



DIOCESE OF GALLOWAY

Message to Parishes of St Joseph's Deanery (East Ayrshire)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I am writing to inform you of some medium-term changes that will be happening in your parishes from September. As you know, we have a small number of priests available to us compared to previous years and so, I have to determine the best way for them to fulfil their ministry with and for you.

Specifically, now that Fr Philip Kitchen has retired, we have one fewer priest in the local area. I am grateful to Fr Kitchen for his years of ministry and am also grateful to the other clergy who work so hard in the Lord's vineyard.

To give us time to find the best long-term solution, including the continued possibility (but not guarantee) of priests coming from elsewhere, I have decided, with the agreement of the priests involved, that the following will be the case for the next six months:

Fr Erasmus Egenonu will move into St John's Cumnock as administrator of that parish as well as Our Lady of Lourdes & St Patrick's, Auchinleck and St Thomas the Apostle, Muirkirk.

In addition to their duties in Kilmarnock, Fr Stephen McGrattan will become administrator of St Paul's, Hurlford and St Sophia's, Galston with the pastoral support of Fr Kevin Rennie. They will continue to reside in St Joseph's, Kilmarnock.

I am grateful to Frs Erasmus, Stephen and Kevin for agreeing to this and for their generosity

These changes will take place on the first weekend of September and last for six months. This will give us a little bit of breathing space to look for longer-term solutions across the Diocese.

I have written to you as a diocese in past months to make you aware of the difficulties we have in manning parishes and to ask you to be prepared for this. I know that this will be unwelcome news for some of you, and I ask you to understand that these decisions are not taken lightly. I also want to engage with you in the months to come and so I will make a formal visitation of St Joseph's Deanery in autumn and winter this year. This will include the Sunday Masses, and also meetings with the parish and deanery pastoral councils and I look forward to joining you in prayer and discussion.

In the meantime, I invite you to continue to pray for your priests, to pray for the diocese and to pray for vocations to the priesthood.

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This weekend we celebrate the great Solemnity of the Assumption. As we listen to Mary's great hymn of praise, the Magnificat, let us follow her example in placing our hope and trust in the constant presence and saving action of our loving God.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



+ Francis Dougan
Bishop of Galloway

Changes to Mass Times in St Joseph's Deanery from Saturday 5th / Sunday 6th September

One of the difficulties faced by moving from four priests to three in the deanery is that each priest would celebrate three weekend Masses at approximately the same times meaning it becomes impossible for us to cover for one another when a priest is on leave or occupied with another ministry at the weekend. While we are very grateful to the retired priests for covering Sunday Masses, there are times when they are unavailable or helping in other parishes of the diocese (and sometimes further afield). It also becomes unreasonable to expect retired priests to celebrate three weekend Masses in succession. To manage this new situation, the Vigil Masses in St Joseph's, Kilmarnock, and St Sophia's, Galston, will be staggered so that when there is a need one priest can celebrate both Masses or assist in another parish. From Saturday 5th September, the Vigil Mass at St Sophia's will be celebrated at 4.30 pm.

From 6th September, the Sunday Mass in St Paul's, Hurlford, will begin slightly earlier at 9.15 am to allow the priest time to be with parishioners after Sunday Mass at St Paul's and travel to St Joseph's and prepare for 11 am Mass.

While an effort will be made to celebrate the present number of Sunday Masses, there may arise occasions when a Sunday Mass cannot be covered in some parishes at times, and parishioners will be asked to go to Mass in another parish. As much notice as is possible will be given when this arises. In St Joseph's Deanery, we are entering another stage of the journey of collaboration and rationalisation which Bishop Frank has been preparing us for in these last months, and which has already been discussed at length with the parish councils and the deanery pastoral council. It will be important to continue to work together with missionary spirit as and when further necessary changes are introduced.

Weekend Masses time in St Joseph's Deanery from 5th/6th September

Saturday Vigil

4.30 pm	St Sophia's, Galston
6.00 pm	Our Lady of Lourdes & St Patrick's, Auchinleck
6.00 pm	St Joseph's, Kilmarnock

Sunday

9.00 am	St Thomas the Apostle, Muirkirk
9.15 am	St Paul's, Hurlford
9.30 am	St Matthew's, Kilmarnock
11.00 am	St John the Evangelist, Cumnock
11.00 am	St Joseph's, Kilmarnock
11.30 am	Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Kilmarnock

Fr Stephen McGrattan, Fr Erasmus Egenonu, Fr Kevin Rennie