

**TOWARDS
A VISION
FOR
THE DIOCESE**



**SUMMARY OF DEANERY
CLERGY CONVERSATIONS**

CLERGY RESPONSES

Towards a Vision

LENT 2007

Diocesan clergy met in their deanery groups to prepare to implement the *Towards a Vision* programme and to explore the questions posed as the ordained ministry of the Church. The time spent together in prayer and reflection gave an opportunity for clergy in the Deanery and priests often in parishes on their own, to listen to each other and explore the hopes, fears and challenges existent in their particular ministry and parishes today.

The following pages contain the distillation of their thoughts, the range of hopes and concerns expressed in their meetings and are presented here to support the ongoing work on framing a vision for the future of this diocese.

Aspects of parish, deanery and diocesan life that were frequently mentioned are printed in **bold type**.

There is some repetition. This is inevitable as the responses were noted at each stage of the process. Discussions evolved through *Growing in Communion* and *Reaching Out in Mission* through to focusing on *Facing the Future*. This summary report faithfully presents the notes on the clergy meetings as they happened.

Diocesan clergy were also involved in parish discussions and participated in the deanery presentations to our Area Bishops.

GROWING IN COMMUNION

The statements on the following pages are a summary of the clergy responses to these questions:

- 1 What are the most important elements in developing the life of the parish? Which have been most effective - what is it that makes you feel that you belong to your parish/deanery/ diocese? Why?
- 2 What are the key challenges we encounter in developing communion and unity in the parish/ deanery/diocese? How can we best respond to these challenges?
- 3 From the vision of the Church as communion, what priorities emerge for our parish/ deanery/diocese? What implications do they have for the way we work with each other?
- 4 What resources, ministries and activities can we identify to bring these priorities into reality? (e.g. Liturgy? Catechesis? Ecclesial Movements? Movements that promote marriage and family life? Shared commitment to justice, peace and pro-life movements? Ethnic Associations/Chaplaincies?)

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| KOINONIA | <p>Koinonia is about knowing, loving and serving – God and each other</p> <p>Communion is community in action</p> <p>All we do is for the glory of God</p> <p>A community needs to be both active and contemplative</p> <p>Koinonia is both vision and process</p> <p>Church is a sacrament and not an end in itself</p> <p>Church is a sign and instrument of the kingdom ‘...only the kingdom is absolute...’ Paul VI</p> <p>Koinonia, Mission and Evangelisation are intimately connected</p> <p>Sacraments involve everyone and are central to our lives as Catholics</p> <p>Koinonia difficult when so many ‘squeeze’ Mass into their weekend</p> <p>Need to recognise that Sunday has changed for many – often a day of work or shopping with the family</p> |
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| | <p>Commitment to weekly Mass as an obligation has changed for many too</p> <p>Acts 2:42 is fundamental to our understanding of Communion</p> <p>As we receive Holy Communion, we need to celebrate communion with Christ and each other</p> <p>Must acknowledge negative factors as well as positive</p> <p>Communion is sharing the sacred</p> <p>Community is sharing social activities and events</p> <p>For Koinonia to exist we need to develop a sense of ownership / belonging – a sense of community</p> <p>We live in a society where we are conditioned towards individualism</p> |
| <p>LITURGY</p> | <p>The Mass is at the centre of our lives in community</p> <p>Fostering a love and passion for the Eucharist is central for formation and community</p> <p>Need more formation on what the Mass is – reconnect with rich symbolism</p> <p>Mass is about praise and sacrifice</p> <p>We have too many Masses</p> <p>Need to understand what we mean by ‘good’ liturgy</p> <p>How do we ensure involvement / participation?</p> <p>Preaching must connect to real life</p> <p>Need to avoid long, boring, mind-numbing sermons</p> <p>Singing is a much neglected ministry</p> <p>Children’s Liturgy of the Word very important</p> <p>Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist take Holy Communion to the sick and housebound – they are sent with love from the gathered assembly</p> |

