

St Teresa of Lisieux Aspley,
St Hugh of Lincoln Bilborough,
St Thomas More Wollaton.

“Towards our Shared Future”

Missionary Outreach for our New Parish



The Eucharistic Celebration

Introduction

Our previous document¹ put forward proposals which considered how, as one new parish, our communities would be better placed to begin the pathway of conversion to become more missionary in outlook, outreach and activity.

The proposal was put before Bishop Patrick who was content for it to be further considered, but he has now asked the WP to consider how the new merged parish would be able to provide Sunday and weekday masses, in a way that does not abuse the canonical norms as set out in Canon 905.1 and 905.2. These are set out as follows:

905.1 A priest is not permitted to celebrate the Eucharist more than once a day except in cases where the law permits him to celebrate or concelebrate more than once on the same day.

905.2 If there is a shortage of priests, the local Ordinary can allow priests to celebrate twice a day for a just cause, or if pastoral necessity requires it, even three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation.”

This document is our submission in response to this request. We are not Canon lawyers and do not propose any definition of what constitutes a legal definition of ‘*a just cause*’ or ‘*if pastoral necessity requires it*’. Suffice to say, we are without doubt, experiencing ‘*a shortage of priests*’.

Our proposals

As previously stated in the Sixth Proposal, at the heart of parish life is the celebration of the Eucharist as the source and summit of the Christian Life². Our role as missionary disciples, takes its departure from and develops out of this reality. We must look therefore to the reception of the Eucharist as the food that sustains and nurtures us, as we take up the challenges of bringing the Gospel and the message of salvation, through our encounter with the living Lord, to all whom we meet, as real and life enhancing.

Gathering round the table of the Lord on Sunday is the beginning of our week, and the point from which we are sent out to share with all whom we meet, the gifts which we have partaken of. We envisage our new parish becoming one community with three altars from which we hope to feed our people and nourish them for the journey ahead.

¹ A Sixth Proposal

² Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium

Aware of the need to be compliant with the Canons of the Church, in particular with regard to the number of masses that one priest may celebrate, we envisage, with the Bishop's permission, the possibility of interpreting Canon 905 in an innovative way which remains within the spirit of its overall design, to ensure that the parish priest does not feel wearied or fatigued.

The celebration of Mass within the parish would be as follows:

Day	Venue	Time	Number of Masses per day
Monday	St Teresa	9.30am	1
Tuesday *	Day Off		0
Wednesday	St Hugh	9.30am	1
Thursday	St Teresa	9.30am	1
Friday	St Thomas More	7.30pm	1
Saturday am	No Mass		
Saturday pm	St Thomas More	4.45pm	2 Vigil
Saturday pm	St Teresa	6.45pm	
Sunday	St Hugh	9.15am	2 Sunday
Sunday	St Teresa	11.00am	
* Tuesday	St Thomas More	12.00 Noon	SW&C

Following this programme, no more than 2 masses are celebrated on any day, which accords with the wishes of Canon 905.2. The times of celebration as specified above, means that the Saturday vigil Mass at St Thomas More would be over by 5.45pm, allowing an hour for the priest to rest and refresh before the vigil Mass at St Teresa. Similarly on Sunday, the Mass at St Hugh would be over by 10.15am allowing 45 mins to prepare for the 11.00am Mass at St Teresa.

Holy days of Obligation would be celebrated as follows

Venue	Time	
St Hugh	7.00pm	Vigil Mass
St Teresa	9.30am	Mass of the Day
St Thomas More	7.00pm	Evening Mass

The normal mass times of serial days would be suppressed to allow for the Holy Day to be celebrated instead.

This regime of Masses seems manageable, and in times of a scarcity of priests, not unreasonable.

Should this solution not be permitted we would propose the following alternatives to be considered to retain a 4 weekend mass solution.

