

This announcement was read at all Sunday Masses on Corpus Christi:

Please be seated.

As you may know, it is about this time of year that clergy moves are announced. Today, I can tell you that Bishop Richard has asked Fr Rajesh to take up a new appointment this September. Because of the need to co-ordinate the moves, we cannot yet tell you where he is going – he should be able to announce that in a couple of weeks.

I would be grateful if you do not ask him (or me) where that is as we cannot tell you at this time. Fr Rajesh has been with us since 2015 and has served us faithfully for the last 7 years. There will, of course, be an opportunity to express our thanks to him in due course.

Bishop Richard has asked me to continue in Bexhill as the sole priest in the parish. I am grateful to still have the help and counsel of Deacon Simon, the Parish Office, the Finance Committee, the Pastoral Care Group, the SVP, Catechists and all the parishioners (groups and individuals) that make up the one parish of Our Lady of the Rosary, Bexhill-on-Sea.

Losing a priest, however, will mean some change, and after speaking with my doctor, there are limits on what I am able to offer, but I can assure you that both St Mary Magdalene Church and St Martha's Church will remain open, and I will continue to offer chaplaincy support to St Richard's and St Mary Magdalene Schools.

Unfortunately, the reduction in priests from two to one, will mean the end of 6pm Mass on Sunday evening at St Mary Magdalene, the last Sunday evening Mass being 21st August. There will also be no Mass on a Wednesday, this being my day off, but the other weekday Masses will be celebrated as currently scheduled, but the exact timings may need to be tweaked due to school Mass commitments, especially on a Tuesday. The newsletter will keep you up to date in due course.

I had already arranged holiday for September when I was told about the move. I have arranged a supply priest for two weekends that I am away, and there will be Mass in each community at the weekends, but there will no weekday Masses in the parish whilst I am away.

I would be grateful if for this weekend only, you could refrain from commenting on this changes on social media, so that all Masses can hear this announcement live.

With a reiteration of my own thanks to Fr Rajesh for his support, and with my prayers and best wishes to you all.

Fr Simon.