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| | <p>Priests are often so busy that celebrating the Eucharist can seem as just one duty among many – but priests also need the Eucharist. We should prepare carefully for the celebration of the sacraments as the way to revive and enliven the Church.</p> <p>Need to reach young people through Christian music</p> |
| <p>PRAYER</p> | <p>Through everything we need an emphasis on prayer</p> <p>Prayer is at the heart of all community</p> <p>Need to encourage spiritual dimension to decision making – not just about maintenance</p> <p>Concern about the prayer life of individuals and community</p> <p>Parishes should be schools of prayer</p> <p>Rosary and Benediction still have their place</p> <p>Need to consider renewal of sacrament of Penance</p> <p>House groups support prayer life</p> |
| <p>WELCOME</p> | <p>The whole area of Welcome needs developing</p> <p>Need to be inclusive</p> <p>Clergy need to feel welcomed by parishioners too – a smile instead of a frown would be welcomed sometimes</p> <p>Baptism and other sacraments are opportunities to welcome people back</p> <p>Social events help to get to know one another and give sense of community</p> <p>We can come across as unwelcoming to those who are divorced / remarried / living together – many of whom are parents in long standing relationships</p> |

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| <p>CHURCH</p> | <p>Church has moved from a 'Fortress' mentality to celebrating diversity, being inclusive and part of the local community - it is the Church in the world</p> <p>Different ecclesiologies can be obstructive</p> <p>Need to be a listening and a hearing Church</p> <p>Need to encourage devotion to Mary as a very important model for the Church</p> <p>There is a gap between the official Church and real life</p> |
| <p>CLERGY</p> | <p>Clergy need to feel confident about the future</p> <p>A call for clergy to look at themselves – in danger of becoming demoralised, isolated and defensive – need to affirm and support one another</p> <p>Without a priest there is no parish</p> <p>Clarify and strengthen the role of the deacon</p> <p>Deacons could have a clear role in reaching those on the margins</p> <p>Some clergy miss opportunities to meet together – meeting together is important for a shared sense of ministry</p> <p>Leadership style of a parish priest can get in the way of community development especially at handovers</p> <p>We need to preach the Gospel more positively</p> <p>Administration gets in the way – it over burdens us</p> <p>Hand admin. over to qualified lay people –finance for this?</p> <p>We're often too busy with the wrong things</p> <p>Clergy are very busy and must be allowed to set priorities</p> |

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| <p>LAITY</p> | <p>Need to discern and engage gifts of all</p> <p>Our parishes are resourced with committed, gifted laity we need to enable them to use their gifts</p> <p>Over the years there has been a change of culture that says that being a Catholic is more than attending Mass and ‘helping’ Father</p> <p>We need to encourage a culture of people working <i>with</i> us not <i>for</i> us.</p> <p>Need to develop a model of collaborative leadership</p> <p>The priest is the leader of the parish community – need to define this leadership</p> <p>We need to formally recognise roles and responsibilities</p> <p>Celebrate the work that is done by the quiet workers too</p> <p>A shared vision for the community is needed</p> <p>We need to encourage participation and enable a sense of vocation in the laity</p> <p>Discernment needed in selecting lay leaders</p> <p>Need training for lay leadership e.g. youth ministry</p> <p>Need to consider paid posts</p> <p>Our parishes have core of generous and committed people – only the same people ‘help’ – a small percentage – need to avoid overloading the willing</p> <p>We must recognise that the people are the Church not clerics</p> <p>Groups in the parish could work more effectively together</p> <p>Clergy must recognise that lay apostolate is not to be found primarily in the parish – it is also in the family, the work place and society at large – we must support them in this</p> |
| <p>SCHOOLS</p> | <p>Stronger parish / school links needed</p> <p>Children and schools are opportunities for community development</p> <p>Children should be treated as individuals</p> |

CHALLENGES

The challenge of individualism, secularism, consumerism, relativism and the pursuit of happiness

Apathy – ‘we’re too busy’

Lack of loyalty to a community

Separate communities around each ‘Mass Time’

People seem to be working all the hours God gave them and have precious little time for their own family let alone parish

We need good quality catechesis for all

How to maintain Catholicity with diversity

Are we losing a sense of the sacred?

