

Becoming a Moderated Parish

*Why? When?
What? How
does it affect
me? What
can I do to
help?*

Scope of Presentation: *Towards a Moderated Parish*

PART 1: WORKING WITH A VISION - UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT: What Is The Church? Why Are We Here At All? What's Our Mission?

- ▶ *The Great Commission & Pentecost*
- ▶ *Second Vatican Council – Lumen Gentium (Light of the Nations)*
- ▶ *Pope St Paul VI – Evangelii Nuntiandi (1975)*
- ▶ *Pope Francis – Evangelii Gaudium (The Joy of the Gospel) (2013)*

PART 2: THE NUTS & BOLTS - DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN: version 1, 2 & 3

- ▶ *A Parish ... a Moderated Parish?*
- ▶ *A work in Progress*
- ▶ *Many practical Issues to be Clarified*
- ▶ *The journey we are on and long and short-term actions and goals*
- ▶ *Making it work ... working together for the BEST results*
- ▶ *Q & A*

PART 1: WORKING WITH A VISION ...



St Paul's Prayer for us - Ephesians 3:14-21

"For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever!"

Amen.

**Who are
we? Why
are we
here?**



Salt and Light: Mt 5:13-16

▶ Salt and Light

- ▶ ¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.
- ▶ ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

***“Go make disciples of all nations”
(Mt 28:19)***



The Church is Born

And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance – Acts 2:4



St Paul -One Spirit, One Body (I Cor 12:1-14)

- ▶ There are different kinds of gifts. But they are all given to believers by the same Spirit. ⁵ There are different ways to serve. But they all come from the same Lord. ⁶ There are different ways the Spirit works. But the same God is working in all these ways and in all people.
- ▶ There is one body, but it has many parts. But all its many parts make up one body. It is the same with Christ. ¹³ We were all baptized by one Holy Spirit. And so we are formed into one body. It didn't matter whether we were Jews or Gentiles, slaves or free people. We were all given the same Spirit to drink. ¹⁴ So the body is not made up of just one part. It has many parts.



**Praying for a New Pentecost -
Pope St John XXIII and the Second Vatican
Council**

From Institution to Pilgrim People

- ▶ *The Second Vatican Council (1960s ~ Popes John XXIII & Paul VI)*
- ▶ *Huge 'shift' in how we see the Church:*
 - ▶ *Lumen Gentium (Light of the Nations) - from the "Perfect Society" / the "Bark of Peter" to **THE PILGRIM PEOPLE OF GOD:***
 - ▶ *Many implications: humility, travel light, the focus is on fellow 'pilgrims'... trust in providence*
 - ▶ *Also: ecumenical & inter-faith implications, dialogue with contemporary society while reading "signs of the times"*

The Local Church

- ▶ *Vatican II also made clear that the ‘fullness’ of Church life resides in any local Church that is in communion with the Universal Church:*

“The Church of Christ is really present in all legitimately organized local groups of the faithful united with their pastors... though they may be small and poor Christ is present through who’s power and influence the One, Holy, catholic and Apostolic Church is constituted”

[Lumen Gentium: 26]

Models of the Church

- ▶ *Cardinal Avery Dulles post-Vatican II proposed 5 'models of the church':*
 - ▶ *Institution*
 - ▶ *People of God*
 - ▶ *Mystical Communion*
 - ▶ *Loving Servant*
 - ▶ *Herald of the Gospel*

The Church (and every Parish community) should reflect the truth in each of these 'models'

From MAINTENANCE to MISSION



Pope Paul VI - apostolic exhortation on evangelization, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (1975)

- ▶ *“The first means of evangelization is the witness of an authentically Christian life.”*
- ▶ *“Modern men and women listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses”*
- ▶ *“It is therefore by its conduct and by its life that the Church will evangelize the world, in other words, by its living witness of fidelity to the Lord Jesus - the witness of poverty and detachment, of freedom in the face of the powers of this world, in short, the witness of sanctity”*
- ▶ *When the Church is authentically as Christ calls it to be, it becomes for the world the SACRAMENT OF SALVATION i.e. an indispensable sign and channel of God’s saving Grace*

Pope Francis - *“Evangelii Gaudium”* (The Joy of the Gospel) - November 2013



The nature of the Parish

- ▶ *“The parish is the presence of the Church in any given territory, an environment for hearing God’s word, for growth in Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration.”*
- ▶ *“The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community.”*

