

18 February 2017

Dear Father,

I am writing to you to ask for your guidance and help.

You will be aware that one of the main tasks that I have as your Archbishop is the appointment of priests to the parishes. In many ways it is one of the most important and sacred tasks of a bishop. It is also one of the most difficult.

As you know we have fewer priests and people at Mass than we had in recent times. There is also a number clergy preparing to retire from active ministry after a lifetime of service to the Church. So I need your advice. I am asking you, clergy and people together, to look carefully at your Pastoral Area and to see how we can best serve the mission of the Church in your part of the Diocese. I want to best use the resources of priests, people and buildings that we have. I would be very grateful if you could share with me your ideas of how we can go forward with fewer priests and perhaps fewer buildings too.

I have asked your Dean to call clergy and people together to help me in the forward planning that we need to embark upon. I know that many of you took part in the Leaving Safe Harbours process and we have been able to put in place some of the recommendations that came from Pastoral Area plans. I thank you for that. You may wish to revisit the planning that you did then. I ask you to share with me in this present task, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that we can be the Church that God has called us to be.

Yours in Christ

Malcolm

Archbishop of Liverpool