



Local Pastoral Areas — final details announced

Bishop Brian has settled the general arrangements for clustering parishes across the Diocese into 26 “Local Pastoral Areas” (LPAs). Within each LPA the individual parishes will remain, but will increasingly work in cooperation with the other parishes, under the guidance of a Local Pastoral Area Team.

The new arrangements are to be up and running in the Autumn, with a Diocesan-wide event on Saturday 20th October as the formal launch. This will be at St Nicholas Catholic High School in Hartford, for all the new Pastoral Area Teams from across the Diocese.

For the parishes of Chester and district the main implications are clear:

- ◆ As anticipated, the parishes in the Chester Lo-

cal Pastoral area are St Clare’s, St Columba’s, St Cuthbert’s (Mouldsworth), St Francis, St Theresa’s, St Thomas Becket’s (Tarporley), and St Werburgh’s.

- ◆ The existing Chester Pastoral Council will be replaced by a new Chester Pastoral Area Team. Each parish community will be represented on the Team by one priest and one elected lay person, and the Team will also include a deacon, a catechist, and a teacher from within the LPA.

- ◆ The Team will meet at least three times a year, and will elect from its membership one lay person and one priest to be Co-leaders of the Team.

Bishop Brian is also replacing the current pattern of 13 Deaneries with six

“Regions”. Chester will form part of the “South Mersey” Region, along with the parishes of Ellesmere Port, Frodsham, Runcorn, southern Warrington and Lymm. A priest from the area will be appointed as



Bishop Brian comments: “Far from Local Pastoral Areas endangering Parishes, their purpose is to support the viability of local communities.”

Regional Dean, to act for the Bishop in exercising general oversight of the LPAs in that area.

Bishop Brian emphasises the practical, working nature of the new Teams. He sees their job as “continually assessing the pastoral need of the Area, identifying ways in which cooperation can further the mission of the church and support the life of the parish communities.”

He adds: “It is presumed that when consensus has been achieved action on the part of all will follow.”

A tight timetable has been set for the formation of the new Teams. A sub-group from the current Chester Pastoral Council has taken on the task of working out some of the practical details so that the individual parishes are in a good position to nominate and elect their lay representative, with the new Team as a whole functioning in good time for 20th October.

“Parishes in Partnership” — your ideas aired

Monday 4th June was a rare summer evening—especially fortunate because it allowed a crowded meeting at Chester Catholic High School to spill out on to the terrace when the time came for group discussions.

The gathering was the “Parishes in Partnership” evening arranged by the Chester Pastoral Council to

give parishioners from across the district the chance to air their ideas about greater inter-parish working.

The scene was set by Fr David Roberts’ talk on the spiritual basis of lay and clerical roles in parish life. The talk was followed by group discussions on a number of topics, but including the task of identifying the

“burning issues” that the Pastoral Council (or, as we now know, the new Chester Pastoral Area Team) should be addressing as a priority.

In brief you told us that these were the priorities:

- ◆ Keeping young people in the church
- ◆ Better definition of the roles of priests and laity
- ◆ Meeting training needs

both of clergy and laity

- ◆ Better communications between parishes and with the diocese

A detailed note of the Evening was prepared and this will be passed on to the Pastoral Area Team. In the meantime it is available in your parish, and can be seen on the website:

www.chestercatholic.org.uk

Chester Catholic High School : €ΔS† APPEAL

The final preparatory phase looms as tenders for building, set to begin this year, bring to fruition the ideas first launched in Autumn 2003 by then Acting Headteacher John McCann. The Catholic



High School's "TaskForce" endeavoured to mould the government's funding allowance of £4.2M into the best way to deal with chronically cramped premises, a suddenly burgeoning 6th Form, and Science College needs for quality laboratory facilities. This fell against emerging and fast-changing backgrounds of sustainable eco-friendly (but expensive) designs, the national challenge to create a real community resource, workforce reforms to teachers' tasks and preparation time, and rising admissions. Maintaining the school's fine reputation added to the pressure.

Funding approval was gained in No-

vember 2004 under the government's "Targeted Capital Fund" (TCF) scheme. The bid was based upon remodelling the current floor plan to increase staff and teaching space, open up current drama art and music areas, build extra labs and extend 6th Form and Special Educational Needs (SEN) space.

Cleverly, some preliminary work – new toilets and some SEN facility – was done under different funding streams to maximise this chance.

TaskForce developed ideas, dared to change much of the original TCF bid, yet gained approval with acclaim – two brand new labs with modern facilities, an extended re-modelled front of house, and a separate block – to the East of the school site – for a new 6th Form, Music/Art/ Drama centre offering performance and show capability with modern computerised recording and practice rooms.

In tandem with this, Governors and Headteacher John Murray have worked to raise the necessary 10% (£500k) of the Department for Education & Science funding, and in April 2007 launched its **€ΔS† APPEAL**.