Schools of Service & Generosity

- ▶ *“Sometimes I think that we should put a sign on the door of parishes that says, ‘Free admission.’ Parishes should be close-knit communities, without bureaucracy, people-centered – a place where the gift of the sacraments can be found. They have to become once again schools of service and generosity, with their doors always open to those who are excluded”*
- ▶ *“Often it is better simply to slow down, to put aside our eagerness in order to see and listen to others, to stop rushing from one thing to another and to remain with someone who has faltered along the way.”*

The Mission of all the Baptised

- ▶ *“In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (cf. Mt 28:19). All the baptized, whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith, are agents of evangelization, and it would be insufficient to envisage a plan of evangelization to be carried out by professionals while the rest of the faithful would simply be passive recipients. The new evangelization calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized”*

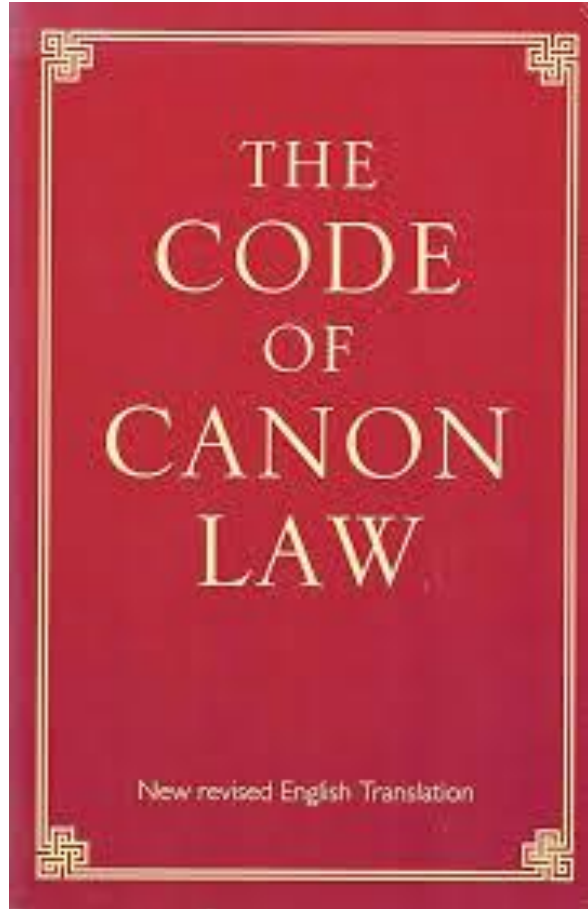
What sort of Church?

- ▶ *“I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures. If something should rightly disturb us and trouble our consciences, it is the fact that so many of our brothers and sisters are living without the strength, light and consolation born of friendship with Jesus Christ, without a community of faith to support them, without meaning and a goal in life”*

PART 2: *THE NUTS & BOLTS ...*

WHAT
NOW?

A large red question mark is positioned to the right of the word 'WHAT'. Below the question mark is a yellow thinking face emoji (🤔).



The Code of Canon Law 1983

What is a Parish? What is a MODERATED Parish?

- ▶ Canon 515 §1: “A parish is a certain community of the Christian faithful stably constituted in a particular church, whose pastoral care is entrusted to a pastor (parochus) as its proper pastor (pastor) under the authority of the diocesan bishop.”
- ▶ Canon 517 §1: “When circumstances require it, the pastoral care of a parish or of different parishes together can be entrusted to several priests in solidum with the requirement, however, that in exercising pastoral care one of them must be the moderator, namely the one who is to direct the joint action and to answer for it to the bishop.”



Our Diocesan Pastoral Plan

DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN - “The Word who is Life” - 3 Drafts (2019, 2022, 2024)

- ▶ *I presented the first edition in each Deanery of the Diocese, inviting all parishioners to gather with me and to spend an evening considering its contents. Following the years of the Pandemic, the second edition was published. I then attended all of the Clergy Deanery Meetings and these were followed by gatherings of the Parish Core Teams (or equivalent) and Clergy coming together in each Deanery. There has also been an overnight gathering for the Deans and I have involved the Education Service and the Trustees in the process. I am grateful to clergy and people alike for the way in which these meetings have been carried out and for the spirit of openness and listening so evident in these gatherings.*

A Vision for the Parish

It will be helpful, here, to re-state the core statement of the previous iteration of the Pastoral Plan:

I therefore take this opportunity to invite everyone in the Diocese – lay faithful and religious, deacons and priests – to join with me in forging our parishes into communities of saints, into strong, lively and welcoming schools of discipleship. May they be communities where the Lord is known and loved; where the liturgy is experienced as an encounter with the wonder of heaven; where daily prayer is a natural part of life; communities of healing, where all are welcomed, their dignity as children of God always recognised; where young people grow in deep love for the Gospel, for the sacramental life of the Church and for prayer; where all know the riches of the Faith and seek to share it with others.