Allowing and empowering the laity

Lack of knowledge / formation

Lack of confidence on part of laity

Remembering to consider the less vocal

Isolation of rural parishes

Transport to Mass and other parish / deanery activities

Different models of church and views on liturgy can confuse

The challenge is to offer hope in difficult times

Finding finances for changes

Narrow minded, touchy people who obstruct others

Are people using Child Protection procedures as an excuse not to participate / lead / organise?

How to support the spiritual nourishment in our homes and families

Humane Vitae – an inability to talk about sex, broken and second marriages and sex outside the married state.

Breakdown of marriages

Attitude of soap operas

Immaturity of faith

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| | <p>Mixed messages – women are welcome... up to a point</p> <p>Engaging with young people</p> <p>Failure to develop collaborative ministry effectively</p> <p>Ecumenism – all should be involved</p> |
| FORMATION | <p>Good quality formation needed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What community is - What the Church is for - Opportunities to grow in faith – CaFE etc - For elderly, young, sick, refugees, special needs - Based on the new Catechism of the Catholic Church <p>Christian Education Centre need to be more available at deanery level</p> <p>Small group network in parishes can aid formation</p> <p>Finance will be needed if deanery level catechetical leaders/ co-ordinators are appointed</p> <p>Courses could be run across several parishes / deanery</p> |
| DIOCESE | <p>Ad Clerum communication vital for all clergy</p> <p>People often don't know what diocese they are in</p> <p>Shape and size of the diocese is a challenge – as is urban / rural dimension</p> <p>Sense of diocese maintained through diocesan Masses and celebrations – Wedding Anniversaries, Rite of Election, Chrism Mass etc</p> <p>Could we have group Confirmations at the cathedral?</p> <p>Area bishops can get to know parishes and clergy but do they distance us from head of diocese?</p> <p>Deacons are not as included as well as priests</p> <p>Diocesan Agencies need to reviewed in the light of an emphasis on Koinonia</p> <p>Diocesan Agencies are too small for the size of the diocese</p> |

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| <p>DEANERY</p> | <p>People don't feel that they belong to a deanery</p> <p>Need to develop a deanery identity</p> <p>The deanery is good for clergy to get to know each other and work together – mutual support is very important</p> <p>The Deanery Pastoral Council is attended by sincere people but something more is needed for deanery parishes to collaborate and co-operate more effectively.</p> <p>A deanery newsletter, Deanery Masses would aid sense of community</p> <p>Clergy already overworked so often deanery initiatives falter</p> <p>What's the deanery for and why support it?</p> <p>What do bishops expect from deanery?</p> <p>Need a shared concern for the deanery to come together</p> <p>A deanery Confirmation ceremony?</p> <p>Need to overcome compartmentalisation in parish and deanery</p> |
| <p>PARISH</p> | <p>Parishes are structures that enable</p> <p>Parish Pastoral Councils / Teams are effective when members all work together</p> <p>Parish should encourage lay groups</p> <p>Parish provides opportunities to serve needy, sick, elderly, young etc</p> |
| <p>RESOURCES</p> | <p>We are blessed with many resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priests - People - PPC / Teams - School Heads and teachers - Chaplaincies - Catechists - Religious - Retired priests |

Additional notes

What can we learn from Evangelical Churches and models of church abroad?

Need to explain our culture of church to those from overseas so that they could be more comfortable e.g. that we do talk in church before and after Mass

Listening 2004 identified that the Church was not seen as listening – a lot of time and effort went into that process – to what effect?

Are we still excluding people?

