



**Incorporating the parishes of Christ the King, Kingstanding, Our Lady of the Assumption, Maryvale and St. Margaret Mary, Perry Common**

Merging the two parishes of Christ the King and Our Lady of the Assumption into one single parish: a  
proposal

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## **Introduction: Theological Foundations**

1. Under canon law, a “parish” is defined as a stable portion of the community of the faithful to whom a priest is sent as its proper pastor (its “parochus”). That understanding is crucial: the stable community of the faithful remains even if the way the pastoral care for it has to change.
2. In considering what is said in this paper, please keep in mind two points: (1) By baptism everybody in community is called to be a full participant in the mission of the Church by worshipping and praying wherever the community gathers; by sharing the Word of God amongst themselves and being formed by it; by building up the community through love and service. This is what is meant by the shorthand that baptism conforms us to Christ and enables us to participate in the ministry of Christ as priest, prophet and king. That’s the spiritual background. (2) An integral part of building up the Christian community is investing in it in accordance with the principles of Christian stewardship. That’s the material background. Sharing in the ministry of Christ and support through Christian stewardship are the foundations of the doctrine of the common priesthood of all the baptised faithful which the Church has taught faithfully ever since the First Letter of St Peter was written. That letter provides the classic biblical grounding for this teaching.
3. In recent years, Rome issued a document entitled “The Pastoral Conversion of the Parish in the Service of the Evangelising Mission of the Church”. The current Pastoral Council of CTK and OLAM has devoted several meetings to studying this document in detail. It is important to stress that the reason for proposing a formal merger of CTK and OLAM is not financial. The overriding reason for merger is to respond to that document and organise ourselves more effectively for mission. It will be clear that we are going to have to raise more money for various purposes and those purposes will be spelled out in Section Two

## **Introduction: Background Information on the parishes in the Cluster**

4. In this paper, the following abbreviations will be adopted: “CTK” means Christ the King; “OLAM” means Our Lady of the Assumption, Maryvale and “SMM” St Margaret Mary. Whenever it is necessary to refer to CTK and OLAM together, the term the United Catholic Community of Kingstanding and Maryvale will be used. The Cluster means all the parishes mentioned in the heading to page 1 collaborating as a single area of mission in this part of Birmingham under the designation, the Newman Cluster.
5. The United Catholic Community of Kingstanding and Maryvale has already had several years of collaborating as a mini-Cluster in its own right. Father Eamonn Corduff was the first priest to be appointed as parochus of both CTK and OLAM. That policy was continued with Fr. Thé-Quang Nguyen’s appointment. The United Catholic Community, even before the Archbishop’s recent decree had a single Parish Council, joint meetings of the two Finance Committees, a single Newsletter and Deacons appointed to work across the Community interchangeably.
6. The current profile of the Cluster clergy is as follows: there are two parish priests – Fr. Simon Ellis and Fr. Thé-Quang Nguyen. Simon is the PP of SMM. Thé is the PP of both OLAM and CTK for which we try to care pastorally as if it were a single united parish. Fr. Simon has been in post 9 years and Fr. Thé 6 years. Both reasonably anticipate another 20 years of active ministry before retirement.
7. Fr. Leonard Cox is also in the Cluster. He is officially retired but is nevertheless active in assisting both at St Chad’s/Sacred Heart, Aston and at SMM. At the request of Bishop David Waller (the Ordinary of the Ordinariate) he is exercising some oversight for the pastoral care of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary now resident at Aston Hall, Stone. His main task is to organise their Sunday Mass provision and Masses for other key seasonal celebrations<sup>1</sup>. It is hoped that in the fulness of

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<sup>1</sup> The Sisters were formerly resident at 99 Old Oscott Hill in the Maryvale Parish. Aston Hall, Stone also provides a home for Bishop Timothy Menezes who has also celebrated Masses for the Sisters from time to time when his

time, those retired priests who occupy the two flats at Aston Hall will be able to offer Weekday Mass provision.

8. There are two current serving deacons: Dominic Fahey and Gary O'Brien. Both have extensive responsibilities outside the parishes of OLAM and CTK. Each Deacon reasonably anticipates a further 10- 15 years of active ministry. A member of the SMM congregation is in formation for the permanent diaconate. As and when he is able, Bishop David Evans presides at one of the Sunday Masses offered in OLAM/CTK.

