



ST ERCONWALD'S LOOKING TO 2020

The number of Priests in our Deanery, our Diocese and our national Church has been steadily declining over a number of decades and we're now reaching a breaking point. In the next few years in our Deanery things are about to change dramatically and we will experience the death of ways of being Church to which we are accustomed. But if we lay at the foot of the Cross our worries about the death of familiar ways of being Church, then – through the mystery of the Cross – they will be transfigured into new opportunities.

1) PREPARE FOR CHANGES

- By the end of 2020 the number of Priests in our Deanery is likely to have dropped by up to 25%.
- According to the current Diocesan Plan, when the number of Priests is becoming insufficient, Parishes are to be grouped together – if and when this was to happen St Erconwald's and All Saints would be grouped together.
- However the Diocesan Plan for the Deanery is not yet set in stone

2) START THINKING AS A DEANERY

In the current situation it's important not to limit our vision to our own Parish but start thinking as a Deanery.

- The Weybridge Deanery, is a cluster of ten Parishes: Egham, Chertsey, Addlestone, Weybridge, Walton-on-Thames, Hersham, Molesey, Thames Ditton, Esher, Cobham and Sunningdale.
- Our Deanery has been proactive and has undertaken a collaborative process of discernment, in view of proposing a range of options to Bishop Kieran in July next year to coincide with the Diocesan Jubilee. Other options could include:
 - ✓ combining two or more Parishes into one,
 - ✓ keeping separate Parishes with a shared Priest,
 - ✓ or clustering a number of Parishes with a team of Priests.
- It's important to realise that any ultimate decision regarding the future of our Parish and of all the Parishes of the Deanery rest with the Bishop.
- A Deanery **Advisory and Communication Group** has been set up, and is made of representatives of all the Parishes, both laity and clergy (and other stakeholders, such as Schools and Religious Communities). This group meets every two months and is responsible for putting together a formal submission to the Bishop next year.
- This submission will be based on the outputs of various **Working Groups**, which are yet to be set up, to look at the many aspects of Parish life in order to encourage cooperation between Parishes. For example working groups will examine issues such as, the formation of Lay leaders, the sharing of Office functions between Parishes and the purchasing of supplies, Marriage Preparation, and Youth Ministry.
- The **Change Management Service Group** is acting as a Secretariat to facilitate this process. Its role is to coordinate the various Working Groups and produce a draft report for consideration by the Advisory and Communication Group and through them to the wider Deanery. The group is skills-based, includes both lay people and clergy and has a maximum membership of eight. It remains an advisory committee and has not executive powers. Andrew Robertson from our parish is a member.
- Our own Parish will take an active part in this process. We have 4 representatives on the Advisory and Communication Group. They are: Elizabeth Lee, Lucy Jardine, Deacon Joseph Côté and Fr John Pearson
- Members of our Parish will also to take part in the various Working Groups at the Deanery Level.
- Internally, we will create our own platform, the **St Erconwald's Looking to 2020 Forum**, an opened assembly to deliberate upon these issues. Each one of us will be invited to come and contribute to a public and frank process of discernment. The Forum will meet on a regular basis. The first meeting will be held on Sunday 5 October, between the 9.15 and 11.15 Masses, in the Church.
- In due time will also create our own **St Erconwald's Working Groups**, which will reflect the Deanery Working Groups to look at specific issues.

3) CREATE A CULTURE OF DISCIPLESHIP

It's important to realise that what's at stake is not only a re-structuring of Parishes in our Deanery, but a profound cultural change: each one of us is called to rediscover the radical call of our Baptism.

- We need to move away from a consumer culture where we only approach the Church to receive the Sacraments: coming to Church on Sunday is necessary but it's nothing like enough! Mass in itself is not an end but a means to become the Body of Christ.
- And we need to move away from a culture of clericalism where the Clergy is expected to be in charge of everything. It shouldn't be like this: in virtue of our common Baptism, ALL the Baptised are called to get involved.
- It's imperative that we start moving NOW towards a culture of discipleship where we help Christ establish the Kingdom of God, through the holiness of our lives and our solidarity with those in need.
- We need to create positive models to embody this: for example, if each one of us was to donate an hour of our time every month to minister to the members of our congregation and to those in need in the world at large, what miracles could be achieved!

Here is a few examples of various ministries to consider:

- EVANGELISATION: The primary purpose of the Church is to evangelise, that is to bring others to Christ. We are called to leave the security of our Church and go to the un-churched, meeting them on their terms, wherever they are.
- WELCOMING MINISTRY: Welcoming all those who come to Mass, paying a special attention to newcomers.
- MUSIC MINISTRY: Animating the worship through singing and playing instruments.
- LITURGICAL MINISTRIES: Sacristan, Altar Servers, Readers, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Money collection.
- HOSPITALITY MINISTRY: Including serving refreshments after Mass.
- EUCHARISTIC ADORATION: Taking turns to spend time with our Lord.
- BIBLE STUDY GROUPS: House groups, affinity groups.
- SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION: Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion of adults and children.
- YOUTH MINISTRY
- L.I.N.K. GROUP: Offering companionship and a helping hand to Parishioners and neighbours.
- HOME VISITS: Including visits to the Bereaved and bringing Communion to the housebound.
- PHONE FRIEND: Keeping in touch with those who are housebound and giving them the possibility of ministering themselves to others over the phone from home.
- HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY: Visiting the sick as part of a team of volunteers.
- PRISON MINISTRY: Volunteering in a local prison.
- FOOD BANK
- DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES AND RED SHIRTS
- ST MICHAEL'S CHILDREN'S HOME IN UGANDA
- CAFOD
- MAINTENANCE OF THE BUILDINGS
- FLOWER ARRANGING
- CLEANING THE CHURCH
- FINANCE

Our Parish is confronted with an inevitable need for change; to continue as we are is not a possibility. The Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross reminds us that, despite all the problems and challenges facing us as a Parish and a Deanery, (that) Christ always triumphs if we his people are faithful. We are not to worry but turn to God in faith and embrace the challenges ahead.

St Erconwald's Looking to 2020 Forum
Sunday 5 October, 10.30-11.00, in the Church