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## **A Pastoral Letter for the 7th Sunday of Ordinary Time (B)**

**14 February 2009**

My dear priests, deacons and people,

### ***Fit for Mission? The Bishop's Decisions***

It's never easy to say goodbye, and I find it hard to believe that this will be my last Pastoral Letter to the Diocese! Where has all the time gone? My Installation as your Bishop seems just like yesterday and certainly not 8 years ago!

I have been determined to see through to the end – before handing over to Bishop Campbell – the final phase of our *Fit for Mission?* parish review which we started together almost 2 years ago. The purpose of this letter is to set before you my decisions taken after prayerful consideration of *the Final Proposals (June 2008)*. Today I make known these decisions having drawn upon the 18 month consultation, led by the Mission Review Team and its Core Group, my own intimate knowledge of the parishes, and, more recently, the advice of the Council of Priests. New Deanery structures will be announced shortly.

First, I want to thank you all for making our *Fit for Mission?* review such a success. What other diocese in the country has undertaken such a comprehensive review of each parish and developed such a detailed strategic plan?

At first many of you were sceptical about *Fit for Mission?* and questioned if it would amount to much. Hopefully you will agree that it is already having results on the ground and promises more in the future. We have made a good start – with this strategic plan combined with the *Fit for Mission? Schools* and *Fit for Mission? Church* documents.

In today's reading from the Prophet Isaiah, the LORD reveals to Israel the new beginning He has in store for them :

***'See, I am doing a new deed, even now it comes to light; can you not see it? Yes, I am making a road in the wilderness, paths in the wilds. The people I have formed for myself will sing my praises'. (Isaiah 43:18-19)***

The renewal programmes that followed the Second Vatican Council all have one thing in common – all express a spiritual longing, a desire for a new beginning, a yearning to be formed by God Himself to sing His praises and show His justice to the world! And God promises to respond to this longing, ***'Look, I make all things new'***. (Revelation 21:5)

Now, more than ever, we are aware of the many strengths and challenges that face parish life in our Diocese. It is increasingly clear that we need to re-organise as a local Church in order to match our finite resources – people, facilities and funding – with the needs of our sacramental and mission life.

It is my responsibility, and that of my Coadjutor Bishop Michael Campbell, to organise parishes in a way that meets the specific needs of this present time and into the future. To do anything less would be an abdication of our pastoral duty!

Here I want to applaud the many sacrifices made by our predecessors in order to promote the mission of the Church and building so many beautiful churches, parish halls, and schools. *Fit for Mission?* has shown that

the emotional ties to our churches run very deep indeed. However, you have also reminded us powerfully that we simply cannot ignore the reduction in the number of priests and shrinking congregations. So many have written urging bold and courageous decisions that look beyond the glories of our beautiful buildings to the pressing needs of sacramental and mission life.

Some of you may be disappointed, even angry, with my decisions, but, believe me, when I say that I have taken none of them lightly. Others will be disappointed that my decisions may not seem radical enough in view of the challenges that face us. There are a few in the Diocese who still need to be convinced of the necessity for any real change. To move forward we must show each other greater patience and charity.

For the decisions in this plan to mark a new beginning two things are needed – a spirit of sacrifice *and* a sense of shared responsibility for the future of the Catholic Church in the North West. Both are essential pre-conditions if the life and mission of our Church is to grow in very different circumstances from even 10 years ago. Thankfully, most now recognise that doing nothing is no longer an option.

As I prepare to hand over to Bishop Campbell I pray that *Fit for Mission?* will mark a new chapter in the life of the Diocese; making us more decisive and courageous in our Catholicism. All that is needed is that we have hope and faith to believe that things can be different!

Changing times demand comprehensive programmes of lay formation, and the promotion of priestly vocations in every sustainable community. Equally urgent, we need to develop our mission with the young and the lapsed. Furthermore, our commitment to Justice and Peace must become as important to our Catholic identity and life as weekly participation in the Mass! These have all been identified in the sacramental and mission priorities of the parishes in the *Final Proposals*.

