

**CHANGES TO THE GOVERNING STRUCTURES OF THE  
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH**

*Summary by the Bishop and Trustees of the Diocese*

February 2013

## **Foreword by the Bishop of Portsmouth**

*Christ is currently calling His Church to undertake a 'New Evangelisation', one that is "new in its ardour, new in its methods, and new in its expression" (Pope John Paul II. Speech to CELAM assembly, 9 March 1983). It is new, too, because of the changing context in which we offer the Gospel -- a culture which is ever less supportive of Christian witness, which demands that we focus harder on the threefold journey of call, through formation, to mission.*

*At the heart of this renewal of energies and resources is a more intense focus on the person of Jesus Christ and to discipleship of Him within His Body, the Church. This was the chief reason I chose for my episcopal motto *In Corde Iesu (In the Heart of Jesus)*. Jesus Christ is the centre of our Christian Faith: He is the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). Filled with His love, we reach out to in service of others, especially the poor and needy, so that justice may be done and all may find peace, communion and happiness.*

*Last year, when I became the Bishop of Portsmouth, I discovered that through the diocesan pastoral plan *Go Out and Bear Fruit* our diocese had already begun to address the questions raised by the need for the *New Evangelisation*; and through the *Living Our Faith* campaign, the people of the diocese have generously provided the resources to enable it to happen.*

*The final piece in the jigsaw was a review of the formal structures of governance and the operation of the diocesan curia. This, too, was begun by Bishop Crispian, who established an expert Review Group that for the past 18 months has examined how best the pastoral administration of the diocese can be shaped to serve the *New Evangelisation*. Over the last five months, since my appointment as Bishop of Portsmouth, I have been glad to have been able to contribute to the Review a theological vision which I believe should underpin the governance of the diocese.*

*The new shape of the pastoral administration which has emerged from this process is outlined and explained in the pages that follow. The new structure seeks to make a theological and practical shift to a more dynamic administration by being totally focused on Christ and his three-fold ministry of sanctifying, teaching and shepherding. This is the ministry the Bishop exercises in Christ's name; the curia or pastoral administration exists to assist the Bishop in his exercise of this three-fold ministry.*

*I am very grateful to the Review Group and to all who have helped to bring about the new structure, and also to the trustees for their wisdom and their courage. I am aware, of course, that to change a structure or *modus operandi* is far from painless. The new structure will involve a certain amount of upheaval and it will demand different ways of working. Yet I am convinced that in the end it will go a long way to enabling us to proclaim anew, and to propose more eloquently, the Good News of Jesus Christ to the people of our time.*

*In Corde Iesu*

*+Philip*

## **1. Background**

The Diocese of Portsmouth serves over 140,000 Catholics across central southern England (Hampshire & the Isle of Wight, Berkshire, South Oxfordshire and part of Dorset) and the Channel Islands. Each Sunday nearly 40,000 people attend Sunday Mass in 153 churches, served by 146 diocesan priests and 41 deacons. The Church in Portsmouth educates more than 28,000 pupils in 54 Catholic state-funded schools and academies as well as 27 Catholic independent schools. In the last five years, two brand new churches have been built to accommodate worshippers: three more are being planned. And the Diocese has built five pastoral centres in the same period, in order to support our work with the young and old, the poor, vulnerable and marginalised in the wider community.

The review of the governance of Portsmouth Diocese is the final stage in a nine-year process that began in 2004 with a major grassroots consultation involving 11,000 responses and an 18-month period of reflection and prayer whose watchwords were ‘communion’ and ‘mission’. The vision which resulted, the 2005 Pastoral Plan *Go Out and Bear Fruit*, led to the creation of new Pastoral Areas with leadership teams, to ensure that Sunday Mass was accessible to as many people as possible. There was a strong emphasis on the need for formation in catechesis, spirituality, liturgy etc., which would be offered to the Pastoral Areas mostly through the Department for Pastoral Formation. The Plan also raised awareness of the need to resource this new activity through a Stewardship programme, which allowed parishes to audit the “time, treasure and talents” of each parish. From Autumn 2005 around 30 parishes carried out this review, and identified their priorities and needs.

