



Parish Priest: Rev. Mgr. John M Walsh

Parish: Our Lady of Compassion

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Dear Friends

**THE GILD HALL
ST JEROME'S PARISH CENTRE
OUR LADY'S ACTIVITY CENTRE**

As you know, the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 led to the closure of the Gild Hall, St. Jerome's Parish Centre and Our Lady's Activity Centre. These buildings have remained closed and have not traded since then. As the pandemic continued, and the general economic situation deteriorated, the Archdiocese began a review of all its Parish Centres. Such a long period of closure has not simply led to a deterioration of buildings and grounds, but has had an impact on the financial health of those buildings. There has been no income, but bills have still had to be paid. Consequently, a significant number of Parish Centres across the Archdiocese have had to close permanently.

Late last year, the Archdiocese began a review of our Parish Centres in Formby. The matter finally went before the Trustees of the Archdiocese last week and a final decision was reached. I am now able to tell you about that decision.

THE GILD HALL

The Trustees have decided to reopen the Gild Hall in September. For some years now, it has been managed and administered by the Archdiocese. Jackie, the manager, did a wonderful job of attracting many groups and making it a popular venue. Sadly, Jackie has decided to move on to other things. Our sincere thanks go to her for all her hard work and dedication. A new manager will be appointed in due course and the Trustees have approved a programme of interior and exterior decoration. It has also been decided that the Gild Hall will now be the venue for all the meetings of our new parish. Once the groups of the parish start to come together again, details of how to book days, times and rooms will be sent out.

ST JEROME'S PARISH CENTRE

The Trustees have decided to reopen St. Jerome's Parish Centre. However, they have decided to make some changes. The Archdiocese will now take over the management and administration of the Centre. The new manager of the Gild Hall will also manage St. Jerome's Parish Centre. Peter Brooks has managed the Centre for many years and he now steps down as manager. He has worked incredibly hard with great dedication to maintain the building to a high standard, to welcome many groups and to make the building available to the parish. I want to say a huge thank you to Peter for all his hard work and dedication. The Archdiocese has asked him to continue in a supporting capacity, and to offer assistance to the new manager in his or her new duties.



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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Joe Moreland has served as Treasurer of the Parish Centre for many years. He and Peter have worked tirelessly to keep the Centre open during increasingly difficult times. Joe will now step down as Treasurer and he does so with my sincere thanks for such generous service over the years. The Gild Hall and St. Jerome's Parish Centre will now be administered as one financial unit by the new manager, under the auspices of the Archdiocese.

St. Jerome's Parish Centre has just about made ends meet for some time. Declining bar sales, fewer groups renting the building and a decline in the number of functions has made the future of the Centre uncertain. The costs to reopen, to meet its financial needs and to make it more fit for purpose, require a much higher income than previously. The Archdiocese has decided to seek groups that will rent the building for higher rates to stabilise the Centre financially and keep it on a strong footing. I am very happy that a solution has been found to reopen our Centre when so many parishes have lost theirs. Exactly how the building will now be utilised will be in the hands of the new manager.

OUR LADY'S ACTIVITY CENTRE

The Activity Centre next to the Gild Hall has served many groups from Our Lady's and the town for many years. It has been managed and administered by Leo Kolassa, who has been tireless in supporting the Centre and making it possible for many to find a home there. The Archdiocese has asked that the Activity Centre and the Gild Hall work as one unit under one manager. Leo will step down from his role, but he has generously agreed to remain on hand for advice and guidance in the future plans for the building. I am deeply grateful to Leo for his dedicated service to the Activity Centre.

The Archdiocese have surveyed the Activity Centre and identified several areas of repair and improvement affecting health and safety that need to be carried out. The financial cost of the works is quite high. So, for now, the building will not be used for group activities or meetings. Once the work is eventually carried out, some thought can be given to its future use.

We now have clarity about the future of the two Parish Centres and we retain the Activity Centre as a resource for the future. Some changes have been made, but we have emerged in a better position than some others. Brian Lowry, who has been overseeing this process on behalf of the Archdiocese, has asked me to provide his contact details at the end of this letter, should anyone wish to make enquiries or ask for further information. His contact e-mail is: b.lowry@rcaol.org.uk

God bless you.

Father John



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