Though many of our parish communities do not face immediate change in the initial phase of reorganisation, I ask all of you to consider the following:

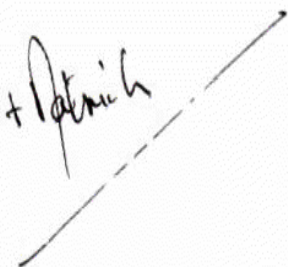
1. Review the mission priorities set out in your *Parish Summary Forms*, and take practical steps to develop your mission with the local community. People will only believe in the love of God if they see Christians acting with love!
2. Welcome people who are affected by churches and chapels ceasing to have Mass, and who will be making decisions about where they want to worship.
3. Provide clear leadership and support at local level to help parishioners adjust to change in parish life, especially those for whom the loss of their beloved church or chapel is great.
4. Accept that the reorganisation of the Diocese will be ongoing through three stages: 'at an early date', 'early next decade' and by the 'middle of the next decade'. It is important to realise that the next decade is only 10 months away!

Finally, the alternative Opening Prayer for today's Mass, sums up my hopes for this great Diocese that I have been privileged to serve as your Bishop:

***'Open our eyes to your deeds, our ears to the sound of your call, so that our every act may increase our sharing in the life you have offered us.'***

Sincerest good wishes, prayers, and thanks,

May God bless you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick", written over a dashed diagonal line that extends from the bottom left towards the top right.

**Bishop of Lancaster**

## Lancaster Diocese

# Parish Reorganisation 2009

### 1. The Parishes of St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster (Listed Church) and St Thomas More, Lancaster (already linked)

**St Peter's Cathedral, Lancaster** to continue and *canonically merge with St Thomas More, Lancaster* from Low Sunday 2009 – at such time Sunday/Vigil Mass will continue at **St Thomas More, Lancaster** for as long as the congregation there makes this arrangement sustainable.

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### 2. The Parishes of St Joseph, Lancaster (Listed church) and the Chapel of St Robert Bellarmine, Halton

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue at St Joseph, Lancaster.*

*Sunday/Vigil Mass will cease at the Chapel of Ease of St Robert Bellarmine, Halton from Low Sunday 2009.*

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### 3. The Parish of St Bernadette, Lancaster

*To continue its present linking with St Thomas, Thurnham*

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### 4. The Parish of St Joseph, Galgate (served from the Chaplaincy of Lancaster University)

*Rejoin (re-merge) the parish of St Thomas, Thurnham* (Listed church), from Low Sunday 2009. Sunday Mass to continue at **St Thomas, Thurnham**. Sunday Mass/Vigil at **St Joseph, Galgate**, will cease from Low Sunday 2009.

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### 5. The Parishes of St Mary, Morecambe, and The Good Shepherd Torrisholme (already linked)

*Canonically merge from Low Sunday 2009 – both churches remaining for the foreseeable future - for as long as the congregations make this arrangement sustainable.*

**6. The Parishes of St Patrick, Morecambe, and Holy Family, Morecambe (already linked)**

*Canonically merge from Low Sunday 2009– both churches remaining for the foreseeable future - for as long as the congregations make this arrangement sustainable.*

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**7. The Parishes of St William, Pilling and St Bernard, Knott End (already linked)**

*Canonically merge from the Low Sunday 2009 – both churches remaining for the foreseeable future - for as long as the congregations make this arrangement sustainable.*

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**8. The Parishes of Ss Mary & Michael, Garstang (Listed church) (including The Mission Room at Calder Vale) and Ss Mary & James, Scorton**

*To link early in the next decade with a view to a canonical merger in the middle of the next decade.*

*Sunday Mass at **The Mission Room at Calder Vale** to cease from Low Sunday 2009.*

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**9. The Parishes of Our Lady of Lourdes, Carnforth and St Mary, Bolton-le-Sands (Listed church), (already linked),**

*Now to be linked further with **St Mary, Yealand Conyers** (Listed church) from Low Sunday 2009.*

*Sunday/vigil Mass to be continued in all three churches for as long as the congregations there make this arrangement sustainable. This decision is made in readiness for a canonical merger of the three communities (even with two or three churches remaining) early in the next decade. Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**10. The Parishes of St Mary, Hornby (Listed church) (with the Chapel of ease of Our Lady Immaculate, Caton), St Joseph, Kirkby Lonsdale , (already linked)**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue at **St Mary, Hornby and St Joseph, Kirkby Lonsdale** (and continue its present linking).*

