

LETTER FROM THE FAREHAM DEANERY CLERGY ON THE DIOCESAN PASTORAL PLAN

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Introduction:

The Diocesan Pastoral Plan launched in September of this year is organised around two main projects: maintaining the centrality of the Sunday Eucharist and the development of larger Pastoral Areas.

Centrality of the Sunday Eucharist:

As regards the provision of the Eucharist we do not envisage any major changes in Sunday Mass provision in the immediate future providing clergy numbers remain as they are. Work is progressing at Diocesan and deanery level to provide catechesis on the centrality of the Sunday Eucharist and formation on the new *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

Development of Larger Pastoral Areas:

On the subject of the larger Pastoral Areas, discussions and consultations have taken place within the deanery and at diocesan level. A consensus position has been reached to regard the existing Fareham deanery (Fareham, Portchester, Gosport, Bridgemary, Lee-on-the-Solent, Stubbington and Park Gate) as the new Pastoral Area. Therefore in the process of implementing the Diocesan Pastoral Plan we will be making a working assumption that this will be case unless strong reasons to the contrary emerge. We also reached consensus on a proposed name for our new larger Pastoral Area which will be known as *The Solent Pastoral Area*. Such a name is geographically relevant and avoids giving precedence to any one existing parish or local government authority.

How will this affect us all?

It may seem from all the above that nothing much will change. However, this is not the case and we must avoid an attitude of complacency. We cannot operate as individual, perhaps isolated parishes. All of us, whether priests, or deacons, lay ministers or leaders and as a body of people who serve God, need to develop our skills, flexibility and cooperation so as the better to work together for the Kingdom. We cannot predict the future and we cannot give false assurances. Immediate changes are not envisaged but changes may need to happen in the future. All of us need to draw on the resources offered to us through faith. We depend on God alone and God's love and presence with us enables us to live with the uncertainties of this world. The more our trust in God grows the more we can face the future and whatever it brings with hope and serenity.

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The first steps towards implementing the Diocesan Pastoral Plan:

First of all it is good to remind ourselves that for many years now our deanery parishes have been working together at many levels and on many shared projects. Cooperation has taken place on youth & altar server events, school activities, preparation for Confirmation, adult formation and the training and support of readers and ministers of Holy Communion. Currently the GIFT series of talks on the Bible is proving very popular across the deanery and planning is in hand for a Deanery Youth Day. The Diocesan Pastoral Plan celebrates, affirms and builds upon all these initiatives and the commitment and generosity of all involved is very much appreciated by clergy and people alike.

So, how do we begin to build on this and take it further in line with the Diocesan Pastoral Plan? Recently meetings took place of Deanery clergy and of the Deanery Pastoral Council together with the parish delegates to the Assembly at Reading last July. The following first steps were agreed:

- 1) Firstly, we recognise our need to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and keep all things subject to God through prayer. Therefore a monthly prayer day will take place on the first Friday of every month beginning at Park Gate on 6th January 2006 (Epiphany). If this is well supported it will, in due course, be held in the other parishes around the Pastoral Area.
- 2) Secondly, our priests and deacons need to get to know, and be known in, the different communities across the Pastoral Area. In the New Year arrangements will be made for the clergy to minister on Sundays in the various churches of the Pastoral Area at more regular intervals while maintaining their particular roots in the community they primarily serve.
- 3) Thirdly, there is a need to encourage relationships, cooperation and networking between the various groups and ministries that exist in our parishes. We will need to discover how best these ministries and groups can serve people in the context of the larger Pastoral Area. To facilitate this co-ordinators and representatives of these groups and ministries will be invited to a one day event in the New Year.

Thank you for listening to (or reading) these words. With God's help and our cooperation the Church can move forward and meet the challenges and opportunities that are arising.

Yours in Christ

the Priests and Deacons of the
Fareham deanery.

(To be read or made available on 2nd Sunday of Advent 2005)