9. The current Mass provision in the Cluster is as follows:

Day	CTK	OLAM	SMM
Saturday Vigil	12.30 pm	6 pm	6.30 pm
Sunday morning	10.00 am	11.30 am	09.30 am 11.00 am <sup>2</sup>

10. The Mass Attendance numbers on average are:

Day	CTK	OLAM	SMM
Saturday Vigil	50-70	60	30/40
Sunday Morning	150-160	120	200 – evenly split between the 2 Masses.

11. SMM has been entrusted to the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham. There are (including Fathers Simon and Leonard) 15 ascribed members of the Ordinariate in the Cluster. As a result of their ministerial and professional backgrounds, these formally ascribed members of the Ordinariate have taken a prominent role in the life of SMM, the Archdiocese and the Ordinariate nationally. SMM remains a territorial parish of the Archdiocese. There is an Agreement between the Archdiocese and the Ordinariate which governs the pastoral care of SMM and their mutual financial arrangements. Any change in the current provision has to be made on one year's notice. None of the Cluster clergy has the competence to amend that Agreement still less to bring it to an end. That can only be done by episcopal decision (+ Bernard [presumably, assisted by + David Evans] and + David Waller of the Ordinariate).
12. On Sundays, Feast Days and Solemnities one Mass in the Ordinariate Rite is celebrated and that is guaranteed by the Agreement. Further information concerning the Ordinariate appears in Appendix One.

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other duties permit.

<sup>2</sup> This is the Ordinariate Rite Mass. Originally, the Sunday morning Mass at SMM was at 10.00 but it was "split into two" during COVID and the later Mass has been retained as the Ordinariate Rite Mass.

## Section One: Reasons for Merger

### *Context*

13. In January and February 2024 on consecutive weekends, I preached at all 7 Masses currently celebrated within the Cluster. I drew attention to the fact that within the next 7 years, having regard to the ages of the current serving clergy, 43% of the active priests would have passed their retirement age. Consequently, we had to organise ourselves for mission in a different way from that with which we have all come to know as Catholics. I explicitly stated that a vital part of that difference was that within 3-5 years, the current three parishes in the Cluster will have merged into one with just one single parish priest appointed to it.
14. These circumstances are not unique to the Newman Cluster. The parish of Blessed Carlo Acutis combines three parishes. In our neighbouring Cluster, Catholic Sutton Coldfield, it has been announced that by the time Fr. Neil Bayliss retires in 2028, the four parishes in the Cluster will be served by just two priests.
15. Thus the current proposal is the first step to the destination I outlined in my homily. The process of formal merger can reasonably be completed with 12 to 18 months, all being well, so we have to make a start now.

### *Type of Merger envisaged*

16. The type of merger envisaged is a fusion. It will not be a takeover of OLAM by CTK or vice versa. This is an absolutely crucial point to grasp. Both CTK and OLAM will cease to exist once the merger is formally complete and a brand new parish will emerge. For present purposes, we can call the new parish "Parish C".
17. The unanimous view from all of the small discussion groups was that merger by fusion was the better option. It preserves a missional presence on both sides of what we hope will become a united Catholic Community. The benefits of merger by fusion were seen by all as worth working towards. A number of important issues which must be discussed further were identified. These are itemised below in paragraphs 18-24.
18. A reduction of Mass times from 7 to 3 or 4 is inevitable. This will inevitably involve a change of time. The times of Masses need to be practical for the priest to manage bearing in mind there will also be funerals and weddings. Planning the reduction with plenty of notice and further consultation with the parish will be key.
19. Related to the reduction in the number of Masses is the question of whether one Sunday Mass per weekend will remain an Ordinariate Divine Worship Mass as per the existing agreement between the Archdiocese and the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham. Fathers Simon and Leonard confirmed that it was not an absolute requirement that the presiding priest at an Ordinariate Mass be an ascribed member of the Ordinariate. Bishop Timothy Menezes has celebrated a number of such Masses for the Benedictine sisters now resident in Aston Hall.
20. Likewise, when considering which is the better option for rehousing the community which gathers for worship currently at OLAM, we need to remember that although OLAM is on top of a hill which makes it less accessible for those arriving at Church by bus, it does have a car park. Furthermore, the Maryvale Institute Chapel has a restricted capacity. It could not comfortably accommodate those which go to the 11.30 Mass for example<sup>3</sup>. CTK has no car park and those attending by car have to use the car park of the Kingstanding Inn (which for the moment is permitted) or park on the street.
21. Times of Masses have to take account of the practicality of times both for young families and the elderly.
22. There was a consensus that we needed to restore the parish minibus service and for this we would need suitably trained volunteers.