*Mass will continue at **the Chapel of Ease of Our Lady Immaculate, Caton** for as long as the congregation makes this arrangement sustainable.*

**11. The Parishes of Sacred Heart, Blackpool (Listed church) and St Cuthbert, Blackpool**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue at these churches – both parishes to link early in the next decade in readiness for an eventual canonical merger by the middle of the next decade – both churches remaining for the foreseeable future.*

*The Chapel of Ease of St Margaret Clitherow is to be served from **Our Lady of the Assumption** (rather than **St Cuthbert**) from the First Sunday of Advent 2009*

*Collaboration between these parishes must begin and increase.*

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**12. The Parishes of St Kentigern, Blackpool and Christ the King, Blackpool**

*Sunday/Vigil Mass to continue at these churches – both parishes to link early in the next decade in readiness for an eventual canonical merger by the middle of the next decade – both churches remaining for the foreseeable future.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**13. The Parishes of St Bernadette, Blackpool and Holy Family, Blackpool**

*Sunday/Vigil Mass to continue at these churches – both parishes to link in the middle of the next decade in readiness for a canonical merger later – both churches remaining for the foreseeable future.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**14. The Parish of Our Lady of the Assumption, Blackpool**

*To continue and to serve the **Chapel of Ease of St Margaret Clitherow** from the First Sunday of Advent 2009.*

*Collaboration between these communities must increase.*

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**15. The Parishes of St John Vianney, Blackpool and St Monica, Blackpool (already linked)**

*Sunday/Vigil Mass to continue at **St John Vianney, Blackpool**. These parishes will canonically merge from Low Sunday 2009 – Mass will continue at the **St Monica, Blackpool** for as long as the congregation makes this arrangement sustainable.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

**16. The Parishes of St John the Evangelist, Poulton, (including the chapel of St Martin Carlton) and the English Martyrs, Poulton**

*Sunday/Vigil Mass to continue at **St John the Evangelist, Poulton, and the English Martyrs, Poulton** – both parishes to link early in the next decade in readiness for an eventual canonical merger – both **St John the Evangelist, Poulton, and English Martyrs, Poulton** churches remaining for as long as the congregations make this arrangement sustainable. **The Chapel of St Martin, Carlton** will cease to have Sunday/vigil Mass at the point of merger between **St John the Evangelist, Poulton, and English Martyrs, Poulton**. Careful local thought would have to be given to the best way of continuing the strong ecumenical partnership given the necessary change of circumstances.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**17. The Parishes of Sacred Heart Thornton (Listed church) and St Nicholas Owen, Thornton**

*Sunday/Vigil Mass to continue at these churches – both parishes to link upon the retirement of the present Parish Priest of **St Nicholas Owen, Thornton** in readiness for an eventual canonical merger early in the next decade. Mass will continue at **St Nicholas Owen, Thornton** for as long as the congregation makes this arrangement sustainable.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**18. The Parishes of St Teresa, Cleveleys and St John Southworth, Cleveleys**

*Sunday/Vigil Mass to continue at these churches - both parishes to link upon the retirement of the present Parish Priest of **St John Southworth, Cleveleys** in readiness for an eventual canonical merger early in the next decade. Mass will continue at **St John Southworth, Cleveleys** for as long as the congregation there makes this arrangement sustainable.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

**19. The Parishes of St Mary, Fleetwood (Listed church), St Wulstan, Fleetwood, and St Edmund, Fleetwood (St Wulstan, Fleetwood presently linked with St Edmund Fleetwood)**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue at **St Edmund, Fleetwood** and the parish will remain linked with **St Wulstan, Fleetwood** – Mass will continue at **St Edmund, Fleetwood** for as long as the congregation there makes this arrangement sustainable.*

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue at **St Mary, Fleetwood** and **St Wulstan, Fleetwood**.*

*It is likely that there would be an eventual merger of the parishes of **St Wulstan, Fleetwood**, and **St Edmund, Fleetwood**, early in the next decade. Eventually, however, this new parish may need to merge with **St Mary, Fleetwood**, (Listed church)*

