

To the Clergy and People of the Pastoral Area:

I am writing to you to ask for your guidance and help.

You will be aware that one of the main tasks that I have as your Archbishop is the appointment of priests to the parishes. In many ways it is one of the most important and sacred tasks of a bishop. It is also one of the most difficult.

As you know we have less priests (and people at Mass) than we had in recent times (and we have a number of pending clergy retirements) and so I need your advice. I am asking you, clergy and people together, to look carefully at your Pastoral Area and to see how we can best serve the mission of the Church in your part of the Diocese. I want to best use the resources of priests, people and buildings that we have. I would be very grateful if you could share with me your ideas of how we can go forward with fewer priests and perhaps fewer buildings too.

I have asked the Dean to call clergy and people together to help me in the forward planning that we need to embark upon. I know that many of you took part in the Leaving Safe Harbours process and we have been able to put in place some of the recommendations that came from Pastoral Area plans, I thank you for that. You may wish to revisit the planning that you did then. I ask you to share with me in this present task, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that we can be the Church that God has called us to be.

Yours in Christ,

+Malcolm McMahon Archbishop of Liverpool.

Dear Parishioners: this letter is one that you can respond to personally; please send your responses to me and I will pass them on to the dean. If you do that immediately you will be without two other informative statistics.

1. *There are the statistics for our Pastoral area: how many attend mass in each parish etc.*
2. *There are the statistics about the numbers of priests that are predicted to be available in the future.*

These statistics will be available at a meeting I intend to hold on Tuesday 25th April at 7.30pm. All are welcome. We can then send in a proposal from those present (or a majority) and people can send in their individual contributions if they wish.

Each parish in the deanery is being asked to do this. The Dean will be asked to present a summary of the suggestions. Fr Philip Inch our dean would like comments back by 15th May.

For information there are the following churches in our deanery:

St Mary's Leyland: run by monks of Ampleforth. Fr Jonathan Cotton, Fr Stephen Wright, Fr Paul Browne; St Catherine's Farington Parish Priest is Fr Simon Henry; Sts. Mary Magdalen's, Teresa's in Penwortham and St Oswald's Longton Parish Priest is Fr Philip Inch; Our Lady's Tarleton, St Peter and Paul's Mawdesley Parish Priest Fr Gerald Anders; St Agnes' Eccleston Parish Priest Fr Michael O' Dowd; St Mary's Euxton Parish Priest Fr Gerry McCusker. There are two married deacons: Leo McNicholas in Longton and Gerard Fishwick in Euxton. One parish Sister in Leyland, Sister Veronica.

Of course many of you the laity support and help us.

God bless you all: may the Holy Spirit guide us and the Archbishop and his council

Fr. Jonathan