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<sup>3</sup> In this connection, see what follows later in this paper about buildings.

23. Deacon Gary pointed out in answer to a question about cover if the parish priest were absent or ill, that there is very likely not going to be any. Hence the reference to cultural change. We would need to prepare the faithful for a greater use of the Divine Office (of the Dead) for anniversaries and possibly Liturgies of Word and Holy Communion (even on Sundays) to counterbalance the reduction of Masses. This links to the point about the theological basis on which this proposal is being considered. The lay faithful must be formed to exercise their baptismal vocation more fully.
24. The point was made that if we reduce the number of Masses and/or change the times, we are very unlikely to retain all the existing congregation. There will therefore be a reduction of income. How can we pay for three buildings if the income goes down?
25. The point was also made that even if we move to the Maryvale Institute chapels with appropriately funded repairs to bring access etc., up to modern standards, if it would not accommodate one of the Mass congregations, is it wise to invest in it?

### *Anticipated benefits*

26.[17.] Formal Merger of CTK and OLAM will assist the mission of the United Catholic Community in B44 by:

- a. enabling a better sharing and allocation of resources- material and liturgical;
- b. breaking down a residual us/them attitude which the Parish Council has discerned;
- c. preparing for a reduction of Masses in the near future and the designation of one of our places of worship as the hub Church;
- d. enabling us to form lay ministers working across our United Catholic Community- not just about liturgical ministers and lay leaders of worship but also health and safety officers and premises managers; catechists and community organisers; safeguarding representatives and future parish pastoral councillors with an understanding that they are ministers of governance; lay missionaries and ministers of hospitality and welcome. We need to accept there that at the very least investment in training courses is going to be needed and possibly more employment contracts<sup>4</sup>.

27.[18.] Merger is necessary to achieve these laudable ends otherwise the financial investment required cannot be appropriately targeted at the area of greatest because CTK and OLAM are still obliged to operate two separate bank accounts.

28.[19.] On present thinking, our newly merged Parish N would continue to have two places of worship: the present Church at CTK and a place of worship on Old Oscott Hill. More is said about this in the next section. In considering this point, what was described as “the elephant in the room” was identified and brought out into the open. As and when the final stage of this process is complete and we have one single merged parish, how can we run three places of worship effectively with adequate financing? 2 buildings would be much easier for a single parish priest to manage.

29. In answer to a specific question, Deacon Gary noted that the Maryvale Community Centre, which is an important contributor to parish income, would remain an asset of the charity which underpins the Archdiocese and under canon law remains allocated to OLAM. On merger it would be an asset of the new parish. Merger as such would not change that. If a sale of the land would include the site of MCC, then that would require further discussion.

## **Section Two: Implications of a Merger**

*For name of parish and dedication of the constituent Churches*

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<sup>4</sup> Employees of a parish are formally employed by the Archdiocese on a standard contract but their salary is provided by the parish or parishes in which they work.

- 30.[20.] Parish N will have a brand new name. The one that was used for the sake of illustration at the Annual General Meeting was “Sacred Heart and St John Henry Newman”. The name of Parish N is something on which the United Catholic Community can present a consensus to the Archbishop when his formal approval to merger is sought.
- 31.[21.] The name of Parish N is NOT the same as the dedication of the constituent Churches within it. Within the United Catholic Community are the dedications: Christ the King and Our Lady of the Assumption. These can only be changed with the approval of the Apostolic See which we are not going to divert time and energy into seeking.
- 32.[22.] Thus the Notice Board outside the places of worship in the United Catholic Community would read:

Archdiocese of Birmingham

Parish of [Sacred Heart and St John Henry Newman *or whatever it ends up being*]

Christ the King Catholic Church/Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Church

23. Again a useful place to look is the parish of Blessed Carlo Acutis, Wolverhampton where the dedications of the constituent Churches are noted above the times of Masses there.