*Collaboration between these three parishes must increase.*

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**20. The Parish of St Mary, Great Eccleston**

*No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might be necessary to review the situation.*

*Mass will continue at the **Chapel of St Francis of Assisi, Hambleton** for as long as the congregation there makes this arrangement sustainable and a priest is available from the parish of **St Mary, Great Eccleston**.*

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**21. The Parishes of St John the Evangelist, Kirkham (Listed church) and St Anne, Westby Mills (Listed church), (already linked)**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue at **St John the Evangelist, Kirkham** and **St Anne, Westby Mills**, and the parishes would remain linked.*

*From the First Sunday of Advent 2009 **St John the Evangelist, Kirkham** will also link with **St Joseph, Wesham** in readiness for an eventual merger of these three parishes early in the next decade. The church at **St Joseph, Wesham** will remain open for Sunday/vigil Mass as long as the congregation makes this arrangement sustainable.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**22. The Parishes of Holy Family, Freckleton and St Peter, Lytham**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue at **The Holy Family Freckleton** and **St Peter, Lytham** – both parishes to link early in the next decade –both churches remaining.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

**23. The Parish of St Joseph, Ansdell (Listed church)**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue. No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might be necessary to review the situation.*

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**24. The Parishes of Our Lady Star of the Sea, St Annes and St Alban, St Annes**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue. Link early in the next decade in readiness for an eventual canonical merger soon after – both churches remaining for the foreseeable future.*

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**25. The Parishes of St Ignatius and St Thomas of Canterbury & the English Martyrs (both Listed churches)**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in both churches. Link to continue pending further review of Inner Preston churches.*

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**26. The Parish of St Wilfrid, Preston (Listed church)**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue. No change is envisaged whilst the parish is served by the Society of Jesus. The further review of Inner Preston churches continues.*

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**27. The Parishes of St Augustine of Canterbury (listed house), St Joseph (listed internally), and St Teresa, Preston**

***St Teresa, Preston** to canonically merge with the parish of **St Joseph, Preston** from Low Sunday 2009. Sunday Mass will continue at **St Joseph, Preston**; also Sunday Mass would continue at **St Teresa, Preston** for as long as the congregation makes this arrangement sustainable.*

*This decision is made in readiness for the eventual further merger of this new parish with **St Augustine, Preston** early in the next decade.*

*Collaboration between these three parishes must increase.*

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**28. The Parishes of St Walburge, Preston (listed church), Sacred Heart, Preston, Our Lady & St Bernard, Preston and Ss Peter & Paul, Preston**

*No change is envisaged for **St Walburge, Preston** pending further review of the Inner Preston churches – the link between St Walburge and Sacred Heart, Preston will continue. However, greater collaboration between **Sacred Heart, Preston** and **St Walburge, Preston** must continue and deepen. Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in these churches.*

***Our Lady & St Bernard, Preston** and **Ss Peter & Paul, Preston** (already linked) will merge into a new parish from Low Sunday 2009. **Sunday/Vigil Mass** at **Our Lady & St Bernard, Preston** will cease from this date but would continue at **Ss Peter & Paul, Preston**.*

*Collaboration between all these parishes must increase.*

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**29. The Parishes St Maria Goretti, Preston and Blessed Sacrament, Preston**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in these churches – both parishes to link early in the next decade in readiness for an eventual canonical merger soon after – both churches remaining for the foreseeable future.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**30. Our Lady & St Michael, Alston Lane (Listed church) and St Francis, Goosnargh (Listed church)**

*No change is envisaged for these parishes in the foreseeable future but it may be necessary to review the situation with regards to their linking early in the next decade.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**31. St Anthony of Padua and the Holy Family, Ingol**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in these churches – both parishes to link early in the next decade in readiness for an eventual canonical merger soon after – both churches remaining for the foreseeable future.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

**32. The Parishes of St Andrew, Cottam, and St Mary, Lea Town, St Robert Catforth and St Mary Newhouse**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in **St Andrew, Cottam, and St Mary, Lea Town** – both parishes to link from the First Sunday of Advent 2009 in readiness for an eventual canonical merger soon after – both churches remaining open for Vigil/Sunday Mass for as long as the congregation at **St Mary, Lea Town** makes this arrangement sustainable. Soon afterwards this new parish will merge with **St Robert, Catforth** – this church remaining open for as long as the congregation make this arrangement sustainable. By the middle of the next decade it is envisaged that this new parish would link with **St Mary, Newhouse**.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