REACHING OUT IN MISSION

The statements on the following pages are a summary of the clergy responses to these questions:

1. How can we reach out in mission to believers and non-believers? (e.g. Through the workplace, school/college, family, local community, parish). What do we need to empower us to be more effective and confident in that work of evangelisation? What particular experiences have helped you? (e.g. CaFE, RCIA, Youth 2000, Parish Missions)
2. Living out communion calls us to be inclusive to all peoples. How do we ensure inclusion of multi-ethnic/cultural, single/married, young/old and people with disabilities within our parishes? How do we celebrate and value the richness each group brings?
3. How do we encourage and seek opportunities for dialogue with our neighbours of other faiths?
4. In what ways do we reach out and show solidarity with those who are in the greatest need in our local area? In what projects or causes are we involved, either as individuals or groups, which promote, for example, justice and peace, the sanctity of life, care of the environment, work with refugees, the homeless?
5. Are there any people in our communities whom we support in a specific apostolate? (e.g. Youth Worker, Pastoral Assistant, Hospital Visitor, Counsellor, Lay Chaplain) What particular initiatives have meant good news for your parish or deanery?

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| <p>PRAYER AND SPIRITUALITY</p> | <p>Need to be rooted in the Holy Spirit</p> <p>Where and how do we offer enriching prayer experiences?</p> <p>Need to build prayerful and prayer-filled communities</p> <p>Need to reconnect with principles of the early church – see Acts</p> <p>Profound interior renewal is needed</p> <p>Do we provide opportunities for people to access the love of God in our parishes?</p> <p>Dismissal at Mass is a call to action</p> <p>Need to develop the visible holiness of the Church</p> <p>Parish missions and retreats welcome all</p> |
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| | <p>Sacramental celebrations, funerals and major feasts offer real opportunities for meeting people on the edges and beyond</p> <p>Families are central to mission and evangelisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support parents as first educators - Encourage simple prayer practices at home - Encourage a Sacred Space at home <p>Church needs to be more pro-family</p> <p>Offer more support where one spouse is not Catholic</p> <p>Need to aim at self-development under the guidance of the Holy Spirit which in turn will lead to recognising the Holy Spirit in the life of others. This recognition will prevent the danger of not recognising or using the charisms of the Holy Spirit</p> |
| <p>EVANGELISATION</p> | <p>Evangelisation is ‘...the fundamental task of the Church...’ <i>Ad Gentes</i></p> <p>Generally our Church is not an evangelising presence in this country</p> <p>Church structures not oriented towards evangelisation but to maintaining what we have</p> <p>We witness by example</p> <p>Laity witness at work and in society at large</p> <p>Should not only encourage laity to take on more ‘clerical roles’ and ‘church work’ but also live their vocation in the world</p> <p>How eager are people to evangelise?</p> <p>All in community can be involved in mission</p> <p>Need to express the love and presence of God</p> <p>Message = The commandments are life giving</p> <p>Evangelisation is an ongoing task for all generations</p> <p>Evangelisation is sense of joy in Spirit filled New Testament Church</p> |

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| | <p>St Francis – ‘...preach the gospel at all times and where necessary use words...’</p> <p>St Teresa – ‘... Christ has no body now but yours...’</p> <p>We need to respond rapidly to requests for baptism and entering the Church</p> <p>We need to show our humanity and friendship – get out of the office!</p> <p>We are instruments for evangelisation – leaven in the dough</p> |
| <p>OTHER DENOMINATIONS & FAITHS</p> | <p>Reaching out and offering friendship very important</p> <p>Many priests and laity interested in promoting greater understanding and are active in groups such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 Faiths Forum - Council for Christians and Jews - Wimbledon Inter-Faith <p>Priests and parishioners can be active on local councils in their events, groups and committees</p> <p>There is little awareness of any dialogue in some areas</p> <p>We could pray together and visit places of worship</p> <p>Opportunities not activated in some parishes</p> <p>We could share facilities</p> <p>Reach out in times of stress or trial to other faiths e.g. removing graffiti on Moses Montefiore Synagogue</p> <p>Silent prayer could be a way of attendees praying together</p> <p>Priests could encourage participation</p> <p>Attend fraternal minister meetings</p> <p>Do what we can together</p> <p>Can be easier to get together with those of no faith – sometimes other faiths often just want to tell us how wrong we are</p> <p>We can stand together with other denominations and faiths against secularism and for the family and clear moral and social teaching</p> |