*For number of Masses and Mass times*

24. The Code of Canon Law which binds all the baptised faithful in our United Catholic Community states that a priest is not permitted to celebrate Mass more than once a day except where the law of the Church permits it. Where there is a shortage of priests, the Archbishop can permit a priest to celebrate twice a day for a just cause or if pastoral necessity requires it, even three times a day on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation<sup>5</sup>. This wise provision is designed to keep the priest spiritually fresh. It will be quite obvious that as and when the merger with SMM occurs, one priest cannot lawfully celebrate 7 Masses at the weekend under any circumstances and, of course, in the Newman Cluster, it would be physically impossible in any case because of the overlapping times. Accordingly, we have to bite the bullet of reducing the number of Masses.
25. Merger of CTK and OLAM will help us to do this because there will be no necessary implication that there has to be equality between the two places of worship. One will have been designated the hub Church where the principal celebrations occur: most notably Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum. What matters is the size of the congregation to make a worthy communal celebration and the availability of suitably competent liturgical ministers, lay and clerical. No decision on which place of worship within Parish N will be the hub Church can be taken until the issues on buildings (see below) have been resolved. However, we need to make a start on the discussion.
26. Therefore as an **initial thought to promote discussion**, my suggestion is that the two Sunday Masses be combined at CTK and the Saturday Vigil Mass remain at OLAM at 6.00 pm. As and when the final merger with SMM takes place, that would enable the dovetailing of the two Saturday evening Vigil Masses into one and still leave scope on Sunday morning for a Mass celebrated at SMM according to the Rite of Divine Worship. [This was noted but no consensus emerged at the meeting. See the earlier comments.](#)

*For buildings*

27. OLAM has the Church and Maryvale Community Centre which is a good source of income. Preserving that source of income whether or not there is a merger is a high priority. The former OLAM presbytery is now occupied by Bishop David Evans under a formal agreement.

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<sup>5</sup> Canon 905.

28. Within the parish boundary of CTK, there is the canonically erected Convent of the Sisters Minor of St Francis Two weekday Masses per week are celebrated in the chapel of the Convent. In addition, there is a monthly half day of recollection there.
29. CTK has the Church, a Presbytery which at one time housed three priests and now is occupied by the parish priest alone. Behind the worship space but as an integral part of the Church building is the Guild Room which can be used for meetings. The St John's Centre which forms part of the Church premises is let to the New Heights charity under a formal FRI lease expiring in 2034. Subject to agreement with the Project Manager of New Heights, the St John's Centre is available free of charge to the parish for use as a Church Hall.
30. CTK has recently been approached to consider a renewal of that lease because funding applications stall if a full 10 years exclusive possession cannot be guaranteed. Following discussions between CTK and the Trustees of New Heights, a five year extension has been agreed with the Archdiocese, meaning that the lease will not now expire until 2039 at the earliest. Within CTK and along the road from it at 108 Warren Farm Road is the Community Café. There are offices on the first floor. This is also operated by New Heights. Again following discussions between CTK and the Trustees of New Heights, the a 10 year renewal of the current tenancy has been agreed with the Archdiocese subject to a provision that the Trustees can bring the letting to an end on 3 months' notice. This was requested by New Heights as protection if their funding should run out.
31. At the conclusion of each arrangement (formal lease and tenancy), the properties reverts to the Archdiocese. There is no automatic right of renewal. Merger would not disturb these current terms. The Archdiocese has confirmed that it will honour them regardless of merger. What happens on expiration is a different matter. This is considered further in Paragraph 33.
32. SMM has the Church and the Presbytery. The Deanery understands and has noted that for as long as Fr. Simon has any responsibility for SMM or any other part of the Newman Cluster, he and his family will remain resident at 59 Perry Common Road. Obviously, if he receives an episcopal mandate to take up another responsibility that of necessity requires a residential move, then that will be a different matter. However, absent such a mandate, a residential move will not be happening. Consequently, there is a possible scenario in which Parish N will not have a resident Parish Priest. Rather, Parish N could be entrusted to the Ordinariate with the same priest appointed as PP of both Parish N and SMM just as Fr. Thé and before Fr. Eamonn were appointed as PP of both CTK and OLAM.
33. If there is no resident PP in Parish N then the prospect arises of the presbytery at CTK being surplus to requirements. The Archdiocese, as charity, will be obliged to consider what could be raised if the property were sold for development in some form or other, especially in the light of a paper on finances which is included as Appendix Two.
34. Parking arrangements in the Cluster are as follows: CTK has no dedicated parking other than three spaces in the Church forecourt. Cars driven to Mass at CTK are either parked on the surrounding streets or, by kind arrangement with the proprietors, in the car park of the nearby Kingstanding Inn. SMM adjoins a public recreation space and therefore has the benefit of the adjacent public municipal car park. OLAM has a dedicated car park which is more than sufficient for all ordinary needs with some overflow spaces at the Maryvale Community Centre.
- 33.[23.] Against that context, the particular problems associated with OLAM's Church have to be considered. The parish Church at OLAM is no longer fit for purpose. There is a consensus on that from the Parish Council. It is unlikely to be cost effective to undertake the repairs identified in the Quinquennial Report because the building is far too large for the actual congregation even allowing for reasonable growth and, in any case, it is almost impossible to heat adequately. Furthermore, it is not possible to have a full participative and communal experience of Mass when there a whole benches in between each individual worshipper.
35. The Archdiocese currently has two possible solutions under review with the aim of reaching a definitive conclusion by the end of 2025. They are:

- a. Allow Parish N to occupy as its own dedicated place of worship the ground floor chapel at the Maryvale Institute. With this would also come custodianship of the sacred heart chapel on the floor above. The specialist property investment advisers retained by the Archdiocese, Savills, have suggested that by designating the chapels and ancillary offices as under the care of Parish N, the remainder of the site would be easier to market. Savill are currently undertaking what is known as soft marketing. This means that instead of general advertising, they approach specific potential purchasers directly to gauge interest.
- b. Sell the current Church building at OLAM to Cardinal Wiseman who would use it as a 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre. They would construct two additional floors. The place of worship would be on the ground floor with ancillary offices. The actual worship space would be designed for 200 people and so half the size of the current one.

36. The question of which place of worship would become the hub Church depends on which of these solutions is eventually adopted. If Parish N takes over the Maryvale Institute chapels then on the grounds of size alone, CTK would have to be the hub Church. However, if the Cardinal Wiseman option is adopted, then given the fact of the car park, the decision is much more balanced.
37. The current view of the Archdiocese seems to be that moving to the Maryvale Institue Chapels would be preferable since this would help to preserve them as a religious centre, especially if St John Henry New is declared a Doctor of the Church. However, it must be acknowledged that with the parish community, there is a considerable anxiety as to whether this preference is financially viable given the scale of works needed to bring the chapels and ancillary accommodation up to appropriate standards for public worship. There is a body of support for Option (b).

#### *For finances*

- 38.[37.] Apart from potential training and salary costs mentioned earlier, either of the above solutions would require funds to be generated by the sale of the current building on Old Oscott Hill. Furthermore, additional funding for conversion works would also be required which implies a sustained programme under the care of a dedicated fundraising committee in conjunction with a hospitality/social committee. It was agreed that future discussion on finances would have to await a subsequent meeting at which Finance was on the agenda and appropriate papers would be needed in connection with that agenda item.