**33. The Parish of Our Lady & St Edward, Preston**

*No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might be necessary to review the situation*

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**34. The Parishes of St Clare, Preston and St Gregory the Great, Preston**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in these churches. No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might be necessary to review the situation with a possible linking of both parishes – however some collaboration should take place now in terms of planning Mass times and joint pastoral/mission/sacramental activities.*

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**35. The Parish of St Mary, Fernyhalgh (Listed church)**

*To continue to be used for the parish Sunday Mass; also serving the shrine of Our Lady, Ladyewell. Further consideration to be given to the development of the Diocesan Shrine of Ladyewell.*

*Greater collaboration with **St Clare's, Preston** is essential at every level.*

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**36. St Thomas, Apostle, Claughton on Brock (Listed church)**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue. No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might be necessary to review the situation.*

**37. The Parishes of St Mary, Barrow (Listed church), St Pius X, Barrow and Holy Family, Barrow**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in these churches. Link early in the next decade in readiness for a canonical merger soon after.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**38. The Parishes of St Columba, Walney Island, and St Patrick, Barrow-in-Furness, (already linked)**

*Canonically merge into a new parish the First Sunday of Advent 2009. **The church of St Patrick, Barrow** will then cease to be used for Sunday/vigil Mass.*

*This decision is made in readiness for a further merger (early in the next decade) with the parish of the **Sacred Heart, Barrow**. Under such an arrangement Sunday/vigil Mass will continue at the churches of **Sacred Heart, Barrow** and **St Columba, Walney**.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**39. The Parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary & St Margaret of Scotland, Dalton in Furness, (including the chapel of St Anthony, Askam) and St Mary of Furness, Ulverston**

*Mass at **St Anthony's chapel, Askam** will cease from the First Sunday of Advent 2009.*

*This decision is made in readiness for a linking of the parishes of **Our Lady of the Rosary & St Margaret of Scotland, Dalton in Furness** and **St Mary of Furness, Ulverston** early in the next decade. Sunday/vigil Mass will continue in these churches.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**40. The Parishes of Our Lady and St James, Millom, and The Sacred Heart, Coniston.**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in both churches – both parishes to link from the First Sunday of Advent 2009.*

*Sunday Mass at the Anglican church at Hawkshead will cease at this point.*

**41. The Parish of Our Lady of the Lakes & St Charles, Keswick**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue. No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might then be necessary to review the situation and link **Our Lady & St Charles, Keswick** with **St Joseph's, Cockermouth** - Some collaboration between these parishes should even now be explored.*

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**42. The Parishes of Mater Amabilis, Ambleside, and Our Lady of the Wayside, Grasmere**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in these churches – both parishes to link from **Low Sunday 2009** in readiness of a canonical merger early in the next decade – both churches remaining.*

*The chapel of **St Philip Howard, Glenridding**, will cease to have a regular Sunday/vigil Mass from Low Sunday 2009 - except when a holidaymaking priest was using the presbytery.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**43. The Parish of Our Lady and St Herbert, Windermere (including the chapel of ease of The Sacred Heart, Stavely)**

***Our Lady of Windermere and St Herbert, Windermere** continues with Sunday/vigil Mass. The Chapel of ease of **The Sacred Heart, Stavely** will cease to have Sunday /Vigil Mass from Low Sunday 2009.*

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**44. The Parish of St Charles, Grange over Sands, including the chapel of St Cuthbert, Flookburgh**

*No change is envisaged here. Sunday/vigil Mass at **St Charles, Grange over Sands** will continue.*

*Sunday/vigil Mass will continue at the chapel of **St Cuthbert, Flookburgh** for as long as the congregation makes this arrangement sustainable.*

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**45. The Parishes of Christ the King, Milnthorpe and Our Lady of Lourdes, Arnside (already linked)**

***Christ the King, Milnthorpe and Our Lady of Lourdes, Arnside** to continue with Sunday/vigil Mass and canonically merge from Low Sunday 2009 - both churches remaining for as long as the congregations make this arrangement sustainable.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