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| <p>SOCIETY</p> | <p>There can be a perception of implicit 'badness' in institutional religion</p> <p>Secularisation is not neutral – it is anti-Christian</p> <p>Need to be wary of being 'lumped' into the 'something spiritual' group and losing our identity as Catholics</p> <p>Walks of Witness are often routed down back streets</p> <p>Secular marketing - sell first themselves, then the product, then the company – we often seem to do this in reverse</p> |
| <p>WELCOME</p> | <p>Inclusion is vital for community and mission</p> <p>Develop a sense of belonging</p> <p>Celebrate diversity and be inclusive</p> <p>Celebrate the multi-cultural diversity of parish life</p> <p>Use inclusive language in Mass</p> <p>Reach out to immigrants</p> <p>Message = all are valued and included</p> <p>Social activities very important</p> <p>Discourage cliques</p> <p>Engagement and integration of so many is a challenge</p> <p>Offer parish facilities to wider community</p> <p>If we cater for everybody are we in danger of catering for nobody?</p> <p>Single people often left out</p> <p>Everyone is welcome but they must respect the values of communion in liturgy and teaching</p> |

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| <p>SCHOOLS</p> | <p>Have a really important role in outreach to others</p> <p>Many non-RC parents attracted and involved</p> <p>Need to encourage recognition that schools are centres of involvement in and with the community</p> <p>They are centres for faith formation in partnership with home and parish</p> <p>Some concern that not always sure of the content of the faith formation taught in our schools</p> <p>Review content of faith taught in schools and re-establish connection between content of faith and object of faith</p> <p>New Catechism should be the basis so that there is a clear vision of Christ and his Church proclaimed</p> <p>How successful are our Catholic schools in encouraging attendance at Mass and involvement in their parish?</p> <p>Need a priestly, pastoral presence in schools</p> <p>Schools can have a very wide catchment area which can make contact and sense of local community with young people difficult</p> <p>Have a wealth of experience of including other cultures, traditions etc</p> |
| <p>YOUNG PEOPLE</p> | <p>There is some excellent work by priests and catechists in sacramental programmes</p> <p>Some parishes have lively youth groups</p> <p>A parish has employed a youth worker</p> <p>Recreational activities in parish are not up to the standard required or expected</p> <p>Parish youth work presents challenges</p> <p>We need our own Youth Ministry as a Church</p> <p>One deanery looking forward to SCYS working with them soon</p> <p>Could a deanery support a paid youth worker?</p> |

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| <p>FORMATION</p> | <p>Formation needed to give people confidence in their gifts</p> <p>Small groups can help to give confidence</p> <p>Formation can help move people from a reluctance to a readiness to share faith</p> <p>Needs to be formation for mission and evangelisation as well as catechesis</p> <p>Church teaching on exclusion from Communion – too many think that they are excluded</p> <p>Need to be more formation on justice and peace issues</p> |
| <p>THOSE IN NEED</p> | <p>Social teaching of the Church is not an add on extra</p> <p>Charity work done by the Church has gradually been taken over by the state and requires a high professional standard – we could encourage laity to be involved in voluntary sector organisations</p> <p>A lot is happening but not universally - don't need to reinvent just breathe life into existing structures</p> <p>Catholic parishes are active in their local communities through activities such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SVP - FISH - Offering financial support - Vineyard Lunch - Inter-faith Youth Project - Churches Together - Prison visitations - Legion of Mary - Manna Centre - Refugee Centres - Pilsdon Community <p>Catholic parishes are involved nationally and internationally through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CAFOD - SPUC - Progressio - J & P groups - Pax Christi - CIIR - Fairtrade <p>There is still some ignorance on sanctity of life issues</p> <p>As Mother Theresa said – we are not social workers – our mission is to bring Gospel to others through our actions</p> |

Additional notes

It is important for priests to be among the people and share their lives not simply provide a service. We need to find ways to facilitate interaction – it is a challenge to minister to people who are so busy

Priests are in need of greater confidence and this can be gained through closer intimacy with Christ. Unless we are men of communion we will not be able to provide a place of true communion for all.