This review in turn led to a campaign, *Living Our Faith*, to mobilise resources. Between 2008 and 2010 over £13m was pledged over five years by the faithful of the diocese to fund the priorities identified by the parishes: £6m was earmarked to fund the particular activities of individual parishes, while the rest was allocated to cross-diocesan funds to pay for the support and training of clergy (£2.75m); the formation of lay people at the level of parishes and pastoral areas (£2.75m); and maintaining and upgrading facilities (£1.65m). The funds raised through *Living Our Faith* marked a very considerable increase in the resources available for the mission of the diocese.

## **2. The context of the Review**

During the above processes of review and growth, the structure of the Curia – the central administration of the Diocese – remained unaltered. In order to consider how best to adapt diocesan governance to better serve the new needs of the Church in Portsmouth, Bishop

Crispian appointed a Review Group, which has been in progress since February 2012. It has had six aims: 1) to ensure good governance of Portsmouth Diocese and its compliance with charitable procedures and law; 2) to review the operation of the Curia, its governance and effectiveness in support of parishes and its relationship to them; 3) to recommend processes to provide effective administration at a parish level; 4) to enable the Diocese to achieve an annual balanced budget by withdrawing or streamlining services, without harming the mission of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Portsmouth; 5) to examine the role, engagement and support of the clergy; and 6) to design a dynamic Curia with sufficient funds available to make an appropriate and rapid response to emerging priorities and initiatives.

The Review Group was asked to consider those aims conscious of a number of priorities:

- (i) a growing deficit in the budget allocated to cover the costs of the Curia;
- (ii) the need to create greater effective oversight by the Trustees of the various curial functions, and to make a clear distinction between management and governance;
- (iii) the need to make greater use of the skills, gifts and resources of the clergy, both priests and deacons, and to support and consult them more while, of course, continuing to make use of the skills, gifts and resources of lay people.
- (iv) to have a governing structure which better reflects the bishop's three roles as priest, prophet and king, bringing the requirements of charity law and practice into closer connection with these three ministries of sanctification, teaching and governance.

The first priority required change. The Review has taken place against the background of a growing deficit in the Curia's budget, one that reflects rising costs. Although the finances of the Diocese as a whole – as result of the *Living Our Faith* campaign mentioned above – are healthy, the funds were raised expressly for the pastoral priorities and needs of the parishes, and cannot be used to cover rising costs of diocesan governance. Nor can those costs be met by increasing the contribution from parishes, currently at 20-25% of their income; any further levy increase would place an unreasonable and unjust burden on parishes.

Other considerations also became apparent in the course of the Review's consultation of key groups within the Diocese who were touched directly by curial governance, namely clergy, pastoral administrators, heads of diocesan schools, etc. A consistent theme was concern over the concentration and centralisation of resources in the Department for Pastoral Formation. Over time, the Department has expanded to meet the demands of Go

Out and Bear Fruit, and has done some excellent work. Yet one unintended consequence of concentrating pastoral objectives -- catechesis, liturgy, formation, etc. – in the Department has been perceived as a disempowering of clergy and parishes. Many complained that, as a result, the gifts and talents within parishes and among clergy were not being adequately used. To take an example: the number of lay catechists has been in steady decline over the last few years, from 1,733 in 2007 to 1,430 in 2012. Yet an increasing number of Pastoral Areas have preferred to employ directly their own catechists.

The Department for Pastoral Formation, as the only department of the Curia that is not strictly essential to the fulfilment of the Trust's legal duties and charitable objectives, was an unavoidable place for the Review Group to consider making the savings necessary to balance the curial budget. But the primary consideration behind the decision to close the Department was the compelling evidence that the pastoral aims of *Go Out and Bear Fruit* would be more effectively delivered by devolving to pastoral areas and parishes the primary responsibility for catechesis and formation, while creating a new Department (for New Evangelisation) to support, facilitate and free up resources for to enable a more intense focus. It is hoped that the result will be to enable more catechesis and formation, and of a more consistent quality, across the Diocese. Similarly, the Review Group reached the conclusion that other elements of the Pastoral Plan – liturgical formation, marriage preparation, stewardship, etc. – will be better delivered by devolving and coordinating these activities, rather than seeking to provide them centrally.

