



26 March 2010

Pastoral Letter
To the people of the Diocese of Cairns

My dear People,

With the death of Fr Peter Vandeleur, some changes in our serving of parishes become necessary.

Fr Pat McKenna, for the time being - till year's end – has agreed to assume pastoral oversight of the West Cairns parish, in addition to his pastor's responsibilities for St Joseph's, Parramatta Park. This will entail Pat moving residence to West Cairns. Fr Laurie Timms (a Carmelite) is coming at mid-year as chaplain to St. Augustine's College and he will live in the St Joseph's Presbytery.

For the time being, Fr McKenna will celebrate the 6.30am Sunday Mass at the Cathedral, then the 8.30am at St Joseph's and the Sunday evening Mass at West Cairns (moved half an hour later to 6.30pm.) Usually I will celebrate the 8am Mass at West Cairns and the other weekend Cathedral Masses.

Fr McKenna has also been caring for Mother of Good Counsel parish and school at North Cairns. After Easter Fr Miah McSweeny has generously agreed to take over as Priest-in-Charge at North Cairns, while still residing at his retirement unit.

The North Cairns Mass will continue to be Saturday 5.30pm, with other Masses, for classes, school etc. to be arranged as needed.

Fr Tom Mullins, recently retired from the Thursday Island parish, will take up residence early this week at Fr Vandeleur's unit at Coral Sea Gardens. He will assume the chaplaincy role Mons. Walsh had done at both Bethlehem Home and Coral Sea Gardens – a Mass every day at 9.30am – Sunday included - at the Bethlehem chapel and a Sunday Mass at Coral Sea Gardens at 10.15am.

Weekday Masses in the central Cairns city parishes need to be rationalized.

Absolutely guaranteed will be the 7.45am Mass at the Cathedral – Monday to Saturday. At Our Lady Help of Christians, Earlville, there will be 6.30am Mass: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and a 6.00pm Mass on Wednesday.

Usually, but with less absolute guarantee, will be a 7.00am Mass at St Joseph's, Parramatta Park, on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and at St Francis Xavier's, West Cairns, on Thursday and Friday 6.30am and Saturday 7.00am.

Circumstance permitting, there will also usually be a daily Mass at Bethlehem chapel at 9.30am.

These Mass arrangements mean that no priest should have to celebrate more than one Mass on a weekday – which is general Church practice.

Fr Michael Morahan O.S.A., formerly principal of Villanova College in Brisbane, has been engaged to head the Religious Education department of Catholic Education Services, Cairns. Michael will arrive after Easter.

Thanks for your understanding. Further provisions for priestly ministry will be negotiated in the course of this year.

Longer term, though, we all need to pray and work for local vocations to religious life diaconate and priesthood for this Diocese.

As signs of hope we do have now a student for the diocese at Holy Spirit Seminary Banyo – the first in quite a number of years. Another has made firm commitment to Seminary studies next year.

May the Lord *send more workers to the vineyard.*

Yours truly in Christ ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Foley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**+ James Foley
BISHOP OF CAIRNS**