

His Grace
Archbishop Leo Cushley
Diocesan Offices
100 Strathearn Road
Edinburgh
EH9 1BB

Friday, 15 June 2018

Your Grace,

Following on from your letter to the parishioners of St Francis Xavier, Falkirk I write to you to provide a response to your proposal, that St Francis Xavier's merge with St Anthony's and St Mary of the Angel's and St Mary of the Angels be closed for worship.

I held a meeting with the parishioners on 7th June in St Francis Xavier's Church to formulate our response to the proposal. There were approximately 70 people in attendance.

At the meeting I outlined the process so far- from the Pastoral letter "we have found the Messiah" to the cluster meetings, meeting of the Archbishop and priests of the deanery and the council of priests. There followed much discussion about the proposal and how the process had evolved. There was a suggestion from some parishioners that the cluster meeting process "had been flawed".

However, there was an acknowledgement that things have been improving in various aspects of parish life, albeit sometimes a slow process. We identified the need for a parish forum to better discuss issues. These can be seen in the attached notes from the parish meeting.

At the meeting there was a lot of discussion about St Mary of the Angels, Camelon. It emerged that a lot of work would need to be done to ensure people from Camelon would be welcomed into the community of St Francis Xavier's.

At the end of the meeting a show of hands was taken to give an indication of people's response to the proposal. On the merging of the three parishes there was almost a unanimous vote in favour. On the closure of St Mary of the Angels the vote was split about 50/50. However, there was a sense that people from St Francis Xavier's were not comfortable about deciding the fate of the people from St Mary of the Angels. Parishioners felt we had to 'read the signs of the times' and be realistic. Such closures and mergers are happening in other churches worldwide, also locally; 'we are lucky to have a church and lucky to have priests'. There was a chance to rebuild community and become more deeply the family of God.

In essence therefore, **the response to the Proposal to “Merge the Parish of St Francis Xavier with St Anthony’s and St Mary of the Angels to become the Parish of St Francis Xavier, was accepted.**

There was no clear indication about the proposal to close St Mary of the Angels for worship.

I trust that this will help you with your ongoing deliberations about the future of the Archdiocese.

Yours in Christ

Fr Jamie Boyle.