



Parish Priest: Rev. Mgr. John M Walsh

Parish: Our Lady of Compassion

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Consultation of the Parish

Over the past two years, since the three former parishes were merged into one new parish, there have been a number of consultation meetings to listen, discuss and discern the way forward. Beginning with the consultation of the former St Anne's parish, the Mission Group, the General Parish meeting and most recently the Visioning Group, there have been many wide-ranging discussions, listening exercises and ideas shared.

After the Parish meeting in the summer, the Visioning Group was formed to take the matters discussed at that meeting forward. Membership of the Group was opened to the whole parish, and 24 parishioners indicated an interest. Our meetings have welcomed between 12 and 18 members of the Parish of a wide range of ages and experience. Although our initial focus was on the use of buildings, the conversations quickly moved on to deeper issues. What is our Parish for? What is our place in the wider community? The conversations were wide ranging. People listened respectfully and there was honest debate.

The Visioning Group met for the final time on Tuesday evening. We began with the clear realisation that the Eucharist is the centre, the summit and the source of everything we do. The entire life of the Parish flows from the Eucharist, and the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist is the one key event that unites the whole Parish and draws everyone together. That celebration sends us out to live the Gospel. We then drew together all the themes we had returned to often in our discussions; the care of the young, accompaniment of those preparing for the Sacraments, Prayer and Liturgy, Evangelisation, the Mission of the Church and care for the sick and dying. All of these areas are part of the everyday life of the Parish, but the Group wanted to discuss new ideas and approaches.

We were all aware of the situation we now find ourselves in. Life has changed and the way in which people interact with one another and the institutions around them has changed. The Church is no different. So, we decided that the best way ahead is to choose two areas that we can work with and focus on over the next twelve months. In this way, we will not overburden ourselves with expectations that cannot be met, but at the same time work together as one parish to move forward.

The Group decided that work with, and accompaniment of families and the young should be the first priority. Alongside this priority, I wanted to place the care of the sick and dying, and work with the bereaved.



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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In sharing with the Parish this record of the long process of consultation we have undertaken, and in particular the work of the Visioning Group, I want to thank all those who have been part of these consultations, for the meetings attended, for the listening, for the sharing of views and for the efforts made to bring together those of different views. In particular, I want to thank Fr. Phil Inch, the Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Development, who has attended our meetings and guided our conversations over these past couple of years since our merger. He is now preparing to visit other Parishes to help them to enter into a similar process to the one we have been through. His experience of what is happening across the whole diocese has been essential in giving a helpful context to all our discussions.

In the coming weeks, I shall be letting you know how we will move forward in the care of families and the young, and the care of the sick, dying and bereaved. In the meantime, let us ask the Lord in our Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist, to draw us closer to him and to one another, so that his love may be clearly seen by all.

God bless you

Father John



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