

The Palmer Partnership: A draft proposal for the future of the partnership. (Draft September 2019)

This draft proposal, prepared by our five-parish group, outlines the development of the Palmer Pastoral Group over the next few years. It suggests how we might cooperate, work together for the benefit of all and prepare for the time when we will have only four priests. Importantly, it is a work in progress.

Structure of the partnership

At present the partnership comprises five parishes and six clergy – three diocesan priests, one priest of the Syro-Malankara church, and two priests of the Missionaries of La Salette (MS). The Diocesan Vision Document envisages this partnership having FOUR priests in the long term. It is expected that this will comprise two diocesan priests and two priests of the MS. The aim of this proposal is to facilitate the greatest possible collaboration between the clergy and laity of the partnership, whilst retaining the individual identity of the parish communities and respecting the different customs and obligations of the diocesan and religious clergy. We envisage a gradual transition to the long-term arrangement, with existing structures retained for as long as possible but increasing cooperation in anticipation of the eventual changes.

St John the Baptist, Ilford

It is proposed that the church and presbytery be offered to the Syro-Malankara community, and the resident priest of that community continue to serve the parish community. It is understood that at some point in the medium term a resident priest will no longer be feasible, at which point the parish would be formally merged with the parish of Ss Peter and Paul. A decision will have to be taken about the continued provision of Masses in the existing building, as it would not be feasible for the parish priest of Ss P&P to take on additional Masses, but for as long as there are still five priests in the partnership it should be possible to cover at least one Sunday Mass.

At some point in the future it may be the case that the site is put to alternative use. The preference of the partnership is that the site be retained rather than sold and turned into affordable housing.

St Peter and St Paul's, Ilford

This would continue as a single parish with resident parish priest. No changes are necessary to the Mass schedule. At some point in time the parish of St John the Baptist would be merged to form a single parish with Ss P&P.

St Teresa's, Newbury Park & St Cedd's, Goodmayes

It is proposed that once the partnership is reduced to four priests, St Teresa's is served by the MS priests' resident at St Cedd's. This would most likely involve the formal merger of the two parishes. It is envisaged that the current Mass schedule of both churches continues, with adjustment for the summer months to allow for a single priest.

Alternative proposal: St Teresa's would be served by the parish priest of St Bede's. This would involve adjustments to the Mass schedule to allow for one priest to celebrate the Masses in both churches.

Once there is no longer a resident priest at St Teresa's, the presbytery would be let out, in order of preference: to lay employees of the partnership (for whom it could be part of their remuneration), to employees of the Redbridge/B&D Catholic MAT, or on the open market. Consideration will be given to converting it into two flats. The room off the porch currently used as the parish office may be retained for parish use.

St Bede's, Chadwell Heath

This would continue as a single parish with resident parish priest. No changes are necessary to the Mass schedule.

Alternative proposal: As above, the parish priest of St Bede's would also be responsible for St Teresa's, which would require changes to the Mass schedules.

Mass Times

In the short-medium term, Sunday Masses will follow the schedule below:

	Sat pm	Sun am				Sun pm
St P&P	6pm		9.30am	11am		
St JB	6pm		9.30am			
St Teresa	6pm	8am		10.30am		
St Cedd			9.30am	11am		6.30pm
St Bede	6pm		9am	11am		

In the long term, with four priests, the Sunday Mass schedule will be as follows:

	Sat pm	Sun am				Sun pm
St P&P	6pm		9.30am	11am		
St Teresa	6pm	8am		10.30am*		
St Cedd			9.30am	11am*		6.30pm
St Bede	6pm		9am	11am		

*During summer months, the 10.30/11am Masses will be combined and could alternate between the two churches.

The long term schedule can *almost* be covered by three priests if necessary, as the St Teresa's & St Cedd's schedule is designed to be covered by one priest, and the St Cedd's Sunday evening Mass could be said by any of the priests if desirable in order to balance the number of Masses said. The exception is St Teresa's 10.30am / St Cedd's 11am, one of which would need to be cancelled in such a situation. Consideration will be given to changing the 11am at Ss. P&P or St Bede's to 12 noon, so that it would be possible to cover the whole partnership with three priests when necessary.

Alternative proposal:

If St Teresa's is served by St Bede's, the Masses for these two churches could be as follows:

St T/St B 6pm Sat; St T 8am, St B 9am & 11am or St B 6pm Sat; St T 8am, St T 10am, St B 11.30am.

Main confession times

Before the Saturday evening Masses at St P&P, St Teresa's and St Bede's

After the Saturday morning Mass at St Cedd's

Daily Mass

It is expected that each priest would celebrate a daily Mass, and that each priest would have a regular weekly day off. The aim will be to have a Mass in at least three of the churches on every weekday, and one on Saturday morning. Within the partnership there should also be an evening Mass and a lunchtime Mass on at least some days of the week.

The following is a possible pattern, though it would be subject to change as necessary (the expectation is that when a funeral takes place this would be the community Mass).

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat (am)
St P&P	8.30am	12 noon	9.30am	7.30pm	12 noon	
St Cedd	10am	7pm	10am	10am	7pm	10am
St Teresa	9.30am	9.30am	7pm	9.30am	8am	
St Bede	9am	9am	9am	9am	9am	

Sacramental Preparation and formation

St P&P and St Bede's will continue with their own FHC programmes. St Cedd's and St Teresa's will work towards joint programmes but with separate celebrations. Confirmation may be organised along the same lines, or there may be a confirmation programme for the whole partnership.

There will be a joint programme for Marriage preparation, alongside individual meetings with the parish priest.

A range of formation programmes will run across the partnership at different times and locations during the year with as much cooperation as possible.

Pastoral Responsibilities

Each of the four priests will have a particular area of responsibility across the whole partnership. The priests will meet formally every other month (alternating with deanery meetings).

- Hospital chaplaincy
- Primary schools & families / marriage preparation
- Secondary schools & confirmation
- Coordination of partnership / second on-call for hospital.

Employees

The partnership will employ a lay Youth Coordinator on a full-time basis.

The partnership will employ a Property Manager with responsibility for health and safety and carrying out routine maintenance on all parish properties. The Property Manager will line manage any hall cleaners employed by individual parishes or oversee agency arrangements.

Parishes within the partnership will employ their own parish secretaries but aim to coordinate working hours so that at least one secretary is working during normal office hours on each weekday, using call forwarding / virtual telephone numbers.

Finance

The parishes of the partnership will remain financially separate (if and when St Teresa's and St Cedd's become a single parish this would naturally entail merging the finances of the two). There will be an agreement between the parishes regarding inter-partnership supply fees and stipends. Each parish will make a contribution to a common fund to be agreed annually by the parish priests, so that the costs of the partnership (principally the employment of partnership employees) will be borne fairly by the parishes. The costs will be shared in proportion to the level of diocesan quota applied to each parish for the financial year in question.

Implementation

The proposals will be implemented on a gradual basis as follows:

Collaboration in sacramental preparation, pastoral responsibilities and secretarial support to be introduced as soon as possible

Youth Coordinator and Property Manager to be employed as soon as funding is identified.

The present Mass schedule (as introduced July 2019) will continue for as long as there are six priests in the partnership.

The transition to the long-term structure depends on the arrangement made with the Syro-Malankara community, whose priest may even be considered supernumerary by the diocese.

There may be an interim period where the partnership is served by five priests. The formal merger of St JB and Ss P&P would take place once there is no longer a resident priest at St JB, with Sunday Masses at St JB celebrated by priests of the partnership. The merger of St Cedd's and St Teresa's (*or the implementation of the alternative proposal*) would take place once there is no longer a resident priest at St Teresa's.