

Diocese of
Shrewsbury
Ad Clerum

2022/04 February





Dear Fathers and Deacons,

Following the meeting of Deans earlier this month, I have sent a paper for the February Deanery Conferences entitled "TAKING STOCK AT THE END OF A STORM" to help us reflect on the situation of each of our parishes as we emerge from the restrictions of the pandemic. The conferences will also be an opportunity to take stock of the progress of the initiatives of *Our Mission Together*; and on parish participation in the *Diocesan Listening Phase* which is drawing to its close.

This is a good time for us to take stock as we prepare for Lent and Easter and, please God, a year when we hope to see a return to normality in the life and work of our parishes. I am especially happy to be able to resume this month the programme of parish visitations; and am devoting many evenings to the celebration of Confirmation with candidates who have often waited up to two years to receive this Sacrament.

CLERGY

FATHER DAVID CRAIG RIP

We received the sad news that following a short illness Father David Craig died in the early hours of Friday 11th February, in Leighton Hospital. May he rest in peace.

Please remember David in the Mass and in your prayers. The details of his funeral arrangements will follow shortly.

THE MASS OF THE SACRED CHRISM

I am happy to say that we are planning for the Chrism Mass to be celebrated in the usual way after an interval of three years. The Chrism Mass will be celebrated on Wednesday evening of Holy Week, 13th April at 7.00pm at Saint Michael & All Angels, Woodchurch. Vesting will take place in the school, please bring an alb and a white stole. The Chapter Canons, who will vest in the old presbytery, should bring an alb as stole and chasuble will be provided. In the same way as last year, the Holy Oils will be prepared in small bottles which the Deans will be able to collect from the sacristy half an hour after the Mass has concluded. Parish Priests are invited to make arrangements with the local Dean to collect the Holy Oils for their parish.

THE COUNCIL OF PRIESTS

The next meeting of the Council of Priests will be held in person at the Cathedral on Wednesday March 16th. I look forward to meeting with the Council at the Cathedral after the virtual meetings of the past two years.

FATHER NIALL MULLALEY

I am very grateful to Father Niall Mullaley who has agreed to serve as acting Dean of Birkenhead and East Wirral during the time while Father Bernard Forshaw is on sick leave.



DIOCESE

DIOCESAN LISTENING PHASE

We are now in the last two weeks of the Diocesan Listening Phase in preparation for the International Synod of Bishops in 2023. I know that Barbara Davies has written to ask that all parish and individual reflections should be received by Tuesday 1st March. The Synod email address is synod@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

HEALTH AND SAFETY

I share with you below two reports from our Diocesan Health & Safety Officer, Julie Tinsley:

1. ACCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

Two accidents were reported to the Health and Safety Officer towards the end of last year, which had taken place on the curtilage of churches, involving members of the congregation tripping on the way to or from the church.

In both these cases, the incidents were not reported to the parish priest at the time of the accidents. Due to the delay in informing the parish (up to two weeks after one incident) it was very difficult to accurately investigate the accidents or prevent recurrence in a timely way.

It is very important to have a system in place for an injured person, or someone on their behalf, to report accidents to the parish priest as soon as possible after the event. This

enables the parish, or diocese to accurately investigate the circumstances of the incident, which may require the Diocese Insurers to be notified, while witnesses are available to give an accurate account of the incident.

It also makes it possible to remove any hazards that may be present as soon as possible and thereby reduces the likelihood of similar accidents happening to someone else.

Please ensure your parish has a suitable and appropriate system in place for reporting and investigating accidents. Place a notice on your church and church hall notice boards to inform people how they should report an accident and who will assist them to complete the Parish Accident Report Form.

2. PARISH HALLS AND COMMUNITY ROOMS

The latest advice and guidance from the Bishops Conference of England and Wales, relating to the Governments removal of restrictions in accordance with their Plan B, included the following information which relates to the use of parish halls and community rooms.

'Social Activities - Parish social activities can resume (if they have been suspended) from the revert date, back to Plan A: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-response-autumn-and-winter-plan-2021/covid-19-response-autumn-and-winter-plan-2021>

It is recommended that the normal Health and Safety risk assessment for the activity and the space used for the activity is reviewed for these types of gatherings.'



Our Insurers will still expect a current risk assessment to be in place and a similar activity risk assessment from the hall users (even for parish groups use).

N.B. You will need to review your hall risk assessment or complete an assessment if you have not previously reopened your community facilities. Ensure that you amend your assessment in accordance with any/all safety control measures you remove or reduce. This may include such things as: the maximum capacity you allow in the building now that social distancing is no longer required; sanitising hands and routine cleaning; the use of face coverings (no longer mandatory but people may still wish to wear them when people gather in enclosed areas) your track/trace systems in place, use of kitchen etc.

You must still be satisfied that your users/hirers activity risk assessments will meet your conditions of use of the hall.

A sensible approach is still to be encouraged whilst we try to open up our premises to the public but maintain a safe environment that will reduce the risk of transmission of the virus.

FINANCE

PETER'S PENCE

The Apostolic Nunciature sent a letter of thanks for the sum of £2,509.17 which had been received from the Diocese for Peter's Pence collections in 2021.

COURSES AND EVENTS

RETRouvaille

A Retrouvaille weekend retreat for married couples is to be held virtually from March 3rd to 6th. I attach a letter to parishes together with a poster and newsletter inserts which you may wish to include in the parish newsletter.

OBLATE RETREAT CENTRE ~ 2022

I have attached a brochure for retreats at the Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistston Hall in 2022, which was sent to my office by Father Lorcan O'Reilly OMI.

FINALLY ...

As Lent approaches, I hope we look forwards with much greater certainty in our planning and please God greater participation in all our parishes. As I travel round the Diocese, a cautious spirit remains, yet a noticeable joy that we can gather once again in a much more normal way.

Let us pray that this Lent and Easter of 2022 will be a time especially blessed for all the people of the Diocese,

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Enc:

- *Retrouvaille Letter to Parishes*
- *Retrouvaille Newsletter suggestions*
- *Retrouvaille Poster*
- *Oblate Retreat Centre Brochure 2022*