### Section Three: Cultural Change and Conversion

- 39.[38.] The changes envisaged above imply much more commitment from the Parish Council which will shortly be reformed as the Parish Pastoral Council operating in accordance with regulations issued by the Archbishop. The members of the Parish Pastoral Council will be operating as Ministers of Governance and will be seeking to involve many more parishioners in the projects. Whilst the parish priest of Parish N will ultimately have the final say (for he alone is answerable to the Archbishop), these changes must see the end of the cultural view that everything has to be left to Father and he must take all the decisions. Furthermore, these changes offer a golden opportunity to entrench synodality in the life of our United Catholic Community.
- 40.[39.] Referring to the theological foundations explained at the start of this paper, the changes envisaged also require each parishioner to live their baptismal vocation intentionally. It will no longer be sufficient for a parishioner simply to come to Mass and go home again without any wider contribution appropriate to age and circumstances. The biblical basis for that assertion is 1 Corinthians 12: 7-11: “To each is given the manifestation of **the Spirit for the common good**. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.” It is in order to awaken that sense of each person’s baptismal vocation that the Divine Renovation Ministry has been invited into our United Catholic Community. More information about this is given in Appendix 3.
- 41.[40.] Yet further cultural change is needed. With fewer masses being celebrated, it will no longer be possible for everyone to have a Mass celebrated to mark occasions. Other forms of worship must be explored most notably the Divine Office of the Church which is an integral part of Christ’s mediatory prayer. Moreover, since 1983 there has been provision for lay preaching at services other than Mass. Suitably qualified lay faithful can, under certain circumstances, act as official witness at marriages. Since 1990, in England and Wales, they can also conduct funerals. Thus there was already ample provision for lay leadership of services of worship other than Mass. Note: lay leadership – not male leadership. However, Pope Francis went further and by extending the office of Lector and Acolyte to both men and women, he opened the door to lay leaders of worship having a stable office within the Church.
- 42.[41.] Sponsoring and promoting the cultural change necessary for these developments to be accepted peaceably will not be easy. However, Parish N would be in a good position to make a start because of the renewal and impetus that a merger would inevitably bring.

Discussion on this section opened up a wide range of comments which I have grouped together thematically as follows:

#### **Ambience of Masses at OLAM and CTK**

It is accepted that currently there is a very different feel to Masses at each venue. If there is to be a fusion of the parishes will there also be a fusion of the styles? If we really want a single united Catholic community then there will surely have to be. Some changes we can prepare for others we must see what develops and react. It is a difficult message to get across but the inevitability of the merger has been accepted by this meeting and needs to be underlined to both congregations. There was a view that the significance and size of the changes about to come upon us had not yet been fully grasped by the majority of the congregations.

#### **Involving more people in the discussion**

It was accepted that attendance at meetings at whatever time of day or whatever day of the week was not always possible for everybody and so we need to identify other ways of giving feedback. What we are embarking on here is the wholesale change of a mindset which has been accepted by many people as the only way to be Catholic.

### **Developing a stronger sense of community**

This had two aspects: worship and involvement in governance. As far as worship was concerned, we had to look at different ways of worship and preaching. As far as governance was concerned, we need to engage, enable and empower. The two are related and to achieve these ends we need to hold a mirror up to ourselves. Deacon Gary confirmed that this was precisely what the Divine Renovation initiative was designed to do. The overall point under this heading was that if we want cultural change then we have to do things differently.

The observation was also made that developing a sense of belong from which flows commitment is the fundamental cultural change we need. The Gospel must be the foundation of everything. This is also a key message of the Divine Renovation initiative.

### **Involving more people in ministry**

Is more firmness in our language required? At present there seem to be more barriers to greater lay involvement than solutions. It was recommended that we confer with other parishes where volunteer recruitment has been more successful.

A suggestion was made that if we wish to receive a broader range of opinions and widen the group from whom feedback was needed then we had to be more specific about the agenda of any future meetings and seek to provide opportunities for feedback either within or just after Sunday Mass.

### **Catechesis for lay ministry**

There was a consensus that more catechesis for lay ministry was required but a plea that it be not overwhelming. What follow up could there be, for example, to the recently run Sycamore course for the parents of the children preparing for sacraments?

In answer to a specific question, Deacon Gary said that we could not simply rely on a continuing supply of priests from abroad., The immigration controls are such that it is not straightforward and it would divert attention from the fact that we need to educate the lay faithful into different ways of being a Catholic.

