

Diocese of
Shrewsbury
Ad Clerum

2022/13 July





Dear Fathers and Deacons,

SHREWSBURY PILGRIMS IN LOURDES

Our Diocesan Pilgrimage returns to Lourdes at the end of this week for the first time since the summer of 2019. The pilgrimage will be a third the size of previous pilgrimages, with around 280 Shrewsbury Pilgrims. I will celebrate Mass for the Youth Pilgrims at Saint Joseph's, Albrighton on Wednesday as they prepare to cross the diocesan border on their overland journey and travel with the flying pilgrimage from Liverpool on Friday. I hope the re-start of the pilgrimage will be an opportunity for us to respond afresh to the invitation to prayer, penance, generous service and the centrality of the Holy Eucharist which forms the perennial message of Lourdes.

This year will also prepare for the pilgrimage of the relics of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes in September. As always, we go as pilgrims to pray for all the people of the Diocese and for our mission together. Please remember the Shrewsbury Pilgrims on Sunday, that our diocesan pilgrimage will be greatly blessed.

CLERGY

COMPLETION OF THE SUMMER APPOINTMENTS

Last week I was able to set out the new appointments in Cheadle, Crewe, Newport, Market Drayton, Stockport and Wythenshawe. I am pleased to have been able to complete the summer appointments with a new appointment to Rock Ferry, New Ferry and Bebbington. I wish to again record my thanks for the generosity of all the clergy providing pastoral support for these parishes and to ask your prayers for Father Bernard Forshaw's continued recovery.

SAINT ANNE'S, ROCK FERRY, SAINT JOHN'S, NEW FERRY & SAINT LUKE THE PHYSICIAN, BEBBINGTON

I have invited a new Religious community, the *Fathers & Brothers of the Holy Family of the Youth*, to undertake the pastoral care of Rock Ferry, New Ferry and Bebbington, taking up residence at the presbytery at Saint Anne's which was formerly a Religious House of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. This Religious community founded in Nigeria has served in the Lancaster Diocese for the past seven years being entrusted with the care of two parish churches and with the ancient Shrine of Ladyewell. Some of you may already have met the priests when on pilgrimage.

I signed an agreement with the Superior General this past week for two priests to serve the Parishes of Saint Anne, Saint John and Saint Luke. **Father Mario Ashuikaka** will serve as Parochial Administrator and be assisted by **Father Emmanuel Chukwujekwu**. The appointments will take effect from 1st September and Father Mario may be able to move from Preston shortly before. We welcome the Holy Family Fathers and pray their Marian and apostolic charism will take root in our Diocese.

A NEW CHAPLAIN TO LEIGHTON HOSPITAL

I am pleased that **Deacon David Harrison** has been appointed as the new Catholic Chaplain to Leighton Hospital in Cheshire. I am grateful to David for undertaking this ministry and wish to record my gratitude to Deacon Tony Ford who now stands down as the named Catholic Chaplain for all his faithful and generous work in the hospital.

DIOCESE

MARRIAGE LAW CHANGES

In April this year Parliament passed legislation (Marriage and Civil Partnerships Minimum Age Act 2022) to declare unlawful, marriages or civil partnerships for those under 18 years of age. However, we are awaiting the publication of regulations to put this change in the law into effect. The essential point is that it is strongly advised that clergy do not arrange marriages for under 18's, lest they fall foul of the law on their wedding day. I know that marriages of those under 18 are very rare in our time, however, I wanted to bring this legal change to your attention.

THE PILGRIMAGE OF THE RELICS OF SAINT BERNADETTE OF LOURDES

I am pleased to be able to forward the national publicity materials provided for the pilgrimage of Saint Bernadette's relics which will come to our Diocese on 13th and 14th September this year.

The relics will be with us at the Cathedral from 1.00pm on Tuesday 13th September until 9.00am on Wednesday 14th September, when the relics will travel to Saint Werburgh's, Chester until 4.00pm that same afternoon. A private visit of Saint Bernadette's relics to Carmel in Birkenhead will follow, however on this occasion, it will not be possible for anyone outside of Carmel to visit the relics.



A booking system is being developed and this will be available shortly along with other information about the pilgrimage on the national website <https://stbernadette.org.uk/>. It is expected to go live at the end of July. Our own diocesan website will also have more specific information about the timings of the visit to our diocese and will be available shortly. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact Canon Christopher at the Cathedral admin@shrewsburycathedral.co.uk

DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE UKRAINE ~ 14th September

A day of prayer has been proposed across Europe on Wednesday 14th September, the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. It is, of course, the day Saint Bernadette's relics are arriving in Shrewsbury. We will aim to have a dedicated hour of prayer in the Cathedral that day for the suffering of the people of the Ukraine. I would also invite you to a consider remembrance in the Mass and/or a dedicated hour of Eucharistic Adoration for the Ukraine on that day.

GENERAL

COMMUNITY FORMATION PROJECT

In the face of the campaign for euthanasia, the bishops have placed a particular focus on the 'Art of Dying Well'. The Art of Dying Well Centre at Saint Mary's University has established a partnership with the Society of Saint Vincent De Paul, to train members to become end of life companions for hospital, hospice, care home and parish settings. The SVP is putting on a series of online 'taster sessions' for parishioners who might consider becoming involved in their local community and one of these sessions is on end of life companionship. If you think it appropriate, you might wish to circulate the following notice from the Society of Saint Vincent De Paul:

"Do you feel called to reach out to people in need in your community?"

For nearly two centuries the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) has been seeking and finding those in need and responding in love. Today, the SVP in England and Wales represents almost 10,000 members across around 1,000 groups. It is rare for one corner of the SVP to encounter a need which has not also been seen and responded to by our members.

Join the movement.

This autumn, you can take part in a range of free online taster sessions, including: 'community formation', 'support with fuel

poverty', 'end of life companionship', 'offender care', 'care for young families', and 'support for refugees and migrants'."

To discover more: www.svp.org.uk/discover or email your interest to discover@svp.org.uk

If you are aware of a need, please contact us at request@svp.org.uk

PRISONERS SUNDAY – 9th October

Bishop Richard Moth has written to remind us that Prisoners Sunday will fall on Sunday 9th October this year. Materials will be sent out to the parishes in the week beginning 19th September and the PACT website provides further information – www.prisonadvice.org.uk.

This is a moment in the year to remember all those in our prisons – the prison population presently stands at around 80,000. It is also an invitation to especially pray for those in the three prisons within our own Diocese at Styal, Stoke Heath and Thorn Cross. The work of PACT in support of families has increased and as with many other charities, the income has fallen during the past two years. The Prisoner's Sunday collection, while not obligatory, offers an opportunity to support the work of our Prison Advice and Care Trust.

FINALLY ...

The pilgrimage to Lourdes at the end of July each year has always provided an opportunity to entrust the needs of the Diocese to Our Lady. It is a moment when we especially remember all the priests, deacons and seminarians of the Diocese and especially those members of the clergy who have died during the past three years and those who are sick or in any particular need. I know that only a handful of priests and deacons can physically accompany the pilgrimage, but please join us in this prayerful entrustment, perhaps praying the beautiful words of confidence and trust found in the Memorare.

United with you in this prayer and entrustment,

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Enc:

- ❖ *Marriage and Civil Partnership (minimum Age) Act 2022*
- ❖ *St Bernadette Relics Tour attachments:*
 - *Digital Info Flyer*
 - *Poster*
 - *Letter*

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