



Diocese of Plymouth
From the Office of the Bishop

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20th May 2015

NOTE ON NEW VICARIATE FOR EVANGELISATION, CATECHESIS AND SCHOOLS

Fr Jon Bielawski, as the new Episcopal Vicar, has been conducting a number of consultations in order to assist the work of the Vicariate, so that it meets the foci of the Pastoral Message, "It is the Lord", on Parishes, Schools and Youth. To strengthen our work and outreach I have asked David Wells to concentrate his efforts more fully on support for the mission of our schools; encouraging a new vigour and approach in these particular local communities. I am grateful to David for his generosity in being open to this new challenge, and grateful, too, to John Mannix and CAST, for working with the Diocese so closely to facilitate fresher evangelisation efforts in, and from, our schools.

Plymouth CAST have taken on some of the statutory diocesan responsibilities for schools, and this means I am in a position to reallocate school subscriptions to this direct work on evangelisation in our schools. This enables the re-allocation of resources in the Vicariate to look at direct support of the work of evangelisation for parishes and with young people. Therefore, these changes are cost neutral, and do not require an increase in either the parish levy or in school subscriptions.

Fr Jon Bielawski, in collaboration with the Bishop's Council, is looking at the best combination of roles for effective parish support and I am grateful that David is supporting this process, prior to his own role changing in September. Alongside this, John Mannix is working with David to structure the new school support work. I am grateful that Fr Gerard Wilberforce will continue to offer his expertise and support in the accompaniment of our diocesan schools and Plymouth CAST. Fr Jon (for the parishes) and John Mannix (for the schools) will circulate more information as the details of the new arrangements are finalised. But it might be worth noting, at this point, that Catechetical projects such as the Catholic Certificate of Studies will continue as part of the provision provided in the new arrangements.

At this time of transition within the Diocese I would like to record my thanks especially to David Wells for the generous service he has given to so many in supporting our parishes over the past 15 years. I know that many priests and lay people have cause to be grateful for the pioneering work he has done, and on a personal note, I want to thank him for his kindness and support to me since I arrived in the Diocese. I am really pleased

that we are not losing him from our Diocesan Evangelisation efforts, and I know that he will continue to make an equally outstanding contribution to the work and mission of our schools. Please pray for Fr Jon, David and John, and all involved, as this vital provision takes shape. I hope it will help all of us be more effective in being the Lord's 'missionary disciples' and in sharing the joy of the Gospel with our needy world.

With my kindest wishes and prayers.

Yours devotedly

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Mark O'Toole .". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning and a period at the end.

Rt Rev Mark O'Toole
Bishop of Plymouth