#### **Section Four: Relationship of Parish N to full merger with St Margaret Mary**

- 43.[42.] As previously explained, the creation of Parish N from a fusion of CTK and OLAM is but the first stage of a process that will end with the complete merger of Parish N and SMM. Once the parish name has been determined, all the buildings issues have been resolved and all the civil legal business completed, there is no reason why the decree of merger cannot be issued. At that point the Archbishop will have to decide whether the Newman Cluster can continue to justify having two parish priests for within the Cluster for three places of worship within easy travelling distance of each other. There is therefore a possible scenario in which, as mentioned, Parish N will be entrusted to the PP of SMM.
- 44.[43.] If that happens, then consideration will be given to whether the Parish Deacons will be entrusted with a formal responsibility to share in the pastoral care of Parish N. This would differ from the work they do now in that within their defined remits they would have powers of governance. In Deanery discussions, Bishop David Evans has remarked in general terms that this may be a genuine outcome in some cases. In such circumstances, the Parish Deacons would maintain a Parish sub-Office close to the places of worship to ensure accessibility and visibility of parish leadership.
- 45.[44.] As and when the full merger of Parish N and SMM occurs, then the Newman Cluster would automatically be dissolved because however Parish N and SMM are merged, they would become likewise one single entity.

#### **Section Five: Next steps in the Consultation Process**

- 46.[45.] The next General Meeting of the Cluster after this one will be on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2025. In preparation for that meeting, the following needs to happen:

Action	Who
Notify the Chancellor, Canon Ray Corbett that merger is under discussion	Gary
Prepare a 2 <sup>nd</sup> Draft of this paper incorporating amendments responding to comments from the General Meeting on	Gary
Pray about what has been said and discuss it within your personal networks in the parish.	All
Collate views received from members of the parish who have read the document on the website but have not attended meetings	Parish Pastoral Council
Confer with New Heights and the Schools regarding the implications of these proposals for them.	Designated Parish Pastoral Council Members.
Reconvene on 21 <sup>st</sup> September with a view to coming to a consensus on a final draft which in turn can be used as a basis for a presentation to the Council of Priests.	All Gary Fr. Thé-Quang

## Appendix One

### The Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham

[Details extracted from [www.ordinariate.org.uk](http://www.ordinariate.org.uk)]

The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham is a diocese-like structure within the Episcopal Conference of England and Wales. This new structure within the Catholic Church is a generous and pioneering attempt to heal the division between Anglicans and Catholics. It enables Anglicans to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church whilst preserving elements of our liturgical, spiritual and pastoral heritage.

The Ordinariate was established on 15 January 2011 as a direct result of the Apostolic Constitution, '*Anglicanorum coetibus*' issued by Pope Benedict XVI. As members of the Ordinariate, we rejoice in the full peace of knowing that we are in full communion with the Catholic Church. Members of the Ordinariate are no longer part of any other communion, such as the Anglican Communion.

The members of the Ordinariate bring gifts to the Catholic Church for mutual enrichment, between those baptised and nurtured in the Anglican tradition and the Catholic Church. Anglican patrimony can be understood to be those elements of the Anglican tradition which have sustained and nurtured the faith of those in the Ordinariate. This includes spiritual writings, prayers and music, as well as those pastoral practices distinctive to the Anglican tradition. So, for the first time in its history, Anglican services, such as Evensong, are now being celebrated in the Catholic Church by canonically recognised groups of former Anglicans.

Whereas membership to a diocese is based on where you live, membership of the Ordinariate is on a 'personal' basis. In other words, no matter where a member of the Ordinariate lives, within England & Wales, they will in the first instance be under the ordinary ecclesial jurisdiction of the Ordinariate, and not the diocese.

Following reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church, laity and religious become members of the Ordinariate by enrolment in a register. In the case of the ordination of priests and deacons, they are directly incardinated into (placed under the jurisdiction of) the Ordinariate.

Walsingham, often referred to as 'England's Nazareth' has been a site of major pilgrimage for nearly a thousand years.

All of our ministry is under the mantle of Mary. Our Lady of Walsingham.