### **3. Changes as result of the Review**

The following changes in the structure of curial governance and in the delivery of the priorities of the Pastoral Plan will take place over the next 18 months.

#### Governance

- (i) The Curia will be reorganised into three Episcopal Vicariates, for Vocation, Education and Evangelisation, each to be headed by an Episcopal Vicar who is directly responsible to the Bishop for the activity of that Vicariate. Together with the Bishop and Vicars General, the Episcopal Vicars will form the Bishop's Council. (The remainder of the reorganisation of the Curia is shown in the 'Functional/Operational Oversight of the Curia' diagram at the end of this document).

- (ii) Each Vicariate will be subdivided into two departments. The Department for Vocation (covering priesthood, diaconate, ecclesial movements, consecrated life, apostolic life and marriage) and the Department for Clergy (pastoral support and formation of clergy, oversight of hospital, prison and ethnic chaplaincies) will come under the Vicariate for Vocation. The Department for Schools and the Department for Educational Chaplaincies will come under the Vicariate for Education. The Department for Administration (including finance, personnel, IT, property, insurance, patrimony etc.) and the Department for New Evangelisation (including new evangelisation, social responsibility, justice, peace and life issues, communications, formation, dialogue and proclamation) will come under the Vicariate for Evangelisation.
- (iii) One of the Vicars General will be appointed Moderator of the Curia. He will be responsible for co-ordinating the strategic objectives of the three Vicariates.
- (iv) The Secretary to the Trustees/Financial Secretary will be responsible for the operational implementation of the strategic decisions of the Bishop, his Council and the Trustees. He will have overall responsibility to the Bishop and Trustees for the financial management of the Curia.
- (v) The number of committees of trustees will be reduced to three, one to oversee each Vicariate. The chair of each committee will be the Episcopal Vicar for the relevant Vicariate; four trustees – two clergy, two lay – will also make up each committee together with other co-opted members who bring particular expertise. This will simplify accountability and increase oversight, in line with best practice.
- (vi) The skills of priests and deacons will be audited and used for the benefit of the Diocese, and priests and deacons will be appointed to key roles in the Curia where their priestly ministry and diaconal ministry add value.
- (vii) By September 2014 the Curia will be brought together on a single site, close to the Bishop's office.

#### Delivery of the Pastoral Plan

- (i) The Department for Pastoral Formation will be closed.
- (ii) A new Department for the New Evangelisation will be created, to sit under the Vicariate for Evangelisation. It will be led by a priest and will have responsibility

for all aspects of the New Evangelisation in the diocese. Its mandate will be to facilitate this work at a parish and pastoral area level.

(iii) The current posts of Head of Department for Pastoral Formation, Director of Music and Liturgy, Advisor for Stewardship and Collaborative Ministry, Advisor for Youth Ministry and Advisor for Catechesis and Adult Formation will be made redundant. (The post of Advisor on Marriage and Family Life no longer exists.) Oversight of Marriage and Family Life will be carried out by the new Department for Vocation. There will be strategic review of the provision of Youth Ministry undertaken by the Department for New Evangelisation.

(iv) The expectation is that responsibility for the development of music and liturgy will pass to members of the clergy across the diocese, coordinated by the Department for Vocation.

### **What these changes will mean**

These changes will enable the Catholic Church in Portsmouth better to meet the call of the New Evangelisation. They will deliver more effectively the priorities identified in *Go Out and Bear Fruit* by making better use of the time, treasure and talent in the Diocese. They will enable governance that is more dynamic – better able to respond to the needs of the Diocese – while also balancing the budget. They provide for more simplified lines of accountability and better oversight, in accordance with charity regulations. They will enable a management which, while being highly effective, also reflects the three duties, or offices, of the bishop to teach, sanctify, and rule – while better equipping the Diocese of Portsmouth to fulfil its mission in twenty-first century Britain.