Need to support our chaplaincies in hospitals, prisons, colleges and universities

We need to be stewards of creation and more involved in environmental activities

We need to focus on mission to renew identity of the Church

Our mission is to transform the world with Gospel values

Need to celebrate what is distinctive and what is unifying e.g. praying the Lord's prayer in different languages at Pentecost

Q2 above excluded but should have included divorced, women and homosexuals

Need to highlight the ministry of women

Parishes can encourage new movements but be careful they don't become elite institutions

Admin gets in the way of mission

Needs to be spiritual dimension to stewardship

How will we put all this into practice – priests are not really overworked but overwhelmed

Clarity needed on correct theological understanding of the ministerial priesthood and common priesthood of all Christians

Lots of great ideas but what will ultimately come out of this process?

FACING THE FUTURE

The statements on the following pages are a summary of the clergy responses to these questions:

1. What are the resources (strengths and gifts) in our parish?
2. How would we respond to a situation in which our parish, or a neighbouring parish, had no resident priest? What forms of collaboration and coordination could develop?
3. Are there any special areas of pastoral provision in this deanery that need to be taken into account for the future? (e.g. Hospitals? Schools? Prisons? Future housing developments?)
4. Are there any particular changes in pastoral provision that we can recommend for our deanery?

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| <p>HOPES</p> | <p>Not a time of crisis but of new growth, a new spring time – a wonderful opportunity to implement Vatican II</p> <p>Considerable hope that parishes will become vibrant and holy schools of prayer through this <i>Towards a Vision</i> process</p> <p>Early church didn't know what was going to happen to them – one thing clear they were firmly rooted in prayer and fellowship</p> <p>Young families are always a sign of hope</p> <p>Clear signs, through the power of the Holy Spirit, of growth in faith and in communion with Christ and his Church – the clear vision, teaching and universal nature of the Catholic Church is reaching many</p> <p>Hope that this process will empower laity</p> <p>Hope that there will be goodwill throughout this process</p> <p>Hope that more will step forward for ministry</p> <p>Hope that Lay leadership will evolve from this process – but clergy must handover to people - let go!</p> |
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| <p>FEARS</p> | <p>Exhaustion – too many demands already</p> <p>Too much upheaval - many clergy are at a time in their life when they want to slow down</p> <p>That any changes will be piecemeal – reactive</p> <p>Unrealistic expectations of parish communities</p> <p>About how the future vision will unfold – what will happen to all the responses?</p> <p>A fear that nothing will happen</p> <p>Only fearful of the future because we're living in the past – highlighted by Vatican II documents being ignored</p> <p>Fewer hospital and university chaplains</p> <p>Trained lay people are invaluable but will they get quality access to the sick?</p> |
| <p>SPIRITUALITY</p> | <p>Deanery retreats would encourage people to work and pray together</p> <p>Could we use SCYS facilities for scripture study too?</p> <p>Baptism preparation needs integration into the community</p> <p>Reconciliation is still an isolated sacrament and needs much catechesis</p> <p>Could we establish a centre for all our students? Perhaps a university church?</p> <p>New movements such as Youth 2000 and Neo-Catechumenate add to choice for spiritual development</p> <p>Parishes need to be places where people are spiritually fed so the liturgy and music need to be right</p> |
| <p>PRINCIPLES</p> | <p>Subsidiarity</p> <p>Collaboration</p> <p>Co-operation</p> <p>Co-ordination</p> <p>Respect for Canon Law</p> |

