



BISHOP'S HOUSE  
27 CAVENDISH ROAD EAST  
THE PARK  
NOTTINGHAM NG7 1BB

0115 947 4786

bishop@dioceseofnottingham.uk

12<sup>th</sup> April 2025

Dear Mrs. Ead,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of parishioners in Saint Mary's Church, Marple Bridge. I am writing to you now, as before, asking that you share this letter with your fellow parishioners throughout Marple Bridge and New Mills parish. I will write further once the questionnaires, distributed after the meeting with Canon John Kyne and Mr David Lawes, have been returned, and I have had chance to study what is said in them. The deadline for their return is Palm Sunday. I will also study the Petition which you have sent me in the post, and which arrived today.

It might help parishioners to understand better my decision concerning Saint Mary's Church, Marple Bridge, if I make clear that similar decisions are being made across the Diocese of Nottingham. The harsh reality is that there are not now in all places the numbers of parishioners needed to make our parishes vibrant communities, and no longer the numbers of priests needed to celebrate Sunday Masses in every church in our Diocese. Difficult decisions are having to be made throughout the Diocese, all of which were discussed in the Roadshows during Lent 2022.

From early September 2025 there will be one fewer priest to minister in the High Peak Deanery, and so it will not be possible from that point to offer Sunday Masses in Saint Mary's Church, Marple Bridge. Since there are two churches in your parish, I am asking parishioners in Marple Bridge to travel to the other church within their parish, namely Annunciation Church, New Mills, for Sunday Mass. I do not judge this to be unreasonable, especially given the circumstances facing our diocese.

To help prepare parishioners in Marple Bridge to begin to adjust to this withdrawal of Sunday Masses, I have spoken with Father Emmanuel and have now asked him to continue celebrating the current weekday and Sunday Masses in Saint Mary's Church, Marple Bridge, until early September when he will take up a new appointment. As I wrote in my letter of last week, I hope that this period of grace from Easter until early September 2025 will offer the portion of the parish community in Marple Bridge the opportunity to prove practically what they can do to ensure that Saint Mary's Church can remain open as a place of worship for weekday devotions organised by parishioners, alongside the possibility of a weekday Mass celebrated by a priest. As previously stated, a review of what has been actively done by parishioners to help achieve this will take place in June this year.

With my prayers for you and all the parishioners as Holy Week begins to unfold before us,

Rt Rev Patrick McKinney  
Bishop of Nottingham

cc. Father Emmanuel Abbem, parish priest