Prayer - Formation - Mission

It will be helpful, also, to re-iterate the foundational elements of the Plan:

The principles of Prayer, Formation and Mission must be the measure against which we place every endeavour. Prayer is the vital prerequisite for every conversation, every thought and every action. Formation in every aspect of Faith is necessary if we are to be effective in Mission. Mission calls us outward, beyond the safety of that with which we are comfortable. We are called to be more closely conformed to Christ, that as His disciples we may bring the Good News to our brothers and sisters. This is a call that is made upon all the baptised, each according to their state in life, that we may use the gifts we have been given at the service of Christ and of our brothers and sisters, both near and far

Diocesan Timelines

February 2024 - Cathedral and Guildford Deaneries

April 2024 - Lewes & Mayfield and Crawley Deaneries

June 2024 - Weybridge and Woking Deaneries

September 2024 - Epsom and Redhill Deaneries

November 2024 - Eastbourne & St. Leonards Deanery

January 2025 - Worthing and Brighton & Hove Deaneries

The pattern for the delivery will begin with visits by the Formation and Ongoing Formation Teams to the two Deaneries, facilitating times of reflection on gifts, strengths and challenges. This will lead to work on a plan, suited to each Deanery.

¹²

It will be during this stage that the Decree of Reconstitution as a Moderated Parish will be promulgated.

Implementation will take place at a pace suited to each Moderated Parish. This is a key element in this development and change for the Diocese, since development and mission is not time-limited event, but a way of life for every community.

Our Deanery: Eastbourne & St Leonards

(8 Parishes, 15 Churches, 4 Primary & 1 Secondary School)



Our local journey

▶ **STEPS TAKEN:**

- ▶ *The various cross-Diocesan meetings to produce the Diocesan Plan (as outlined earlier)*
- ▶ *Overnight meeting of all the Deans with Bishop and Diocesan Pastoral Team June 2023, at which radical revisions leading to the current Plan were proposed.*
- ▶ *Meeting of all clergy with Bishop and Diocesan Pastoral Team at the Amex Stadium, December 2023, to present the current Plan*

***Since March** we have begun locally to prepare for the autumn and our formal constitution into Moderated Parish ... small steps but above all to get people together, talking , praying, reflecting and sharing*

STEPS SO FAR ...

- ▶ **Since March** begun steps locally via Clergy monthly Deanery Meetings to prepare for the autumn and our formal constitution into Moderated Parish:
- ▶ **March Deanery Meeting**: using documents, updates and guidelines from the Diocese we began looking at practical steps we need to consider to prepare our communities to become a single parish. Agreed a Working Group of 3 Parish Priests and 2 Deacons (Frs Kevin Dring, Neil Chatfield, Simon Dray, Dcns Eugene Adams and Simon South) to take a “deeper dive” into the practical detail of preparation for change.

STEPS SO FAR ...

- ▶ **April Clergy Deanery Meeting:** meeting of the Working to take deep dive into some of the practical issues in light of Prayer-Formation-Mission focus
- ▶ **May Clergy Deanery Meeting:** confirmation by Bishop that Fr Kevin (currently Dean) to be appointed as Moderator, plus reporting back of the Working Group to the full clergy gathering for discussion. Agreed that June meeting to be “Hub Meetings” (Eastbourne / St Leonards) with each priest inviting a parish lay rep to be part of the discussions
- ▶ **June Clergy Deanery Meeting:** Hub Meetings with lay reps looking at very practical actions for the autumn, in preparation for our formal constitution as a new Moderated Parish
- ▶ **July Clergy Deanery Meeting:** feeding back of the reflections from the Hub meetings and agreement of the immediate (short term) actions

PLANNED AUTUMN ACTIONS

▶ Prayer:

- ▶ *For all our communities to be praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit every step of the way, using Holy Hours, Adoration, personal prayer, Bidding Prayers*
- ▶ *To identify in the autumn opportunities for us to come together for prayer across the MP*

▶ Clergy:

- ▶ *Skills audit to identify particular gifts & experiences to use within the team ministry*
- ▶ *Find ways to off-load administration responsibilities by investment in professional (voluntary and paid) experts*
- ▶ *Pulpit swapping across our many church communities for people to get to know the Clergy Team, and vice versa*