**46. The Parish of Holy Trinity and St George, Kendal (Listed church) (including the Mass centre at the Anglican church, Sedbergh)**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in both centres. No change is envisaged here - as long as the congregation at Sedbergh makes this arrangement sustainable.*

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**47. The Parish of Our Lady of Appleby, and the Mass centre of Holy Family, Kirby Stephen**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in both centres. No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might be necessary to review the situation.*

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**48. The Parish of St Catherine, Penrith and the chapel of St Wulstan, Alston**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in both centres. **St Catherine, Penrith**, to serve the chapel of **St Wulstan, Alston**, from 1 March 2009.*

*The Mass Centre of **St Norbert Shap**, will cease to have Sunday/Vigil Mass at this time.*

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**49. The Parish of Our Lady and St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge (Listed church) and the chapel of St Ninian, Brampton**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in both centres. This parish becomes a Diocesan parish from **4 May 2009**. Sunday Mass to continue in both churches.*

*This decision is made in readiness for **Our Lady and St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge** to be linked with **Our Lady and St Joseph, Carlisle** and the **chapel of St Ninian, Brampton** to be served from the **Parish of St Augustine, Carlisle** - both early in the next decade.*

*Collaboration between the parishes must start immediately.*

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**50. The Parish of St Augustine, Carlisle and the chapel of our Lady of Good Counsel, Longtown**

***St Augustine, Carlisle** to continue to have Sunday/vigil Mass **the chapel of our Lady of Good Counsel, Longtown** will cease to have Sunday/Vigil Mass from Low Sunday 2009.*

*This decision is made in readiness for **chapel of St Ninian, Brampton** to be served from the **Parish of St Augustine, Carlisle** early in the next decade.*

**51. The Parish of Our Lady and St Joseph, Carlisle (Listed church)**

*St Catherine, Penrith, is now to serve the chapel of **St Wulstan, Alston**, from 1 March 2009.*

***Our Lady and St Joseph, Carlisle** continues to have Sunday/vigil Mass and will be linked with **Our Lady and St Wilfrid, Warwick Bridge** early in the next decade.*

*It is envisaged that in the middle of the next decade **Our Lady and St Joseph** will also link with the new parish of **St Margaret Mary/Christ the King, Carlisle**.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**52. The Parishes of St Margaret Mary and Christ the King, Carlisle**

*Continue to have Sunday/vigil Mass – both parishes to link early in the next decade in readiness for a canonical merger soon afterwards – both churches remaining for as long as the congregations makes this arrangement sustainable.*

*It is envisaged that eventually the new parish will be linked with the parish of **Our Lady and St Joseph, Carlisle** in the middle of the next decade.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**53. The Parish of St Bede, Carlisle**

*No change is envisaged here for the present but it will be necessary to review the situation regularly.*

*Collaboration with neighbouring parishes is essential.*

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**54. The Parishes of St Cuthbert, Wigton and St Edmund, Carlisle (already linked)**

*Link to continue –with Sunday/Vigil Mass at both churches for as long as the congregations make this arrangement sustainable.*

*Sunday/Vigil Mass has already ceased at **Morton Chapel** and at the **Anglican Church, Burgh-by-Sands**. Possible collaboration between these parishes should be explored.*

**55. The Parishes of Our Lady and St Patrick, Maryport and Our Lady of the Assumption, Silloth**

*No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might be necessary to review the situation.*

*The link between **Our Lady & St Patrick, Maryport** and **Our Lady of the Assumption, Silloth** to continue – Sunday/Vigil Mass will continue to be celebrated in both churches.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**56. The Parish St Joseph's, Cockermouth**

*Continues to have Sunday/vigil Mass. No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might then be necessary to review the situation and link **St Joseph's, Cockermouth** with **Our Lady & St Charles, Keswick**.*

*Some collaboration between these parishes should be explored.*

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**57. The Parishes of Our Lady and St Michael, Workington, (Listed church) and St Gregory, Workington**

***Our Lady and St Michael, Workington** becomes a Diocesan parish from **4 May 2009**. Sunday/vigil Mass to continue in both churches.*

