

“NOW IS THE FAVOURABLE TIME”

Planning for the future in The Archdiocese of St. Andrews & Edinburgh

For the past 5 years Cardinal O’Brien, with his advisers, has been reflecting on the local church for which he is responsible, and has followed the guidance of Pope John Paul II in his letter for the new Millennium, in which we read: “the programme of the Gospel must continue to take root, as it has always done, in the life of the Church everywhere. It is *in the local churches* that the specific features of a detailed pastoral plan can be identified...”

This planning process began by looking at the structure of the Archdiocese, so that Parishes could continue to be centres of Catholic life, even though there are fewer priests than we are accustomed to, e.g. when His Eminence was ordained a priest there were 56 diocesan priests in the Edinburgh parishes, now there are 14!

After thorough consultation, he has decided on the following:

- Instead of 10 Deaneries, there will be 6 – providing more opportunity for priests to support each other, to share resources, and to work together in their local areas. These Deaneries, with their newly appointed Deans are as follows:
 - **St. Cuthbert’s, in the Borders** – Father John Creanor
 - **St. David’s, mostly Midlothian** – Father Joseph McMullan
 - **St. Mary’s, West Lothian** – Father Basil Clark
[These three Deaneries are unchanged from before.]
 - **St. Andrew and St. Margaret**, all the Fife parishes – Father Gerry Hand
 - **St. Giles, Edinburgh**, all the City of Edinburgh Parishes – Father Michael Regan
 - **St. Ninian and St. Mungo**, the Stirling and Falkirk parishes – Father Kenneth Owens
- Two Vicars General have been appointed:
 - Monsignor Alistair Lawson – Moderator of the Curia (*responsible for coordinating administrative matters in the Diocese, e.g. the work of the Diocesan Trustees*)
 - Monsignor Philip Kerr – Vicar General for Mission and Ministry (*responsible for overseeing the pastoral work of the Archdiocese, especially through the work of the Diocesan Agencies, e.g. Social Care.*)
- To help coordinate pastoral action in the Archdiocese, and so that communication and concerns can be better shared, an Episcopal Council has been established, which consists of the Vicars general, all the Deans and Cardinal O’Brien.
- The title of ‘Vicar Episcopal’, for those priests who were responsible for some of the diocesan Departments has changed: now heads of Departments will be referred to as Directors, thus allowing lay-people to head up departments, e.g. Mrs Maureen McEvoy is now Director of the Social Care Department, Mrs. Lynn Gemmell is Director of the Diocesan Youth Office.

We will issue a further Update at the beginning of 2008, to keep you informed of progress.