

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (Revised by Steering Committee) - 1 July 2019

Some Background - For approximately 5 years now, the 4 parishes within the Ipswich Catholic Community have been working closely together to ensure all our parishioners have regular Masses, ongoing access to the sacraments, maintained parish support for our schools, and to ensure there is a growing Catholic community in the Ipswich region. Our primary schools and colleges collaborate more closely, we also operate out of one parish office, and our 4 parishes have grown together to become the strong community we are today.

Although we operate as if we are one community, many of our systems and processes are not aligned, so there is much duplication. We are also technically 4 individual parishes therefore the Archdiocese of Brisbane interacts with us in that way, duplicating correspondence, process and some financial costs. Therefore, it is proposed that our 4 parishes amalgamate to form a new parish.

Simply put, the primary purpose of the proposed parish amalgamation is to formalise our current arrangements and to complete the process as required by Canon law.

QUESTION		ANSWER
1	Aren't we already one Parish?	<p>Today within the Archdiocese our 4 parishes are referred to as the Ipswich Catholic Community. For nearly 20 years the Leichhardt and North Ipswich parishes operated like a single parish. A number of years ago North Ipswich and Leichhardt then started to work together with Rosewood and Ipswich, becoming known as the Ipswich Catholic Community.</p> <p>For many, there was the thought that the 4 parishes had already amalgamated. Mass times have been aligned for many years and we share special liturgies as a single community (e.g.: Easter Vigil and the Multicultural Pentecost Mass), we also have 1 Animation Group and we operate out of the 1 parish office.</p> <p>However, canonically we are still 4 separate parishes, with numerous Finance Councils, individual parish boundaries and properties.</p>
2	Why do we need to amalgamate the existing parishes?	<p>While all 4 parishes have been successfully administered by a Pastor and two Associate Pastor's for many years, there are some administrative and financial delays due to all 4 parishes not having a parish priest. Currently Fr. Stephen Bliss is parish priest of St. Mary's Parish, and Administrator of the other 3 parishes. Not having a parish priest for all our churches can cause some administrative and financial delays due to Canon Law. There are also some differences between parish priest and administrators that cause multiplicity of administrative and sacramental tasks. In consultation with the Vicar General, it is felt that now is the right time to formally request the amalgamation of the four parishes in order to form one new parish giving all our church communities certainty of a parish priest.</p>
3	Will our Mass times change?	<p>There will be no reduction in weekend Masses.</p> <p>Regardless of the amalgamation process, we regularly review our Mass times. We have recently confirmed the addition of a Ripley Mass, a commitment our Archbishop has asked our community to offer. Our community also offers monthly weekend Masses in Marburg and Pine Mountain.</p>

4	What is the Amalgamation Steering Group	Fr. Stephen has formed an Amalgamation Steering Group consisting of; Fr. Stephen Bliss ofm, Fr. Thomas Zaranski, Fr. John Hong, Benjamin Leschke, Jack Ho, Lyn Fields, Carmel Luetchford, Mandy Leape-Jarvis, John Cuthbert, Lawrence Risati, Margareta Lemon, Graeme Rosewarne. This group of people will work closely to ensure consideration from all local church communities is maintained, and to ensure communication is shared with everyone.
5	What costs will be involved?	It is not anticipated that there will be many additional expenses as new bank accounts will be issued by the Archdiocese Development Fund, which will be at no charge. A new parish name would involve some costs due to rebranding.
6	Will there be new opportunities to grow as a single parish community?	Yes! It is important that we don't just amalgamate and continue to operate as 4 separate parishes. We do need to consciously look at things in a new way and grow stronger as a single parish. In fact, in recent years we have already started to work to develop our liturgies together, however we have never approached this as a single parish. We welcome ideas from everyone. Some other examples of where we are working more closely as a single parish community include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Animation Group - representatives from our church communities regularly come together do discuss our parish and help form our one parish community. The animation group engage in their local church community to ensure parishioners everywhere have the same opportunity to contribute to the Ipswich Catholic Community. • New Sacramental Program for Children - the parish office and all 4 primary school APREs are working more closely to improve engagement and opportunity for children in all our schools. • New Rite of Christian Initiation of Teenagers (RCIT) program. The parish is working with APREs from both colleges to deliver formation and the sacraments to teenagers in our parishes. • Aligning liturgical rostering for all church communities to reduce licensing costs and administrative burden. <p>Music - Each month all out musicians are invited to share their talents and passion for music at a 'Music Jam'.</p>
7	Will there be a new Pastoral and Finance Council?	There is already in place an Animation Group. The purpose of this group is to bring greater connection between local church communities and the parish as a whole. Following amalgamation, a pastoral council will be considered in conjunction with the existing animation group, and a single parish finance council will be formed.
8	What is the name of new Parish? Can it be the Ipswich Catholic Community?	We haven't decided on a new name yet, so suggestions can be made in line with the guidelines of the Archbishop, which state that we must consider name for our new Parish, we must also consider the names of our neighbouring Parishes. Your suggestions and feedback are welcomed. Please send to: ourfuture.icc@bne.catholic.net.au

