

St Erconwald's Looking to 2020

SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

"The number of priests will certainly reduce and you, the laity, will have to be more active in parish life."

(Bishop Kieran, Message to the Weybridge Deanery, 14 September 2014)

1. What are my fears and anxieties about this?

- Work load of priests will become unmanageable and they will become overstressed.
- Closure of Parishes and decline of number of Parishioners.
- Parishes will have to merge and will become too big and impersonal.
- Reduced number of Masses available (Sundays and week). Loss of flexibility.
- Less occasions for the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Less contact with priest in times of emergency, e.g. when someone is seriously ill.
- Fear that Mass will not be the same and that traditions of the Church will be lost.
- Travel more distance to Church. Fear that some people will not have access to Mass because it is too far.
- Loss of sense of belonging.
- Fear that our Catholic faith will disappear and be replaced by other religions.
- Fear that only a few people will get involved and have to carry the parish alone.
- Fear that there will be conflict in the transition process.
- Fear that women will not be included in leadership roles.
- Lack of continuity and loss of confidence if Church is not lead by a priest, as priests have got years of experience and expertise. Concern that unqualified lay people will lead the Church.
- Insufficient pastoral care of parishioners.
- Fear that we will lose our St Erconwald's identity.
- Afraid to have no time to get involved, with already excessive workload and family commitments.
- Anxious about what to offer personally.
- Worry that everyone will not get a voice in the process of transition.
- Worry that we will end up with an overcrowded and noisy Church, and that there will not be enough space for cars.
- Fear that as a parish we will not rise to the challenge of changing our community to more closely reflect Gospel values.
- Fear that as a church we will continue to focus on personal morality and not the wider issues of social justice and equality.

2. How can we turn this situation into a new opportunity?

- Wonderful opportunity to put our faith into action and give back more.
- Opportunity to fully explore the lay vocation.
- Consider the aspects of the Church life that are not essential for the priest to perform and encourage lay people to take up these roles.
- Get involved outside Sunday Mass.
- An occasion to evangelise.
- A chance to reach out to the wider community.
- Great opportunity for prominent leadership roles with responsibilities for women.
- Make the poor, social justice and outreach to the marginalised the centre of our community.
- Opportunity to get out of the church and "get our hands dirty", as Pope Francis said, by reaching out to the unchurched and learning to care for, befriend and serve the poor.

- Opportunity to full open our church doors to those who have not been fully welcomed in the past, including divorcees, cohabitees, and gay people.
- Opportunity to make the Church more appealing and relevant to the younger generation. Change the way the Mass is delivered so that it can cater for the next generation. We need more variety in the Masses.
- Good occasion to involve young people and young families.
- Get guidance from other parishes that have already gone through this process.
- Build links with other Parishes and have deanery wide initiatives.
- Merging parishes could lead to stronger communities.
- Network with other local churches and charities in service of the poor and to share resources.
- Encourage everyone to share their talents. Empower those who are not involved, especially current parishioners who are in the background, newcomers, and people who are outside the Church.
- Set up working groups to match the Deanery groups.
- Get Sisters more involved.
- Recruit young priests from other countries.
- Get more deacons.
- Petition the Pope asking to admit married men to the priesthood, after all he has allowed for married Anglican priests to become Ordinariate priests.
- Petition the Pope to ordain women to the priesthood.
- Opportunity to consider lay preachers.
- Use modern technology (PowerPoint and Smart Board), including during Mass. Jesus and the Apostles would have been on Facebook and Twitter.
- Improve webpage to facilitate communication and outreach, especially to the youth.
- Parish spiritual retreat to kick-start the process.

3. As lay people are going to have to run their own parishes, what help/training will they (YOU) need?

- Training should be consistent across the deanery.
- Compile a register of available skills and who is willing to teach those skills to others.
- Identify all aspects of parish life and train people accordingly. Planning and coordination will help map out different needs.
- Provide clear details about tasks and time limits. This will allow people to see what they can volunteer for and fit around their working and family lives.
- Need training scheme for new volunteers.
- Areas that require training include:
 - Training in evangelisation (for all): Scriptures and Church doctrine (catechism)
 - Training of Catechists: so that more people can deliver courses (Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, and Marriage).
 - Training in pastoral care.
 - Training on social justice issues, both local and international.
 - Training in accountancy skills, management skills, organisational skills, leadership skills,
 - Training in IT skills.

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