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# **Statement of the Diocese of Westminster on the Parish of St. Thomas More, Swiss Cottage**

20-1-2005

After nine years in Swiss Cottage, Father Ian Dickie will be moving at Easter to take up another appointment as Parish Priest. The Cardinal and the auxiliary Bishops of the Diocese would like to thank him for his devoted work at St Thomas More parish.

Father Dickie will be replaced by Father Gerard Sheehan, whom many of you know well already. Fr Sheehan has taken an active role in the life of the deanery and has been deanery secretary over these past few years.

Father Sheehan is a priest of the Personal Prelature of the Holy Cross and Opus Dei and has worked for ten years at Netherhall House, the student residence run by Opus Dei. Opus Dei itself has had a presence in the parish for over fifty years.

In announcing Father Sheehan's appointment, the Bishops want to thank the Opus Dei prelate for agreeing to be entrusted with the pastoral care of St Thomas More. This appointment continues the diocese's policy of entrusting some parishes to communities and movements that are already making a significant contribution to the

Church's life in this diverse and multi-cultural part of our country. In recent months the diocese has entrusted two parishes to the Vietnamese and Brazilian communities who have made their home in London. The diocese is also exploring how other ecclesial groupings, notably the Neo-Catechumenate and the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate, might take on further pastoral oversight. In every case, the priests concerned will be under the jurisdiction of the Diocese, responsible to the Cardinal.

Cardinal Cormac Murphy- O'Connor said:

“The members of Opus Dei have their own particular part to play in the mission of the Church in our country. Father Sheehan's appointment is a further sign of that commitment and a natural development of his longstanding engagement in the

parish. It reflects, too, the commitment of all of us in the Diocese to maintain the vigorous spiritual and pastoral life of our parishes”.

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