## Appendix Two

### Financial Information supplied by the Archdiocese

#### Why do we need to fundraise?

- To respond to the combination of long-term inflation, exceptional increase in energy costs and falling mass attendance
- To make our parishes fit for the future – attractive, warm, safe, clean, environmentally friendly
- To secure our parishes for future generations
- To invest in and deliver the four themes of the vision – formation, liturgy and worship, evangelisation and social outreach

#### Context

- Offertory Income has increased by 3% or **£220k** from £7.20m to £7.42m between 2013 and 2023
- If our offertory had increased in line with inflation (49%) the offertory would have increased by **£3.55m** to £10.74m in 2023
- Over the ten years the cumulative ‘loss’ of income is close to **£10m**, with the last three years being particularly challenging due to energy and property costs
- Mass attendance fell by **30%** from 66k to 45k impacting income
- Parish giving per person over the period has increased by £1.07 per person per week from £2.17 to £3.24 – 49% in line with inflation
- (Preliminary figures indicate that in 2024 average giving rose by 0.11p to £3.33 – an increase of 2.7%, approximately in line with inflation)
- In 2023 almost 50% of parishes had an operating deficit meaning they are using reserves or selling assets to fund day to day operations or adding to their overdraft
- Many parishes have significant building liabilities. Property related costs are typically the highest outgoing for parishes. Many parishes simply cannot finance their existing property in the long term
- All the above leaves little to invest in the vision and/or secure the future of the parish
- Good stewardship requires us to respond and change, and we need to do it quickly

#### Impact

- A **£1** (30%) increase in giving per week would increase the offertory by **£2 340 000** per year across the archdiocese (Mass Attendance of 45 000 x £1 x 52 weeks = £2.34m)
- A Costa coffee increase of £3.50 would increase income by **£7m** per year
- Gift Aiding 50% of the above would add between £250 and £750k
- What would be the impact in your parish?
- How would you use the additional income to support the parish vision?
- How will you manage if you don’t do it?

## Appendix Three: Divine Renovation

Divine Renovation is a ministry which has its origins in Canada which has suffered widespread lapsation over many years. A Parish Priest, Fr. James Mallon, who was the Pastor of St Benedict's in Halifax, Nova Scotia became disillusioned with the annual experience of seeing a church full of people for the conferral of First Holy Communion and Confirmation upon candidates who had not previously been to Mass and who had no intention of coming to Mass again after each sacrament except possibly for their funeral. He decided to do something about it and his Bishop backed him up. He wrote about his experiences and founded the Divine Renovation ministry to help other parishes make the same journey. It is now a global ministry and many parishes in the Archdiocese have welcomed this ministry into their parish life.

A key phrase for Divine Renovation is "intentional disciple". An intentional disciple is one who is conscious of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. An intentional disciple is one who does not habitually talk about "being too busy to come to Mass" or "life getting in the way of coming to Mass". An intentional disciple does not regard football on Sunday as an automatic exemption from keeping the Sabbath holy. An intentional disciple understands that by virtue of baptism we all share in the common priesthood of all the faithful and out of that common priesthood some men are called to be ministerial priests. An intentional disciple understands that each and every single one of the baptised faithful has a call to holiness and a call to participate fully in the mission of the Church as priest, prophet and king.

As discussed at length in previous General Meetings of the Cluster and reported in subsequent supplements to the weekly Newsletter, our United Catholic Community is embarking upon this journey. The programme we are using is called the Genesis Compass. The programme is modelled on the first narrative of the Creation as contained in Genesis 1:1 -2:2. Each module within the programme takes its theme and its focus from one of the seven days of Creation. So there are seven modules. Each Module lasts several weeks. The Steering Group has just begun Module One: Missional Prayer and this will last until 4<sup>th</sup> June. During this time the Steering Group gathers for an intense period of prayer. The fruits of that prayer are then shared with our United Catholic Community. The impact of that sharing will be assessed on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. The full programme looks like this:

Day 1: "In the beginning... the Spirit hovered over the waters	Missional Prayer
Day2: Let there be light	Forming and casting a vision
Day 3: Seeds, vegetation and fruit upon the earth	(re)Planting and evangelisation initiative
Day 4: Sun and moon to rule the day and night	Building a Leadership Team
Day 5: Living creatures: be fruitful and multiply	Enhancing the Sunday Experience
Day 6: Let us make man in our own image	Becoming the leader that you are
Day 7: God rests after completing his work	Sabbath

The Steering Group comprises Fr. Thé, Deacons Dominic and Gary, the Sisters, Patience Iwuka, Jackie Scott. There is an overlap between this group and those leading Youth Alpha in Cardinal Wiseman.