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| <p>MASSES</p> | <p>Number of Masses in deanery needs to be reviewed especially for Sundays</p> <p>A system for deanery priests celebrating Mass in different deanery churches would promote a wider sense of community for both priest and people</p> <p>Need a systematic look at the size of church buildings</p> <p>We have too many churches – closures will be necessary</p> <p>Suggestions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No priest to celebrate 2 vigil Masses as his normal commitment - No priest to celebrate 3 Sunday Masses as his normal commitment - During Holy Week – one priest one service per day - Look again at Chrism Mass and hold earlier in the week <p>Any change of local Mass times should be sanctioned from on high</p> |
| <p>CLERGY</p> | <p>Role of clergy with emphasis on Eucharist and preaching needs clarification and development in an emerging new clergy / laity relationship</p> <p>Re appointment of priests to parishes – there should be some form of consultation developed for parishes to ensure continuity of life and mission – or at very least some form of a more structured ‘handover’</p> <p>During interregnums – deanery priests to ‘cover’ until proper conversations have been had and avoid too hasty an appointment</p> <p>Assistant priests could be appointed to a deanery with specific tasks assigned</p> <p>Clergy will have to learn to delegate – trust parishioners to do what they have authorised them to do – this is a different change of emphasis for some parish priests</p> <p>Proper attention needs to be given to our accommodation and not rush to compulsory sharing of houses</p> <p>Need greater support and use of our deacons</p> <p>Chaplaincies do a wonderful job and need to be maintained – lay ministry could be expanded here</p> |

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| | <p>Ethnic Chaplaincies could be further integrated into parish life</p> <p>Need to define the roles of priest / deacon / laity</p> <p>It should be remembered that priests serve the parish and not vice versa</p> <p>Priests need to live in and as part of community</p> |
| <p>LAITY</p> | <p>Many gifts and sense of commitment are untapped resource for parishes</p> <p>Increasing awareness of the importance of role of laity</p> <p>Early retired people are a great resource</p> <p>Effective PPC essential to manage change and developments</p> <p>Need to give lay leaders responsibility</p> <p>Greater use of Lay Administrators and Lay Assistants needs to be explored</p> <p>Approaching laity often difficult as they seem stressed and overstretched already</p> <p>There is a reticence to commit</p> <p>Only a certain number are willing</p> <p>Multiplicity of appeals especially financial can put a burden on parishes and people</p> |

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| <p>FORMATION</p> | <p>Formation a high priority and need to be of a high quality</p> <p>Needs to be a well funded diocesan strategy</p> <p>Training needed for priests to manage ‘all this’</p> <p>Need well trained catechists for all levels to ensure Catholic teaching taught correctly</p> <p>CEC courses not just at Tooting Bec but in parish clusters too</p> <p>Deanery parishes to come together for programmes</p> <p>Larger parishes often fund formation – smaller ones can’t afford to</p> <p>Selection of appropriate people for formation courses essential</p> |
| <p>SCHOOLS</p> | <p>Time to have a conversation about the contribution of our schools?</p> <p>Look at pastoral provision offered by schools</p> <p>Need to maintain pastoral provision in our schools, colleges and universities – need a focus on chaplaincies</p> <p>Schools are a wonderful resource for faith formation</p> <p>Schools have facilities to share</p> <p>Need to be careful that popular schools do not become a law unto themselves</p> |
| <p>COLLABORATION WHERE NO RESIDENT PRIEST</p> | <p>Need to reduce, re-organise, rationalise weekday and Sunday Masses</p> <p>Deanery zones could help here</p> <p>Do we need to reshape / resize our deaneries?</p> <p>Masses need to be at least 1½ hours apart to allow for cover</p> <p>When reorganise make provision for sickness and holidays – have some slack in the system</p> |

