

As you all know I have been very concerned for some time about a number of difficulties here at St. Catherine of Siena and St. Lewis... Questions about financial viability and, especially, the problems with the building structure have been at the forefront of those difficulties. I have tried to share some of those issues with you over the past two years while trying not to cause unnecessary concern... as the clergy and the Pastoral Area Working Group have tried to devise a plan for the whole area. That plan is still somewhat off but today I am afraid the problems have overtaken us...

A report has been commissioned which is likely to say that access to the buildings of St. Catherine of Siena must be restricted on health and safety grounds because the electrical installation is in too poor a state for any repairs to be carried out. At this

point the costs involved in a full rewire can not be justified because of the other problems with the building. Therefore the Archdiocese may have no choice but to close the doors of the Church while we consult on the future. If this happens we will not be allowed to celebrate Mass in St. Catherine's Church.

I know this is unexpected and shocking news... we are all shocked... this is the first time this situation has arisen in the Archdiocese... and only the second time the Archbishop has had to face a situation like this in 27 years as a bishop... but now our attention must turn to planning. At the Archdiocese a couple of alternative solutions are being investigated such as a partial rewire of the Church and or Hall but if this is not possible we need to think

Taken from the statement prepared and read out at weekend Masses in St. Catherine of Siena and St. Lewis over the weekend of the 30th & 31st July 2011.

about how and where we will celebrate Mass, about what option we have while further time is given to looking at all other possibilities?

I have cancelled my holiday for this week so that I can be here with you now and so that on Monday I can hold an emergency meeting with the surveyors, the priests in the pastoral area and an emergency meeting of the cluster reps will follow... but today we need to think about how we can stay together as a parish community over the next few weeks or months while the Church is not available.

I know that you feel shocked, believe me I have felt the same way, this has suddenly been brought to a head but we will hopefully find a way through this together...



Purpose of this leaflet

This document is issued by Fr Ron Johnson in his capacity as Parish Priest and Pastoral Area Leader.

It is intended to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the recent announcements made at Masses on 30 and 31 July 2011.

It is also intended to ensure informed and open discussion concerning the impact of the recent decisions upon our parish family.

Q. What decision has been made?

A. A decision has been made to cease using the buildings at St Catherine of Siena for liturgical celebrations and all other activities open to the public.

Q. Who made the decision?

A. The decision has been made by the Diocesan Trustees following receipt of expert and professional advice concerning the fabric and suitability of the Church.

Q. Why was the decision made?

A. The decision was made because all Trustees must comply with their legal obligations. Once they receive expert and professional advice concerning the unsuitability of the buildings at St Catherine of Siena and lack of compliance with Health & Safety Legislation they had no choice but to act.

Q. When was the decision made?

A. Fr Johnson was alerted to the decision on Friday 28 July 2011.

Q. What does the decision mean?

A. Due to Health & Safety legislation, the buildings at St Catherine of Siena may no longer be used for the celebration of the Eucharist and other activities open to the public. As a result, attempts are being made to identify an alternative venue. Further notices will be issued by Fr Johnson.

Q. Does this mean our parish has been closed?

A. No. The issue which has been identified relates to the buildings of St Catherine of Siena only.