



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

**Parish:** Our Lady of Compassion

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**25 July 2020**

Dear Parishioners of St. Jerome's and St. Anne's

This weekend marks the reopening of two of our churches in Formby for public Mass. It has been 132 days, or 19 weeks since the last public Mass was offered in our churches. What stories could be told of those days by us all!

Of course, we are still in the middle of the pandemic. I say this because our return to church is not a triumphant moment when we dust ourselves down and say, well that was that, now let's get back to normal! The Prime Minister remarked yesterday that it would take until the middle of next year before our country would be well past this crisis. That sounds right.

When those of you coming to Mass this weekend at St Jerome's enter our church, you will notice an immediate change. Some of the benches have been removed to accommodate the safe number of worshippers and to create more space for people to move safely. It reminds us that things are no longer the same. All the instructions for attending Mass safely have already been sent to you. Please read them carefully and remember to bring your face covering with you.

Speaking of change, this weekend marks the end of Father Bernard's ministry as Parish Priest of Our Lady's. We have so many reasons to be grateful to him, especially here at St Jerome's, which he served faithfully for 10 years. I am delighted that he will be remaining in the community. Father Bernard will move into the clergy retirement apartments in the Old Rectory next to Our Lady's church in the coming weeks. With the Archbishop's encouragement and approval, I shall then move into Our Lady's Presbytery to make my new home there, in the centre of our town.

The care of three parishes is a daunting challenge, and no one will be surprised to hear me say that it is not sustainable for very long. There will be changes of course, but it is going to take some time to see how these changes will happen. This is all happening in the middle of a pandemic which is likely to be with us for a long time to come. So much patience and understanding is needed.

A word of congratulation to our new deacon, John Mc Carthy, who was ordained deacon last Sunday. The Archbishop has appointed John to serve the Catholic community in Formby. Deacon Joe Moreland has also received the same appointment. John has now stepped down as Parish Administrator of St Jerome's and St Anne's parishes to take up his new role as deacon. I want to thank him for four years of excellent service to our communities in that role. A new Parish Administrator will be appointed in due course, but not until it becomes clear what the needs of the new reality in Formby are. I am very grateful to Deacon Joe who has agreed to continue to assist me in other administrative matters.



**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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So let us fix our eyes on Jesus. We are here because of him and for him. Every brick, every pane of glass, every door of our churches and buildings were put there for him. To enable his message to be preached and heard and shared. But of far greater value than these bricks and mortar, precious though they are, are the people who gather in them. The true treasure is each and every disciple of Jesus who forms his body. We are the true temples of God, because His Spirit lives in us and glorifies the Father and the Son in us. Whatever happens in the time ahead, let us remain close to each other and work to build up the unity of the body of Jesus. Remember the final words of Jesus to his disciples; ‘... and behold I am with you, yes, to the very end of time.’

Please pray for me.  
God bless you,

**Father John**



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