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| | <p>There is always such an enormous fuss when a Mass time is changed</p> <p>Laity need to be consulted, listened to, encouraged, trained and empowered</p> <p>Every attempt should be made to ask the community what it wants to do</p> <p>Mass community needs to be prepared for absence of a resident priest</p> <p>Mass communities must not be seen as an add on but an integral part of community</p> <p>Deanery based paid catechetical team / co-ordinator</p> <p>Deanery RCIA Centres</p> <p>It needs to be recognised that it is 'all the Baptised' who are the greatest resource, not just the clergy</p> <p>Collaboration is the only way forward</p> <p>Sacramental programmes can be shared</p> <p>Foster a network of sharing</p> <p>Older and younger parishioners need to collaborate</p> <p>If a community is without a priest or a Mass what's left?</p> <p>Fewer Masses will lead to fuller churches</p> <p>Return to 'daughter' 'Mother' church model</p> <p>PPC needs to be stronger</p> <p>Need to share delegation and responsibility</p> <p>Could there be a co-ordinating pastor to work with several clergy?</p> <p>Clustering does not always work – look at experiences in other countries</p> |
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| <p>ADMINISTRATION AND MAINTENANCE</p> | <p>Release priests to be priests</p> <p>What costs to parish to do achieve the above?</p> <p>Priests feel overburdened by admin</p> <p>Fewer priests seems to mean more admin</p> <p>Deanery level of administration needs investigating</p> <p>Possible need for paid workers at deanery level</p> <p>Financial implications are huge – laity require training, formation and fair remuneration</p> <p>Need to ‘unearth’ local experts including trades</p> <p>Diocese to have a facilitator to oversee buildings</p> <p>Could empty Mass centres become centres for deacons or religious to work from?</p> |
| <p>VOCATIONS</p> | <p>Need to actively promote vocations to the priesthood</p> <p>Priesthood need to be presented in a positive way</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is a calling to follow Christ and - It is a professional way of life <p>Priesthood is normal, ordinary and full of beauty and credibility</p> <p>What is each parish doing to promote vocations?</p> <p>Schools and university chaplains could promote vocations more</p> <p>Parents need to encourage vocations too</p> <p>Work of the Vocations Team in the diocese is to be commended and should be supported more</p> <p>Need to invite priests from overseas – some Polish priests have been invited but declined invitation</p> <p>Vocations from overseas often a very positive experience for parishes</p> <p>Some seminaries overseas cannot take all they wish to train – could some train here in exchange for a period of time in our parishes?</p> |

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| | <p>Give post-confirmation young people greater opportunities for service and faith experience e.g. World Youth Day that could lead to vocation</p> <p>Encourage more men to come forward to the diaconate</p> <p>Must recognise that you no longer need to be a priest or religious to be seriously involved as a Christian</p> |
| <p>FINANCE</p> | <p>Money needs to be set aside at the outset for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Training and formation of catechists - Spiritual development of all <p>Finance difficulties can paralyse or enliven a parish</p> <p>Guidelines on appropriate contributions could be published by diocese</p> <p>Finances can be difficult when small parish congregations dwindle, people go to Mass of convenience or elsewhere when Mass times are changed this can lead to a threat of closure</p> |
| <p>Additional notes</p> | <p>Priests and parishes need to 'loosen up' and support each other pastorally and personally</p> <p>Need to distinguish between people as Church and buildings</p> <p>Need to understand that pain as well as joy is experienced when changes are made</p> <p>We need to ask the fundamental question – What is a parish for? Many of us have inherited a model from the days when Catholics lived in ghettos and relied on their church and school.</p> <p>A radical approach is needed to bring Church in touch with modern reality</p> <p>There are 7000 Mass attendees in our deanery – there are challenges and difficult decisions but it must be done</p> <p>Diocese could look at effective models and good practice in the American Church</p> |

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| | <p>Need an informed discussion about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Married priests- Role of women- Deaconesses <p>Consideration needs to be given regarding parishes that are run by religious communities</p> <p>Impact of Housing Policy on parish planning is an ingredient too – e.g. the Aylesbury and Heygate Estates are being converted to 70% one bedroom dwellings</p> <p>‘Aspiring parents’ move out of areas to get children into schools of choice</p> <p>We are over supplied with church buildings</p> <p>Some churches will close - but we must be careful that we don’t encourage participation to build up communities and then break them up</p> <p>Bishop in Kent is necessary</p> <p>Needs to be special provision made for multi-cultural issues and multi-lingual issues</p> |
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