



**Parish Priest:** Rev. Mgr. John M Walsh

**Parish:** Our Lady of Compassion

**Tel No:** 07104 873230

**Email:** [ourladyofcompassionformby@rcaol.org.uk](mailto:ourladyofcompassionformby@rcaol.org.uk)

**Web:** [ourladyofcompassionformby.org.uk](http://ourladyofcompassionformby.org.uk)

**12 Aug 2020**

Dear Parishioners of Our Lady's

Three weeks after my appointment as your new parish priest, the handover of responsibilities by the Archdiocese is now almost complete. When a new parish priest is appointed, the Archdiocese offers various services of support to inspect all the various aspects of the parish estate. This enables the new priest to have an overall view of his new responsibilities and any matters that require his attention.

The most pressing need brought to my attention was the existence of damp in the church. As you know, this has been a long-standing problem, but the situation has worsened. An example of this can be seen at the back of church where extensive damp is evident in walls only redecorated a few years ago. The damp is also widespread in the sacristy area and in the former confessionals. When a problem like this emerges, then speed is of the essence. Unfortunately, the surveyors were unable to access all the affected areas because many items had built up over time and were preventing access. The items had to be removed quickly to allow work to begin at the end of this week.

Some of you may have seen the large skip in the courtyard of the former Rectory which is now very full! This is the evidence of some very hard work that has been taking place over the last few days. The damp has sadly affected many items which have now been disposed of. Other items, such as those belonging to our groups and others have been relocated to the meeting room where they can remain in a safe, dry place whilst work is carried out.

I want to thank Andy Dell, the chair of the parish council, members of his family, Irene who cares for the flowers and other helpers who came in at very short notice to carry out this work. It had to be done quickly and it has now been completed. Thank you most sincerely to all who helped. Work will begin on the exterior of the church on Friday morning before work on the inside commences.

At a time like this, the sensitivities of people can be heightened. There are fears of change and reorganisation which become more difficult to cope with as we get older. A remark was made to me by a parishioner, that having seen the very full skip, the fear was that a number of the parishioners would find themselves on the skip as well! The arrival of a new parish priest will always cause some anxiety. That is inevitable. This is compounded by the pandemic which has taken normal life away from us and replaced it with a strange existence of social distancing and restrictions. As I mentioned in my welcome letter, this hits parish communities very hard, since social interaction is the very life blood of our life together.

So I want to reassure you as much as I can. Although our group activities are suspended, they will return at some point in the future. When they do, all our volunteers will be needed. Our Lady's has a very strong tradition of community, service and outreach. I intend to work hard to build that up, extend and improve it and make Our Lady's an even more welcoming and loving community.



**Our Lady of Compassion**

18 School Lane, Formby, L37 3LW

Served by the Churches of Our Lady of Compassion and St. Jerome

Roman Catholic Archdiocesan Trustees In. Reg. Charity No: 232709



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Page 2

We cannot see the future. We do not know how long this pandemic will last. Will there be changes ahead? Most certainly. But even these are unclear at the moment. Our parish remains quiet and our life together is at a minimum. This will continue for some time. But being aware of the needs of those around us is more important than ever.

Finally, a word about communication. Finding a means of getting information to everyone across our three parishes is proving challenging. I had hoped to create a single platform, but that is only reaching relatively few. There are some who do not use the internet and rely on the printed word. Unfortunately, we cannot print newsletters at the moment. So, the existing platforms we have are Facebook and the St Jerome's and St Anne's website. E-mails are also sent to those who have given us their details. My hope is that a new website for the whole Catholic community will be ready before long.

May I ask that as many of you as possible communicate these letters of information to those you know in your area and to your friends. We can only do so much, but with your help we can reach more people.

Thank you, in anticipation, for your help.

May God bless you and your loved ones,

**Father John**



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