



You Will Be My Witnesses

TEN-YEAR MISSION PLAN
FOR THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH

Dear Friend and Parishioner,

I write to update you, following the first meeting of clergy and nominated representatives from each parish, in our new expanded Parish formation, as part of the 10-year mission plan: You will be my Witnesses.

As a reminder, the churches of:

- Maidenhead: St Edmund Campion, St Joseph
- Cookham: St Elizabeth
- Twyford: St Thomas More
- Wargrave: Our Lady of Peace
- Culham: Christ the Redeemer

And St John's convent in Kiln Green

are being asked to come together as a new Parish, which I have been asked to lead as the Co-ordinating Pastor (Parish Priest).

I want to reiterate again – we are very keen that each church retains their separate identity, name and community. However, we do now need to start to think about how this new extended parish comes together, celebrating our strengths, differences and cultures (to form a new Pastoral Area).

In our first meeting of the Parish implementation team last week, we were asked to think about our new wider Parish name. After some discussion, the name that resonated most was "The Holy Family", using the church names, St Elizabeth, St Joseph, Christ and Our Lady especially, and underlining our intention to be a wider family of churches and parishioners in the future.

"The Holy Family Parish" will only be used by the Diocese to identify our new, wider Parish, made up of all our cluster of churches and internally within our new wider community. Each church in our new Parish retains their name, their identity locally and publicly. There is no intention at all to change this.

So what happens next?

We need to register this name, agreed by your church's representatives and clergy, with the diocese.

We have a deadline set by the diocese to form our new wider Parish by 2027, with areas to be considered including our mission, communities, liturgy, schools, finances, resources and chaplaincy

So the Parish Implementation team we have brought together will meet monthly, to explore these topics and start to come up with strategies, approaches and how we think the new Holy Family Parish will work in future.

In my next update I'll share the names of your representatives and the role they will perform, so that you can get to know them.

The most important thing for me – is that we, the faithful, in all our churches feel included, listened to and heard. This is not being done to you, but with you. I therefore intend to update you regularly and after each meeting – so that you can see exactly where we are on this journey.

We are at a pivotal point in the future of the Catholic church. You have heard the stark truth about the health of the Catholic church in the Portsmouth diocese from Bishop Philip and your priests.

We can't complain about the changes being made, if we haven't taken every opportunity to input.

As we look to the future and the target of 2027 to achieve this change, it's clear that we cannot carry on as we are. We can't keep coming to mass once a week, taking no part in Parish activities and expecting that the parish, the church and our communities will still be exactly the same in 5 or 10 year's time. We have to take an active role in our collective future.

If we are to have a growing, thriving, loving, caring, charitable, inclusive Holy Family community, open to all and supportive of our neighbours we have to act decisively now.

Any change is always difficult to accept and I'm determined to make this journey as transparent and collaborative as I can for everyone in our wider Parish.

Liam

Fr Liam Cummins