

# **Mass Time Consultation**

## **Deanery Context**

There are 21 Catholic churches in Sheffield Deanery. There are thirteen parish priests in the deanery, two of whom are here temporarily from overseas. None of them are under 40, five are in their 50s, three in their 60s, two in their 70s and one in his 80s. Every weekend they celebrate a total of forty Sunday Masses, including Saturday vigil Masses.

Bishop Ralph wants us to plan now for a future when this will no longer be sustainable because of priest retirements and illness. We also have to consider availability of cover so that priests can take a rest or a holiday.

## **Parish Context**

As you know, we will be moving to just two Sunday Masses on 2 December. This is to allow one priest to cover the provision of Mass at St Francis' as well as at St William's when the need arises. St Francis' will discontinue their 9am Mass leaving them with just one Mass at 11am, their better attended Mass. We will be keeping our 9.30am Mass, the better attended of our Sunday morning Masses. It is just about possible for a priest who has celebrated 9.30am Mass at St William's to get to St Francis' for 11am, though if this became a regular occurrence I think the priest would need a bit more time between the two Masses.

In our new situation, I had been wondering whether we should review the timing of our other Mass (currently 6.30pm on Saturday) to see whether there are better alternatives. The Parish Vision meeting last Tuesday encouraged me to follow up on this.

## **Why consider a change?**

The last thing we want is to lose any of our parishioners. For the elderly and families with young children 6.30pm may be rather late, especially in the winter.

It is also worth bearing in mind that parking is not entirely straightforward. On a Sunday the Coop opens from 11am to 5pm. Now that they do not open until 11am, I hope that we will encounter fewer problems than previously using their car park for the 9.30am Mass, though users would have to pay. The fact that the Coop closes at 5pm may also mean that, on a Sunday, parking from 5pm is easier. On Saturday there is nothing encouraging to say about parking: a larger congregation will just make for greater difficulties, but we might consider more lift giving.

## **Consultation**

You may well have your own preferences among the possibilities I propose, but I do ask you to think also about the good of the whole parish as you participate in this consultation.

I will use the results to inform my thinking about what seem to be the best arrangements.

May God bless us all and may Our Lady and St William pray for us.

Fr John

20 October 2018