PLANNED AUTUMN ACTIONS

▶ Communications:

- ▶ *Presentation on the 18th July at OLR. From this meeting KD will send a Letter to Parishioners across the 8 Parishes to be circulated by end of July with a short overview of the process / journey so far and inviting people to be part of this. Linked to the Letter will be some Presentation / Open Meetings across the 2 Hubs in the autumn giving verbal update by KD and the clergy team and inviting people's responses and questions. Dates to be arranged.*
- ▶ *Begin to plan for a MP website with pages for each community, regular updates to parishes via Newsletters & Websites*

▶ Pastoral care and Youth ministry:

- ▶ *Coordinated plans for care of the sick, housebound, isolated, hospital chaplaincy etc*
- ▶ *Prioritising support of our young people, with a possible Youth Coordinator for the MP, organising activities, gatherings etc. Work closely with our MP schools (4 x Primary schools and St Richard's College)*

PLANNED AUTUMN ACTIONS

- ▶ **Audit of our Communities: gifts, talents, resources, opportunities**
 - ▶ *Begin to identify leadership from within our communities i.e. people who will be willing and able to take leadership roles across the new MP and within the structure of the Leadership Team (Moderator, Clergy and Others) and within community (church) Core Groups*
 - ▶ *Identify our people (volunteers and potentially paid) with useful professional skills (including tested contractors); identify our administration resources (offices, secretaries etc)*
 - ▶ *Identify other resources e.g. buildings and other material resources*

PLANNED AUTUMN ACTIONS

▶ **Sacramental Programmes:**

- ▶ *In the autumn bring together (in Hubs) Catechists to meet and get to know each other, share good practices and resources from programmes being used, with a view to beginning to offer in the coming year consistent Sacramental Programmes in a few locations across the MP. Celebration of the Sacraments would always be on the most local level i.e. in the church community where a person / family worship. Catechist training and formation sessions to be arranged with Diocesan support.*

▶ **Liturgical Ministries:**

- ▶ *A programme of formation for all those in liturgical ministries in the MP (at Hub level) to be set up with the Diocesan Formation Team. Also, as with Catechists, to bring together those in ministry from across the MP to share good practice, resources and friendship.*

PLANNED AUTUMN ACTIONS

▶ Mass Times & Schedules:

- ▶ *Agreed that we don't need to rush into radically changing Mass schedules, but as soon as possible both Hubs need to agree contingency plans to provide emergency cover and produce guidelines on what to do where no Mass can be provided. This means that each hub needs to review its current Mass times with a view to creating flexibility where necessary. Consideration should also be given to times when no Masses can be provided and where lay people can lead an alternative prayer liturgy.*

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

BE PART OF THE PROCESS – PRAY HARD FOR THE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT – COME TO MEETINGS AND GATHERINGS WHEN YOU CAN – BE OPEN AND WILLING TO CHANGE – KEEP EYES FIXED ON THE GOAL OF MISSION (as per Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium*)

ENJOY THE CHALLENGES AND WORKING TO HELP BUILD A BIG AND VIBRANT “COMMUNITY OF COMMUNITIES”!

ALWAYS LOOKING OUTWARDS TO BE CHRIST FOR OTHERS!



Some Final Thoughts ...

- ▶ *Let's all be positive and optimistic together: focus on what can / should be done, rather than what can't be done!*
- ▶ *The Diocesan Plan gives opportunity to grow in our faith and mission, individually and communally*
- ▶ *Some changes will need to be more urgent, other changes can be gradual – prayerful discernment by us all is needed step by step to avoid wasting energy and resources*

And a few more ...

- ▶ *Immediately we can start sharing resources, knowledge, gifts and skills – anything that helps to work well together*
- ▶ *Immediately we can begin to bring people together to meet, to share, to build (new) community and talk together about what matters most of all as we move forward (Conversations in the Spirit as per Synodal Process!)*
- ▶ *The Diocese will then begin formally working with us from November with a year plus to embed the changes and new ways of working i.e. we can be focused but patient!*



REFRESHMENTS & CHAT 15 Mins

Q & A Session



Lord,

The Word who is Life.

May all the people of our Diocese
grow in openness
to the power of the Holy Spirit,
so that through a growth in understanding
and courage,
and truly open to your call,
we may bear powerful witness
to all around us,
for you are Lord for ever and ever

AMEN