9	What will happen to the names of our current church building?	We currently have 11 churches across the 4 parishes. Each church will retain their individual name; these will not be changed. In the same way that St. Boniface Church, Marburg is currently part of St. Brigid's Parish, after we amalgamate St. Boniface Church will retain its name, however, be part of our 'new parish name'. All 11 churches will be churches of 'new parish name'.
10	Will all church buildings still be maintained?	It will be the responsibility of a new Parish Finance Committee to budget for regular maintenance at all our churches. Maintenance of all our buildings is extremely important and it will be managed dependent upon available funds (including possible grants). This is the current process and will not change as a result of amalgamation.
11	Will the 1st and 2nd Collections from all Masses go into one account?	With the joining of the accounts – all collections will be banked together in the support for all pastoral and running costs of the new parish.
12	When is amalgamation going to happen?	<p>The proposed Timeline is as follows...</p> <p>June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with priests, Steering Committee, parish staff. <p>July</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekend 7th July – Video announce from Stephen (all of community) • Local Church Community sessions, Committees, schools, etc... • Review administration / financials / rosters / liturgies, etc... • Notification to other parishes and deanery <p>August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue consultation opportunities for communities and groups • Continue to review administration / financials / rosters / liturgies, etc... • August - Name consultation <p>September</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue consultation opportunities for communities and groups • Continue to review administration / financials / rosters / liturgies, etc... • Prepare paper for Archbishop & Council Priests <p>October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submission to Archbishop and Council of Priests • Communicate outcome of Council of Priests • Announcement of new parish <p>November - December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to align and manage change <p>January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installation of Fr. Stephen as Parish Priest of new parish

13	<p>Will there be any Parish Consultation? How can parishioners provide feedback?</p>	<p>There are a number of ways you can participate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is invited to provide suggestions or feedback at any time to the members of the Steering Committee. • Your questions and comments can be made via our dedicated email ourfuture.icc@bne.catholic.net.au • Fr. Stephen will be scheduling consultation sessions allowing all local church communities to participate in a discussion. <p>Regular updates will be provided on our parish website and parish newsletter</p>
14	<p>What happens to the existing Sacramental Registers?</p>	<p>Because it will be a new Parish, there is a requirement for new Sacramental Registers. The old records for Ipswich, North Ipswich, Leichhardt and Rosewood Parishes will be maintained at the Parish Office in Woodend, as they currently are.</p>
15	<p>How do I make a bequest in my Will?</p>	<p>If you want your bequest to be used for a specific purpose, e.g.: maintenance of the Rosewood church, then you will note this in your Will and those funds will be identified for the Rosewood Church, and only used for that purpose. Should you wish to make a general bequest, the funds will be used at the discretion of the Parish Priest. For more detailed information when updating your Will, please contact the Archdiocesan offices in Brisbane.</p>