

The Deanery of Eastbourne & St Leonard's-on-Sea

Part of the Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

Dean:

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LETTER TO ALL PARISHIONERS OF THE DEANERY

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Dear Friends,

Becoming a Moderated Parish – How will it affect YOU?

As Dean of Eastbourne & St Leonard's Deanery, as we presently are, Bishop Richard has asked me to take on role of Moderator of the new Moderated Parish. In November we will formally begin to come together from what are currently 8 individual parishes, from Eastbourne to Rye, into a **SINGLE PARISH**. This will be a BIG Parish and a BIG challenge for all of us, clergy and laity together. But it will also create many new good opportunities to work more closely together as a "Community of Communities", under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I recently gave a **Presentation on this project in Eastbourne**, and around 150 people attended, mainly from the more local parishes. I talked about the background against which we have to work to bring our parishes together as one – the Scriptures and Church teaching through the ages on mission and evangelisation. We had a short time for questions at the end of the presentation. I want to thank all those who came and participated. I've received very helpful feedback and now want to give some reassurance to everyone on certain points.

Firstly, this is about all of us together discerning what we need to do to make this work well. We won't be looking at making any unnecessary changes ("change for change's sake") but instead, only what looks to be genuinely good and helpful for everybody in the parish. We won't be about "closing down" but building up what we already have, sharing all our good resources, especially our many good and gifted people. We'll do this by listening to people's views and concerns and then discerning the steps forward we need to take.

Secondly, the Diocese will begin working directly with us in November to guide us into the arrangements and structures we will need to operate as a single parish, cared for by a Team of Clergy in collaboration with lay representatives from across our communities. The Diocese is clear this is a work that will take a couple of years to embed, so we won't be rushing ahead of ourselves, but we will need to keep a positive momentum. As in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan, our focus will be on building up our life of **Prayer**, on better **Formation** for all, and on our **Mission** to share the Joy of the Gospel with others.

Thirdly, looking ahead to the coming weeks and months: **[1]** after the summer we will begin bringing together catechists and other groups to begin reflecting on how to share and work together; **[2]** there will be a series of Open Meetings in September / October across the Deanery to address people's questions and concerns and provide updates on the process. If you have any questions now you would like to be answered please email them to me and they can be included in a Q & A info sheet we will make available at the Open Meetings (kevin.dring@abdiocese.org.uk) ; **[3]** then in November the Diocesan Team will be with us to begin formally inaugurating our new Parish.

There are inevitably still many uncertainties and unanswerable questions, but these will become clearer as we move forward, trusting always in the Lord – it's His Church!

Thank you for reading this letter and please do join the Open Meetings in September / October -further details to follow. If you wish to view my recent Presentation slides, please go to <http://ourladyofransom.org.uk> and follow the link. We will soon look forward to having a dedicated website for the new Moderated Parish to keep everyone up to date on developments. Above all let's keep all that needs to be done in our daily prayers. Have a restful month of August and I look forward to meeting with you soon and working together in the time ahead.

God bless,

Fr Kevin

[On behalf of the Deanery Clergy Team]