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Dear Parishioners

Thank you very much for all those who have taken the time so far to respond to the letter about proposed changes to Mass times. There are still a few weeks to feedback and I will then respond in due course after having discussed your comments with the pastoral development group. However, there is one concern that was raised by a number of people that I wish to respond to immediately, and that concerns the future of the Church. Some people asked if the intention is to close the Church. I want to assure you that the process of changing the mass times is not a prelude to shutting the Church. In fact the whole point of this process is to secure the future of both communities by being served by one priest.

As the Bishop wrote in his recent pastoral letter:-

“I am sometimes asked whether it is my plan to close parishes. I would suggest this is the wrong question to ask. The real question is surely this: how can we continue our mission in every part of the Diocese? I hope we will always be realistic enough to recognise situations where we can no longer sustain a parish structure or a church building. However, it has never been my wish to see parishes close. Indeed, it has been a great joy as your bishop to celebrate Mass in every parish, and to see how the Church's mission continues through your faithfulness. This reminds us that the answer to the challenges we face today will always be found in the simple and demanding call to be true to the faith we have received.”

I hope this goes some way to reassuring you.

With prayers and best wishes

Fr Jonathan.

