

15th October 2023

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ in Portsmouth,

YOU WILL BE MY WITNESSES

You are warmly invited to a public meeting which will take place at **6pm on Monday 13th November** in the hall in the Cathedral Discovery Centre. The meeting's purpose will be to begin the process of preparing a pastoral plan for the Portsmouth Pastoral Area.

Last month, the final version of our diocesan ten-year plan, *You Will Be My Witnesses*, in response to the bishop's vision – *Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church* – was published. It is the fruit of an extensive consultation and discernment across the diocese over several years. You may find a copy of the plan on the diocesan website at www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/you-will-be-my-witnesses.

Here in the Portsmouth Pastoral Area, the Cathedral, St Swithun with Our Lady of Lourdes, and Corpus Christi with St Joseph, have been entrusted with the task by the end of March 2024 of preparing:

- a) A local plan, indicating areas of focus for mission.
- b) An outline estate plan, indicating how we can best use our buildings and financial resources to achieve this local plan.
- c) Milestones for the amalgamation of our current parishes into one canonical parish.

These items will then be sent to the bishop for review and approval.

To make our meeting as focused, efficient, and effective as possible, there will be questions provided for attendees to discuss. In advance of the meeting, please consider what *realistic* and *concrete* steps we ought to take over the next ten years to achieve the bishop's vision in each of its key areas:

- 1) A Christ-centred Church – liturgy, ongoing formation of clergy and laity, and evangelisation.
- 2) Missionary Communities – focused on mission and service, inspiring and nurturing our young people, and a Church looking beyond its walls.
- 3) Prudent stewards – how our structures need to change, how we can best steward our existing assets and how we ought to invest our resources (people, money, and property) in the future to achieve our plan.

Please come to the meeting with *constructive* suggestions to make as to the future of our pastoral area.

In the meantime, let us invoke the Holy Spirit to guide us all in our deliberations, and may our patron saints intercede for us as we embark on this new and exciting phase of mission in our city.

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