



Parish Priest: Rev. Mgr. John M Walsh

Parish: Our Lady of Compassion

Tel No: 07104 873230

Email: ourladyofcompassionformby@rcaol.org.uk

Web: ourladyofcompassionformby.org.uk

9th July 2023

Volunteers for the Parish

We are blessed to have good and generous parishioners who serve our Catholic community faithfully. We see evidence of their work all around us; in the care of our church, in the support of the needy, in the care of and ministry to the sick, to name just a few. In our community, many acts of kindness and service are happening every day, many of them hidden from view. Our Faith asks us to reach out to those who need our help and support. I know this is happening in many places. Among our volunteers are those who have offered themselves for training as Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, and who have been authorised by the Archbishop to assist me in distributing Holy Communion during Mass, but more importantly to take the Eucharist to the sick in their homes. This is a very important ministry for obvious reasons. I cannot reach everyone who needs the Eucharist. Our Extraordinary ministers are a great help. Because this is a public ministry of the Church that can only be authorised by the Archbishop himself, it is overseen and regulated by the Archdiocese. I am reminded from time to time, that the public ministry of the Church is not entrusted to an individual because they are worthy, but because it is essentially an act of service that requires generosity, and a willingness to accept the direction of the Church in how this ministry is carried out. It is not a ministry we take upon ourselves, even less something that we 'own'. This is true of bishops and priests, as well as members of the laity.

Our Archdiocese, as the commissioning authority acting on behalf of the Archbishop, is currently undertaking a review and assessment of all parish volunteers, and particularly those visiting individual homes and care homes. They are requiring Safeguarding representatives and parish priests to show that all records of visits made by volunteers are fully recorded. In addition, visits undertaken to individual homes and care homes in an official capacity are no longer to be made by a single individual, but by two people.

The immediate reaction to these new arrangements may be negative. Isn't this just unnecessary bureaucracy? It's worked well up to now, why change it? All fair questions until we come back to that original point. These acts of service are authorised by the Church, which continues to update its working practices.

It is my responsibility as parish priest to ensure that what the Church asks for in its official ministries, is overseen properly and accounted for. When it became clear that the record of official visits undertaken in the Parish were not accurate, I asked our Extraordinary Ministers to step back from their visits until we updated the records of all visits taking place. We are now making arrangements for our Extraordinary Ministers visiting the homes of others and the care homes, to do so in pairs. This may appear unnecessary to some, but the Church has an overriding concern at this time for proper protections to be in place. Not just for the vulnerable person, but for those making the visit.



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



Parish Priest: Rev. Mgr. John M Walsh

Parish: Our Lady of Compassion

Tel No: 07104 873230

Email: ourladyofcompassionformby@rcaol.org.uk

Web: ourladyofcompassionformby.org.uk

The Church has been through a dreadful time in these last years and is learning some hard lessons. We cannot be surprised that a firmer and clearer approach is now being taken to put every safeguard into place. It is an approach that deserves our support.

A word about my own visits to the sick. I do not publish the visits I make. I would not do that. But I visit the sick of our community on a regular basis, anointing the sick and taking Holy Communion. Occasionally, I am called to a sick or dying person in the night. I have also recently agreed to work with Fr Sergio to provide cover for St Joseph's Hospice, formerly Jospice, for the terminally ill.

Deacon John and I are now visiting the care homes of Formby and the homes of those receiving communion. It gives us the opportunity to speak with the sick, be in contact with their families, and have a conversation with their care provider. Visits will resume as quickly as we can put these new arrangements into place.

I want to thank Deacon John for all the work he is doing to put these new arrangements into place. He has already met with our Extraordinary Ministers and is working hard to create a new database of all visits that will be made in the future. I know that some have been unsettled by these changes and that change is not often welcomed, but I am very grateful for your patience and understanding as we put the directives of the Archdiocese into place.

Finally, a huge thank you to every one of our Extraordinary Ministers who enable the sick to receive the Eucharist at home. I would also like to thank, on behalf of the Parish, all of our volunteers who work selflessly and generously to support us in many areas. Thank you for your service and for your example to us all!

God bless you,

Fr. John



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