

## **Developing Corpus Christi Parish**

### **Some thoughts from the Parish Priest**

19 October 2017

Following the announcement a few weeks ago that the Bishop has decided to form this new parish, there are a good number of things for us to begin thinking about. Members of the Parish Enabling Team (PET) have already turned their mind to some of these matters but many of them require or would benefit from broader reflection. In his letter announcing the decision, the Bishop asked us all to work together to develop our new parish.

#### **A New Parish Identity**

In seeking to bring together people who were previously part of three separate parish communities (although working together for a number of years now) it is important that we try to create a real sense that this is something new and that this is now one parish.

It has been suggested that we use a particular logo for our parish which can feature on our newsletter, other documentation and any new signage. There is no existing logo that we can simply adopt and so I am asking pupils in our three primary schools and at Thornleigh if they would like to have a go at designing something. This competition can also be open to any other parishioners (young or older) who might wish to submit an entry.

In designing a possible logo for the parish it is important to bear in mind the two significant aspects of our name. Corpus Christi focuses us on the Eucharist (the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ) but it also reminds us that we ourselves are called to be the Body of Christ in the world today here in this locality. So hopefully the logo will capture one or both of these aspects.

Hard copies of designs should be handed in at church or sent to the parish office at St John's. Electronic copies should be e-mailed to [office@sbsj.org.uk](mailto:office@sbsj.org.uk). Please include contact details of the designer(s). All entries should be submitted by **Monday 13 November** and the competition will be judged at the PET meeting later that week.

#### **New Mass Times**

As mentioned at each of the Masses last weekend, once St Columba's church closes on 11 November, we will need to move the 5pm Saturday evening Mass to one of our other churches. Some views have already been expressed on this but I am keen that those who currently attend that Mass regularly should have the main say in this matter. So, we will have some ballot papers available at St Columba's next Saturday evening so that those attending can express their preference.

In seeking to decide between St Brendan's or St John's for that Saturday evening Mass, it is important that we give consideration to those who will need to get there by public transport. Which of our two remaining churches is best served by buses at that time on a Saturday evening?

Whilst keeping the Saturday evening Mass at 5pm (in whichever church), it would be appropriate at this point to slightly amend the Sunday morning times to enable us to coordinate our Masses with those in our nearest neighbouring parishes. This can be done quite easily by bringing them forward by 15 minutes. So our new Mass times would be 9am at St John's and 11am at St Brendan's. Subject to approval by the Bishop we would introduce them from the weekend of 18/19 November. Let me know by **Wednesday 1 November** if you have any thoughts on this proposal.

### **Standing Orders and Offertory Envelopes**

Over the coming weeks, the Diocesan Finance Office will be making arrangements with the bank to combine our existing parish bank accounts into one new account for Corpus Christi parish. Anyone who currently contributes to any of our parishes by standing order should not notice any difference, since all of these should be automatically directed to the new account by the bank. If any hiccups arise with this transfer, we will let you know and, likewise, it would be appreciated if you let us know if it causes any problems for you. Hopefully, it shouldn't.

If you contribute by envelope (whether gift-aided or not), you should continue to use your current set of envelopes through to the end of this financial year. When we order the new sets of envelopes (for 2018-19) they will have our new parish name (and hopefully our logo) on them.

If anyone else would like to make their regular contributions to the parish by standing order or offertory envelopes, please get in touch with the parish office and we will put you in touch with the appropriate organisers of these schemes.

If you live within that part of the former parish of St Columba's which is now in Holy Infant's parish, and you would prefer your envelope contributions to go there, we can pass them on or you could ask for a new set of envelopes from Holy Infant's.

### **Parish Boundaries and School Admissions**

In a few weeks time, we will publish some more detailed information about the boundaries of our new parish and about the area of St Columba's parish which is now part of Holy Infant's. Parish boundaries are important when it comes to identifying a person's rights and responsibilities within the Church, where sacraments can be celebrated and whether or not permission might be needed.

Since references to current parish boundaries will no longer be appropriate, we will be adjusting the wording of the admissions policies for our primary schools, whilst retaining the same catchment area for each.

### **Hope in the Future**

This diocesan initiative for building up missionary parishes has come at an ideal time for us as we seek to develop our single new parish of Corpus Christi. Some members of the PET team will be taking a lead on this but we are also open to other people joining them who are willing to volunteer their time and energy in helping to shape how we implement the different stages of this initiative.

If you would like to register an interest in helping with this, there is a form available in each of our churches or on the parish website which you can complete.

### **Final Mass at St Columba's**

In the midst of looking to the future of our new parish, we need to remain conscious of the fact that St Columba's church will be closing soon and to recognise the sadness this will cause for a good number of people. It is right that we mark the closure with a Mass of thanksgiving for the life of that parish and church building.

The Bishop will be coming to celebrate this Mass on 11 November and the school will also celebrate Mass in the church building for the final time the previous day. Further details for both of these will follow. In the meantime, you may wish to make former parishioners of St Columba's aware of these celebrations so that these Masses are truly very special occasions, giving everyone who wants to be there the opportunity to fittingly give thanks to God for all that St Columba's has been.