

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

Regarding recommended merger of the parishes of Sacred Heart Diamond Creek, St Mary's Greensborough and St Thomas the Apostle Greensborough North



1. What would the merger of parishes mean for us?

Over the past 13 years, our parishes have been partnered: Sacred Heart and St Thomas for the first five years and St Mary's joining this partnership for the past eight years. The merger would be a process of bringing our parishes together into a single, unified entity.

The Archdiocese of Melbourne has developed a parish renewal program called *Take the Way of the Gospel*, which invites parishes to consider how they may grow into the future as vibrant, vital and viable faith communities. Merging our parishes would further strengthen our community on this journey, enabling us to proactively plan how we may be an important, effective and enduring Catholic missionary force, for the coming decades.

2. Who are the members of the leadership team managing the consultation process?

The Partnered Parishes Pastoral Council, along with our priests and members of the Strategic Planning Committee, are managing this process.

3. How would a merger affect our current activities?

The merger would strengthen our community life by bringing together the resources and talents of many parishioners. As now, activities would continue in individual churches, we would come together for many liturgies, celebrations and social events, and as one parish there would be many more opportunities for combined spiritual, pastoral, educational and outreach actions and work.

4. Would the parish boundaries change?

The new parish would encompass the existing geographic areas of our parishes.

5. What changes can parishioners expect in worship and sacraments?

At this point, worship and sacraments would continue as before, including the combined liturgical celebrations. Parishioners are always welcome to attend Mass or other sacraments in the different churches.

6. Would our churches remain open?

At this point, all churches would remain open. However, it would be important to review our situation over time, as communities change or particular circumstances arise. Communities would always be consulted about the possibility of any changes.

7. Would churches keep their names?

The churches would keep their names. Their unique identity and history would always be valued and respected. There would be an active consultation process to identify a name for the new parish, reflective of our faith community.

8. Would Mass times be affected?

Again, at this time Mass times would remain the same, but may need to be reviewed if circumstances change.

9. Would there be a single parish office, a single phone number, email address and website?

There would be a main parish office, and its location would be decided during the merger process. There would be one parish phone number, email address and website.

10. How would the financial aspects of the new parish be managed?

The merger would aim to streamline operations and optimise financial resources, with cost-savings and better use of resources for the benefit of all parishioners. There would be one bank account for the new parish and this would help the parish manage one set of accounts and reduce bank charges and associated fees.

11. Are there any disadvantages to merger?

We have not been able to identify any disadvantages.

12. How can we support our priests and what support is the archdiocese providing?

The various Pastoral Councils of the partnership support and offer any assistance needed to Father Steven and Father Zaher. All of us, as parishioners, are invited to think about our priests through this process and to offer any help that is wanted. Their presence and work are vital to the life of our parishes. We have practical and advisory support through the archdiocese's *Take the Way of the Gospel* program.