This aspect of the project is crucial to its success. Commitment to this by the whole community is needed for this opportunity to modernise the future and potential of Catholic High School, Chester.

*Peter Hussey
Chair of Governors*



As cheery as a wet weekend? Walkers from the Catholic High School, Chester still smiling after reaching the first of the Yorkshire 3 Peaks on 30th June. By completing the 3 Peaks Challenge the group raised £1,000 for the CHS €ΔS† Appeal

God's wonderful gifts — joining in the celebrations

On Trinity Sunday, 3rd June, Pope Benedict canonised four new saints at a Mass in St. Peter's Square: Maria from France, Charles from Holland, Simone from Poland and George Preca from Malta.

It was because of George Preca, and encouragement by others in my own journey of faith, that I had travelled to be there. I had no special ticket – any person can collect a canonisation mass invitation the day before from the Swiss Guards.

It was a joyous event to be part of – it seemed half of Malta had voyaged to the nerve centre of our faith. Donned with specially printed badges, scarves, flags and

the latest tribute song in their heart, they shouted their heads off in support of their beloved George. You may have read about him in the catholic press and even maybe in the Daily Mail, as his miraculous intercession had inexplicably healed a young boy from liver failure – an event that even caused a surprised and

happy stir in the medical community itself by the verification by a Hindu doctor. He too was present at the Mass celebration.

As for the soaking we received during the 2 hour canonisation Mass, Pope Benedict reminded us of the precious good that water is and how thankful we are!! "May God Bless you all", he proclaimed. With water from the sky at this present time – He does indeed!!

*Heather Lannin
St Columba's Parish*



*Heather with her host
Maltese family*

Chester University welcomes Catholic presence

One of the briefs given me on being sent to St Werburgh's in September 2006 was to develop links with our newly-chartered University. A group of very keen Catholic students had approached Fr Russell, our Dean, and, through him, the Bishop, to say that there was no Catholic Chaplaincy presence on campus, could anything be done?

The ten months since have been an exciting time of establishing friendships and exploring the way ahead. We've had a regular Monday Lunchtime Mass in the main University Chapel, followed by a "soup'n' sandwiches" lunch in St Thomas's Church Hall next door. Numbers haven't been great, 6-8 each week, but with a useful mix of staff and

students.

In addition, we've welcomed about 20 students each week to Sunday Mass at St Werburgh's. I asked a few of them why they didn't also come to the University Mass on the Monday. "Mass two days running?" they asked with horror on their faces; "We don't think so, Father..."

We also have good links into the University's Warrington Campus, with at least one of the students coming regularly to our Monday Masses.

The University, an Anglican foundation, its Council chaired by the Bishop of Chester, could not have been more welcoming, especially in the person of Rev Ian Arch, the full-time Anglican Chaplain, Alison Upton, his marvellous Chaplaincy Co-

ordinator, and Rev Andrew Buchanan his assistant. This year they have inducted two Associate Chaplains: myself for the Catholics and Rev Gordon Etheridge for the Free Church students. We've both been invited to preach at official University services more than once, and Bishop Peter Forster and the Vice-Chancellor have personally told us how valuable they believe our presence to be.

The priority for next year is trying to get all these Catholic students and staff together - if they want to be got together! - either in some formal CathSoc or in some less formal, more social gathering. Next year should be an exciting time, building on the excellent start made this year.

*Fr. Paul Shaw
St Werburgh's Chester*

News from the Training Group

The Pastoral Council's revamped Training Group met for the first time July 10th at St Werburgh's, writes Fr Paul Shaw. Our brief is to look for "training opportunities" for the six parishes of the new Chester LPA. Most parishes are represented on the Group, but we'd like to recruit a representative from St Francis and St Thomas Becket's - anyone out there keen to join us?

We see "training" in its widest context of "growing in the faith", a duty (a pleasure?) for each and every one of us, whether exercising formal Ministries or just wanting to find out

a little more about Christ and our Church. The aim will be to provide as rich and varied a diet of training opportunities for the months and years ahead. Two programmes have been planned for this autumn:

◆ **"Perspectives on the Eucharist"**, is a series of talks in which our local Priests will be invited to give a half-hour talk on their personal perspective on the Eucharist, with a time for discussion and questions afterwards. The talks will run for seven Thursday evenings, from October 11th to November 22nd, at a venue to be decided. Full details by early September.

◆ **Advent Holy Hours** will be arranged in each of the eight worship centres of our area - St Clare's, St Columba's, St Cuthbert's Mouldsworth, St Francis, St Theresa's, St Thomas Becket Tarporley, St Werburgh's, and Waverton Methodist Chapel. We will have an hour of prayer, readings and music, organized by the parishioners at each centre, to reflect the richness of the Advent Season. The times will be varied to give everyone an opportunity to spend an hour with the Lord in the run-up to Christmas, not just at their own worship centre but hopefully at some of the others in our newly-constituted Local Pastoral Area.

