

# DIOCESE OF SALFORD



## *Pastoral Letter of the Right Reverend John Arnold Bishop of Salford*

*To be read in all Churches on the weekend of 1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup> April 2017,  
the Fifth Sunday of Lent.*

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I am writing this very brief letter to inform you all that the diocesan consultation has now closed. In the parish re-structuring document published in January, I asked a number of parishes to give further consideration to their own situation. Feedback received by the end of February has allowed me to make proposals for each of those parishes which were communicated to them last weekend.

The various proposals that have been put forward must now begin to be gradually implemented. Judging from correspondence that I have received and recent meetings with the Deans and priests, there would seem to be a strong consensus that the formal consultation should be started as soon as possible in those situations where one priest is already responsible for two or more parishes. In time further steps will be taken to initiate the process in other parishes. Each parish and community will be contacted directly as the canonical process is begun for each proposal. We will keep everyone informed as to how each series of events happen to trigger further amalgamations.

There has been much positive collaboration by priests, religious and people throughout the consultation and I am confident that, despite the upheaval of change and the personal disappointment that may be felt by many, the changes are a realistic response to the changing circumstances in which we live. We have every reason to be optimistic about the development of parishes in which we may all fulfil our vocation as missionary disciples and ambassadors for Christ.

Please make every effort to welcome those who may feel saddened by change. Exciting initiatives are being looked at to help parishes move forward with fewer priests but greater involvement by parishioners supporting the work of the ministerial priesthood. Let us look with hope to the future and build communities where Gospel values are lived and Works of Mercy are developed for the benefit of all.

“Stay with us, Lord, on our journey”

With my prayers and good wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+John". The plus sign is small and positioned to the left of the name "John", which is written in a cursive, slightly slanted script.

+John  
Bishop of Salford