- The possibility of assistance from a “spare” or “flying” priest (eg the Bishop’s secretary) to take on the responsibility for one weekend mass.
- That a retired diocesan priest who is willing to celebrate one weekend mass, be accommodated in the presbytery at St Hugh’s.
- That the parish be allowed to advertise nationwide for a priest who wishes to retire from his full-time ministry, to be given the opportunity to spend his retirement at St Hugh’s presbytery and to celebrate one weekend mass.
- That the deacon be permitted to celebrate a Service of Word and Communion (SW&C) with consecrated hosts which he brings from a mass celebrated at which he has been present. ie consecrated hosts from a Sunday Morning Mass at 9.30am at St Thomas More to be used at a SW&C at 10.30am at St Hugh.

If it is not possible to proceed with the 4 weekend mass solution, and we are left with no other alternative but to reduce to a 3 mass weekend, then the following two options are submitted:

- One vigil and 2 Sunday Masses as below:

Day	Venue	Time	Number of Masses per pay
Saturday pm	St Hugh	6.30pm	1 Vigil
Sunday	St Thomas More	9.15am	2 Sunday
Sunday	St Teresa	11.00am	

This solution keeps a Sunday mass in each Church, by relocating the vigil mass from St Teresa to St Hugh. Current numbers of attendees would suggest this is achievable. St Hugh has capacity up to 200.

- A Sunday morning mass for the new parish is alternated on a weekly basis between St Hugh and St Thomas More, with a Vigil and Sunday Mass at St Teresa.

The Deanery Proposal

We now turn our thoughts to address the proposal presented at the deanery Road Show of the 7 March 2022. This envisions the suppression of the three parishes of St Teresa of Lisieux Aspley, St Thomas More Wollaton and St Hugh of Lincoln Bilborough into one new parish, by extinctive union, with the churches of St Teresa and St Thomas More remaining open, and the church of St Hugh being closed. A new parish would be formed with two places of worship.

Referencing the Document of the Congregation for the Clergy of 20.07.2020 on the "The pastoral conversion of the Parish community in the service of the evangelising mission of the Church"³ it states at paragraph 48 that

... Moreover , the suppression of Parishes by extinctive union is legitimate for causes directly related to a specific parish. Some causes are not sufficient, such as, for example the scarcity of diocesan clergy, the financial situation of the Diocese or other conditions within the community that are presumably reversible and of brief duration (eg numerical consistency, lack of financial self-sufficiency, the urban planning of the territory)

Paragraph 51 goes on to state

Related to the topic of Parish groupings and their possible suppression, is the necessity that sometimes occurs, of the reduction of Churches to profane but not sordid use which belongs to the diocesan Bishop, after having first heard from the Presbyteral Council, whom he is obliged to consult.

Ordinarily, also in this case, the legitimate causes for decreeing such a reduction do not include reasons like the lack of clergy, demographic decline or the grave financial state of the Diocese. However, if the building is in such a state as to be unable to be used for divine worship in any way, and there is no possibility of repairing it, then the Bishop can proceed, according to the norm of law, to reduce it to profane but not sordid use.

We would therefore submit that a fit and proper alternative use for St Hugh be considered before any suppression be decreed. In the light of the desire for our parish to become more missionary in its outreach, thought should be given to the possibility of converting the buildings into a centre of activity that develops such missionary objectives. such as:

³<http://www.clerus.va/content/clerus/en/notizie/new26.html>

- Conversion of the Church and Hall/Presbytery into a refugee centre/facility with funding for this project derived from Caritas International or some other Catholic Charity or Catholic donor. We would propose that a small chapel be retained on the premises so that the Blessed Sacrament be reserved and a weekday mass be celebrated.

Final Consideration

Memorial Garden at St Hugh's.

The Working Party bring to your attention the presence at St Hugh's of a memorial garden in which are interred the ashes of a number of former parishioners, at least ten. We ask that this situation be taken into account in the discussion before any final decision on the future of St Hugh's is made.

Summary

It is our heartfelt desire to keep the three Churches open for the celebration of the Sunday mass and we hope that the solution proposed and outlined above for a 4 mass weekend will be carefully considered.

Yours in Christ

Fr Stanley & Deacon Anthony
& The Members of the Working Party