Celebrations at St Cuthbert's

On Sunday 13th May, Fr Joe Carney blessed and rededicated Our Lady's Shrine at St Cuthbert's, Mouldsworth. The shrine, built originally in 2000, is a memorial to a former Parish Priest, Father 'Mac' McDonald and has been refurbished and newly landscaped as part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations.



At Mass on Sunday 20th May, Mrs Margaret McDonnell, one of the church's founding parishioners, celebrated her 90th birthday with her daughter and parishioners. After Mass parishioners presented her with a bouquet of flowers and she shared her birthday cake, complete with candles, with all present.

June 1st was a golden day in the lives of Kathleen and Alan Cox of Alvanley. They were married 50 years ago at St. Edward's, Runcorn. Both are converts, Kathleen when she was eighteen and Alan shortly after they met.



Chester Pastoral Council

Dean: Fr Russell Cooke, St Columba's,
1 Newball Road, Plas Newton, Chester CH2 1SA,
01244 400873

Chair: John Davies, 01244 676508

Website: www.chestercatholic.org.uk

Newsletter Contact: Bernard Payne, 01244 350323

E-mail: bernard.payne@tiscali.co.uk

Chester Pastoral Council has been running since 2001, helping the Catholic parishes in Chester and district to work together and share ideas and resources as they carry out their Christian ministry. From this Autumn the Council will be replaced by the new "Local Pastoral Area Team" along the lines now settled by Bishop Brian.

The Chester Pastoral Area Team will have a smaller number of lay representatives than the CPC but will undoubtedly benefit from working under a constitution that is recognised and applied throughout the Diocese. The Chester Pastoral Council now "hands over the reins" to the emerging Chester Team confident that the inter-parish impetus built up over the last 6 years gives the new Team a flying start.

Sunday Masses across Chester Pastoral Area:

St. Anthony's, Saltney (Wrexham Diocese)		Sun 11.00am
St. Clare's, Lache, Chester	Sat 6.00pm	Sun 9.30am
St. Columba's, Plas Newton, Chester	Sat 7.15pm	Sun 9.15 & 11.00am
St. Cuthbert's, Mouldsworth		Sun 9.00am
St Francis, Chester	Sat 6.30pm	Sun 8.00, 9.30 & 11.00am
St. Theresa's, Blacon, Chester	Sat 6.30pm	Sun 10.00am & 5.30pm
St Thomas Becket, Tarporley	Sat 5.30pm	Sun 11.00am
St Werburgh, Chester (Sat Vigil Mass at Rowton Methodist Church)	Sat 6.00pm	Sun 9.00, 10.45am, 6.00pm

More information about the parishes of Chester and district can be found on our website:

www.chestercatholic.org.uk

The site includes links to individual parish websites where they exist, and also to the re-vamped website for the diocese:

www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org

Music at St. Werburgh's Church

"TUESDAYS-AT-ONE"

- ◆ 40/45 minute lunchtime recitals given each week by a visiting local organist. Retiring collection.

EVENING CONCERTS

- ◆ **Wednesday 22nd August, 7.30pm**

An Evening of Pipe Organ Fun

Presented and played by Mark Swinton, Assistant Organist, Bath Abbey.
Admission £5 including programme and light refreshments

- ◆ **Friday 21st September, 7.30pm**

The Organist Entertains

The one and only Nigel Ogden plays a programme of music for all tastes.
Admission £5 inc light refreshments

- ◆ **Saturday 13th October, 8.00pm**

The Chester Bach Singers

An evening of choral and organ music.
Tickets available from members of the choir or at the door.

Lindisfarne & the Northern Saints

28-30 September 2007

Bill Baker from St Columba's is organising a three-day trip to the North East following in the footsteps of St Aidan, St Cuthbert and other Northern Saints, staying at Ushaw near Durham.

- ◆ The coach leaves St Columba's early on Friday morning, arriving in Jarrow in time for lunch and a tour of Bede's World museum and monastic remains. Evening dinner at Ushaw is followed by a film about the Northern Saints.
- ◆ Saturday includes a visit to Lindisfarne, with Mass on the island followed by visits to exhibitions about the Lindisfarne Gospels. Then on to Bamburgh, and its association with St Oswald and St Aidan.
- ◆ Sunday includes a tour of Ushaw followed by Mass with the seminary students, with our return journey starting after lunch.
- ◆ The journey home breaks with a visit to The Bowes Museum galleries & gardens, and we arrive back in Chester around 8pm.

The price of £180 per person includes coach travel, en-suite accommodation, all meals, and all entrance fees and gratuities.

For further information and a booking form, please contact:

Bill Baker, 01244 376701

