



Our 10-year Mission Plan - You will be my Witnesses



Dear Friend and Parishioner,

A lot has been happening since my last update in June in our new expanded Parish formation, as part of the 10-year mission plan: ***You will be my Witnesses.***

You received an update in June/July in person from your parish representatives, explaining why we need to change and how we think the new **Holy Family Parish** will work in future. The feedback that we received, was that this was a really useful update, with everyone gaining more understanding of why we need to change.

I mentioned previously that the Diocese required a report to explain how we, the churches in Maidenhead, Twyford, Wargrave, Cookham and Culham, as well as the convent, want to come together to create the new Parish of The Holy Family. This was submitted to Bishop Philip in August as requested and in September, the Bishop visited us in Maidenhead to understand more about our plans.

One of our main proposals in our plan is that we launch our Holy Family Parish formally on Pentecost Sunday 2025 (8th June 2025). We may not have everything aligned by then (due to canonical law we have a lot of formal steps to take, which don't affect setting up the new parish), but it seems fitting that we come together and celebrate our new parish at Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, marking the beginning of Christianity as a new community, and the coming of the Holy Spirit on the disciples to transform them as missionaries.

So how did the meeting go? I'm pleased to report that as one of the first transition groups that he has visited, the Bishop complimented us on how much work and thinking has already taken place. He was impressed with our plans and I got the feeling that we are further ahead in our thinking than other parishes.

Bishop had 3 things he wanted us to think about more:

- How to involve the youth - To look at alternative ways to involve, encourage, and inspire younger children and families, particularly post-First Holy Communion and post-Confirmation.
- How to generate more spiritual activity - placing Christ at the centre of all we do, and the personal renewal needed to ensure that any future structures serve the mission.
- How will we know we are being successful in our transition to The Holy Family Parish – we will need to provide the Diocese with details of the impact we have made

Here the team felt comfortable that there was nothing in that list that we weren't already considering, however the point was taken that we probably need to articulate this clearly in our plans.

So the overall feeling based on the feedback from the Bishop was that we should move forward with all our plans, including launching at Pentecost 2025 (if ready). This means we now need to start to activate key parts of our plans. These include

- a. A fully functioning Holy Family Finance Committee (NB. We don't have to have merged all the separate church bank accounts and some of the admin. that may require additional Diocesan oversight, but we should have a functioning committee to align all finance activity and make effective, informed decisions)
- b. A formed Holy Family Parish Pastoral Council in place (Asking existing members to stay and appoint where there are gaps, so that we can establish this quickly, with revised governance)

A copy of the 18-page Parish plan presented to the Bishop is available at the back of the church. Please do take a look – so that you can see how we plan to create and run the Holy Family Parish, in the short, medium and long term. It is also available on the parish website.

So, what happens next?

As you know we haven't waited for Diocesan feedback before taking action!

1. I'm delighted to announce that Maria Beasley is our new **Children and Young people Youth worker** for our Holy Family Parish. Maria is based at St. Joseph's and her contact details have been added your church's newsletter. Maria has now visited and introduced herself to each church and has already got some great plans, including a November appeal for Advent Calendars. Watch this space!
As you know, the only way that we can continue to be relevant, vibrant and sustainable, is if our children and young people have a solid faith foundation. Maria will plan and organise all child and youth activity within the new wider parish, including sacramental preparation, youth events, including formation, community building, workshops, activities, pilgrimages, etc. She will work alongside our magnificent teams of catechists who have been leading faith foundation with our children and youth for many years.
2. You will already have seen invitations to **The Chosen** episode talks, led by Fr. Kevin and Dcn. Peter at St. Thomas More each Monday evening and **The Rescue Project** is also underway. We are also planning for more ways for everyone to explore their faith...
3. The **Holy Family Finance Committee** is in the process of being set up, but we need more representatives, look out for details about what the role entails in your newsletter
4. The **Holy Family Parish Pastoral Council** will also be set up on the coming months, with existing PPC members at each church asked to stay on and other churches requiring representation. Again, please look out for announcements on this at your church in the coming months.
5. The various Working Groups in the Transition group are now formulating their plans into tangible activities, what can we do now and by Christmas, what can be done by Pentecost and what will we do after Pentecost and the rest of 2025. I hope to share more details about these plans before Christmas.

... and your priests and deacons continue to work together with liturgical plans, especially looking forward to arrangements for Advent and Christmas.

Keep talking to your representatives...

As you can see from all the groups, there is a lot to do – and they need your help. They are available after Masses most Sundays for a coffee and a chat. They want to hear from you, so they can feedback your thoughts to our meetings.

If you don't feel comfortable airing your opinions in this way, please write to me directly at: lcummins@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk and I will listen and respond. 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.

On some subjects, we may want to canvass opinion more widely through surveys or questionnaires. Please look out for these regular 'You will be my Witnesses' updates where I will give more information.

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.

Father Liam

Parish of the Holy Family, made up of the following church communities:

Maidenhead: St Edmund Campion, and St Joseph

Cookham: St Elizabeth

Twyford: St Thomas More

Wargrave: Our Lady of Peace (currently closed)

Culham: Christ the Redeemer

Kiln Green: St John's convent

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