

Diocese of  
Shrewsbury  
*Ad Clerum*

2022/01 January





Dear Fathers and Deacons,

## LOOKING TO THE NEW YEAR AHEAD

I was thankful that it didn't prove necessary to send additional communications relating to public health over the Christmas holiday period. It would be premature to suggest an end to the crisis is within sight as we are certainly seeing a rapid spread of the new variant and significant pressure on our hospitals. Yet, as 2022 begins we note more optimistic signals from the public authorities regarding the prospect of new restrictions. The picture will no doubt be a changing one during the winter weeks ahead and we must remain vigilant in all that helps ensure safety and supports the continued recovery we happily are witnessing across the parishes.

## CHRISTMAS 2021

It was especially encouraging to hear that there has been greater sense of normality in the celebration of Christmas 2021. I have already been told of a significant increase in numbers in several of our parishes. This Christmas may not have seen a return to pre-pandemic levels of attendance, yet it has been another step on the long path of our recovery.

## MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

During the Christmas period we received the sad news of the death of **Mother Paula Fairlie OSB** the Abbess of the Benedictine community in Chester who died on Christmas morning. On the following day 26<sup>th</sup> December, we received the sad news of the death of **Mr Jim Keaton** who will be well

remembered for his service of the Diocese. We also received news before Christmas of the death of two of our Sisters in Carmel, **Sister Teresita** and **Sister Marie Bernard** who lived this hidden life of intercession for priests and for all sinners.

May they rest in peace.

## PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

**Father David Craig** and **Father Jim McGrath** who were admitted to Leighton Hospital during the Christmas holidays.

Please remember **Mother Immaculata** in Carmel who has been very poorly during this Advent and Christmas.

Please also remember Father Bernard Forshaw's father who suffered a cardiac arrest on the Monday after Christmas and continues to recover in hospital.

## CLERGY

### RETIREMENT OF CLERGY

I always ask clergy who have passed the canonical age of 75 to review annually their continuing service in the parish. If you are considering retirement in the year ahead then please feel free to be directly in contact with Canon Michael Gannon VG. It is always helpful to allow time for arrangements to be made both for the parish and for this new stage in the priestly life.



## RETIRED CLERGY REPRESENTATIVE

I am very grateful to Father Geoff O'Grady who has been elected and generously agreed to serve as the representative of the retired clergy on the Diocesan Council of Priests and on the Retired Clergy Advisory Group.

## JUBILARIAN CELEBRATION OF THE PRIESTHOOD IN ROME

**21<sup>st</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

This annual celebration of the priesthood at the Palazzola just south of Rome, has been much appreciated by those who have taken part during this past decade. All those priests who will be celebrating their Ruby, Golden or Diamond Jubilees (those ordained in 1962, 1972 or 1982) should receive an invitation later this year. If you wish to accept this invitation in due course then please make a note of the dates in your diary.

## FINANCIAL

### CAFOD ANNUAL REPORT

I have enclosed the CAFOD Annual Report Summary 2021 and a spreadsheet detailing the donations to CAFOD from parishes and other sources within the Diocese during the years 2020/2021 for your information. It has been a remarkable response from the people of the Diocese during a very troubled year.

## FINALLY ...

*The New Year begins for us with the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. We confidently entrust ourselves to the protection of the Holy Mother of God who guards the entrance of each new year. Pope Francis preached on this theme at Saint Peter's on 1<sup>st</sup> January. The Holy Father's words might help us with this time of listening in the parishes. The Holy Father asks us to learn from Our Lady what it is to keep and to ponder and ends his homily with these words: "At the beginning of the New Year, let us place ourselves under the protection of this woman, the Mother of God, who is also our mother. May she help us to keep and ponder all things, unafraid of trials and with joyful certainty that the Lord is faithful and can transform every cross into a resurrection. Today too, let us call upon her as did the People of God in Ephesus. Let us stand and, facing Our Lady as did the People of God in Ephesus, let us together repeat three times her title of Mother of God ..."*

*Let us entrust the continued recovery of the life of our parishes to the Holy Mother of God who is always the Help of Christians.*

+ Mark

*Bishop of Shrewsbury*

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- *CAFOD Annual Report. pdf*
- *CAFOD Shrewsbury Report. Excel*