***Our Lady and St Michael, Workington, and St Gregory, Workington** to link early in the next decade in readiness for a canonical merger soon afterwards. Eventually the new Workington parish should be linked with, and then merged, with **St Mary, Harrington**. Either the church of **St Gregory** or the church of **St Mary** will be expected to cease to be used for a Sunday/ Vigil Mass.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**58. The Parish of St Benedict, Whitehaven**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue. No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might be necessary to review the situation.*

*Collaboration with neighbouring parishes is essential.*

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**59. The Parish of St Begh, Whitehaven, including the chapel of Ss Gregory & Patrick**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue. No change is envisaged here at present. It is a Benedictine Parish and well served by the Belmont Community (OSB)*

*Collaboration with neighbouring parishes is essential.*

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**60. The Parish of St Mary, Kells**

*Sunday/vigil Mass to continue. No immediate change is envisaged but should local circumstances change it will be necessary to review the situation.*

*Collaboration with neighbouring parishes is essential.*

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**61. The Parishes of St Joseph, Frizington and St Mary, Cleator**

*To continue with Sunday/vigil Mass - both parishes to link from the First Sunday of Advent 2009 in readiness for a canonical merger early in the next decade – Sunday/Vigil Mass will continue at the **St Joseph, Frizington** for as long as the congregation there makes this arrangement sustainable.*

*Sunday/vigil Mass will cease at the chapel of **St Bega, Cleator Moor** upon the linking of **St Mary, Cleator** and **St Joseph, Frizington**.*

*Collaboration between these parishes must increase.*

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**62. The Parishes of St Mary, Egremont and St Joseph's Seascale (already linked)**

*To continue with Sunday/vigil Mass in both churches. No change is envisaged here before 2015 when it might be necessary to review the situation.*

*Possible further collaboration between these parishes should be explored.*

## *Explanations:*

### **A LINKED PARISH:**

Linked parishes happen when two or more parishes share a priest. Linked parishes do as many things as possible cooperatively especially given the priest is striving to serve two separate parishes.

Characteristics of linked parishes include:

- The parishes involved retain an independent identity and canonical entity.
- The parishes are separate communities of faith.
- The parishes may have a common parish pastoral council and some common committees.
- According to Canon Law, linked parishes must have separate finance committees.
- Linked parishes do many things cooperatively.
- Joint committee meetings where collaborative planning happens are hallmarks of well functioning linked parishes.

The key to successful partnership parishes seems to be an attitude of cooperation which results in finding opportunities for sharing resources to enhance the quality of mission and ministry in each parish.

### **A MERGED PARISH:**

Merged parishes create a new parish and larger configuration which is able to provide many more activities and opportunities for Mission than the original parishes could have managed on their own.

The merger process allows parishes to:

- Join forces to form a larger, more vibrant and inviting worshipping community,
- Reduce overheads, and use resources more effectively.

When done sensitively and with good leadership cooperatively the merging of parishes will ordinarily create a more sustainable parish situation.

A merged parish happens when:

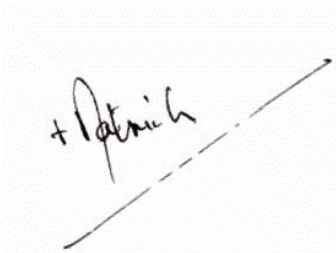
- Two or more parishes come together to form one new parish. Merged parishes are new canonical entities and the new parish obtains the assets as well as the liabilities of the parishes which formed it.
- A new name is given to the parish (rather than changing the name of the church building's dedication) which may be a brand new name or a combination of the former parish names.

The newly merged parish may have one or more churches (at least for a period).

**Examples of ways linked and merged parishes can collaborate include:**

- A common catechetical programme.
- A shared youth ministry programme or adult formation programme.
- Support for a common Catholic School.
- A joint *RCIA* programme.
- A shared parish outreach programme.
- Increased participation in the Sacred Liturgy

**Decisions - Signature:**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read '+ Patrick', written over a dashed diagonal line.

**Bishop of Lancaster**

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Robert P. Billing', written over a dashed diagonal line.

***14 – 2- 2009, Lancaster***

***Fr Robert Billing, Secretary***