



Parish Priest: Rev. Mgr. John M Walsh

Parish: Our Lady of Compassion

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Dear Friends

St. Anne's Church

As announced last weekend, Archbishop Malcolm has made the decision to take St. Anne's Church out of sacred use and close it. He will celebrate a closing Mass for St. Anne's community on Tuesday October 19th at 7.00pm. This is a particularly difficult time for all those who have worshipped at St Anne's and called it their home. I ask for the prayers, compassion and sensitivity of our entire community for the people of St Anne's.

Gild Hall

After almost two years of closure and several weeks of refurbishment, the Gild Hall is finally set to reopen. The last job is the exterior repainting. The inside of the hall needs a thorough cleaning and then it will be ready. The Archdiocese, which runs the hall, intends to appoint a new manager but has not yet done so. To ensure that we open as quickly as possible, I am very grateful to Peter Brookes, who has agreed to get everything ready until the new appointment is made. It will be ready for use from Monday October 18th. To make bookings, please contact Peter Brookes on 07802565265.

Parish Groups

It seems almost unnecessary to say it, but two major events have taken place since March 2020. The first is the pandemic, which has brought three major lockdowns and numerous restrictions and is still with us. The second is the merging of three former parishes into one new parish. These are huge events and will have consequences far into the future. Change is not something that has happened, it is something that is still happening. So we must adapt. Resources and numbers have been hit hard. With all this in mind, I decided that the Gild Hall should become a new meeting place for all parish groups. The church meeting room will still be used for smaller meetings. As we saw above, much time, money and effort has been invested by the Archdiocese in preparing the Gild Hall for new use. The parish will have much greater access than previously and will be given priority for meetings on certain evenings of the week and wider access during the day. It is a wonderful resource and I want to see it used frequently. There are already lots of ideas about its future use.

It is understandable that groups that previously existed want to get back to meeting up again, but we are no longer the former Our Lady's, the former St. Anne's or the former St. Jerome's. We are a new parish. All the members of the new parish must now decide what groups they want, what support they need, what structures they would like to see. Some previous groups have decided to join together, such as Our Lady's and St. Jerome's UCM. They will now meet as one group, but the idea is to reflect on, talk about and reimagine how we can offer support and encouragement to one another in our community. Expect to see details soon about coffee mornings and tea afternoons in the Gild Hall for everyone to drop in, find some company and talk about ways we can offer support in the future.



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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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Mission Group

I am very grateful to Fr. Philip Inch, the Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Development, for all the help he has given us in steering the process of consultation for St. Anne's. He has also been offering advice to me about the first steps needed to move our new parish forward. His suggestion was that I gather a few people from the three former parish communities together, to listen to each other and to prepare the way for the publication of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Plan, which will be published in a few weeks time.

There is no doubt that the events of the last 18 months have brought us to a very different place, now just in the Church but in Society as a whole. I have mentioned this a number of times in homilies but I think it is going to take time to sink in. We have to respond to the new reality and begin to reflect on the way forward.

Six people met, together with myself, Fr. Inch and the two deacons, for the first time last week. They were; Ben Miller (St. Anne's), Mike Halford (St. Anne's), Dympna Edwards (Our Lady's), Michael Crilly (Our Lady's), Clare McCarthy (St. Jerome's) and Bruni Jones (St. Jerome's).

The first point that Fr. Inch made to us, was that we should now begin to move beyond referring to the three communities and build a new culture of one community, one parish. He invited us to listen to one another as we shared our thoughts about where we are now. I was delighted to be part of this first meeting and to hear honest and encouraging viewpoints. I would like this listening exercise to be extended to our whole community.

There are two questions that I invite everyone to reflect on:

- What is the purpose of our parish and what is it for?
- What is the mission of our parish?

The six people who are part of the Mission Group, will be talking to you, reaching out to you and listening to your views. The Group will meet again in November, just before the Pastoral Plan is published. It is worth pointing out that the Mission Group is not a Parish Council and not a permanent group. It is a pilot group to begin a listening exercise with each other and with our community. It will receive and consider the Pastoral Plan and facilitate a consultation of the whole community about the Plan. I want to hear from all of you about what structures, groups and support networks you feel our new parish needs. That will come after the Archbishop's Plan is published. For now, I would like us all to reflect upon, pray over and consider what we believe is the purpose and mission of our parish.

My sincere thanks to each member of the Mission Group for agreeing to give their time to meet, share and facilitate this listening exercise for our new parish.



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Finance Council

I am reminded that Cannon Law requires me to form a new Finance Council for our new parish. Various arrangements were in place in the previous three parishes and I take this opportunity now to thank each and every person who have given their time to advise and serve.

The following parishioners have agreed to serve on the new Finance Council. Andy Dell, Mike Halford, Ben Miller (Chair), Pauline Adams and Shelagh Murphy. Joe Moreland, who has been administering the parish accounts, will act as Secretary. The members of the Council will serve for no more than three years, when they will be replaced by new members. I have met with the Council and given them oversight of all Parish accounts. I have asked them to prepare a statement of account of the new parish to be made available to all parishioners. I thank all of the new members for agreeing to take the new Finance Council forward.

Weekday Masses

Mass is celebrated at Our Lady's Church on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Until now, the Mass time has been 12 noon, with the exception of Thursday, which is celebrated at 10.00am. The timings have not been convenient for everyone, so a couple of weeks ago I asked for feedback about the best time for Mass during the week. Many of you have responded and virtually all respondents, with just a handful of exceptions, have asked for Mass at 10.00am. Therefore, from this coming week, all our weekday Masses will be celebrated at 10.00am. Thank you for responding.

God bless you

Father John



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