

Diocese of
Shrewsbury
Ad Clerum

2022/18 November





Dear Fathers and Deacons,

A NEW BISHOP OF EAST ANGLIA

The Holy Father has appointed Canon Peter Collins of the Archdiocese of Cardiff to become the Fifth Bishop of East Anglia in succession to Bishop Alan Hopes. Please remember Bishop Hopes as he begins his retirement next month and for Bishop-Elect Peter Collins as he responds to the Holy Father's call to begin his episcopal service of the Diocese of East Anglia.

I will be attending the Episcopal Ordination in Norwich on 14th December.

ADVENT PASTORAL LETTER

A Pastoral Letter will be sent to parishes tomorrow in readiness for the First Sunday of Advent.

ADVENT LAUNCH OF NEW DIOCESAN WEBISTE

A new Diocesan Website is to be launched this week. The website offers a window into the life and work of the Diocese and is an invaluable source of information. The transition from the old to the new website has involved painstaking work. I wish to record our thanks to Mrs Catherine McLaughlin (formerly the Director of our Youth Mission) for undertaking this task. It would be good to draw the attention of parishioners to the relaunch on the First Sunday of Advent.

DIOCESAN YEARBOOK 2023

I am grateful to Mr Anthony Timothy and the team at the Curial Offices who have co-ordinated the preparation of our Diocesan Yearbook 2023.

This is a record and guide to the life and mission of the Diocese. The new Yearbook should be with you for the beginning of Advent.

CLERGY

MONSIGNOR CANON PETER O'NEILL RIP

We have received the sad news of the death of Monsignor Peter O'Neill in Wythenshawe Hospital on Saturday 19th November. May he rest in peace. I will send details of the funeral arrangements as soon as they are made and, in the meantime, please remember Peter at Mass and in your prayers.

CANON PHILIP MOOR VG

Canon Phil Moor returned early from holiday last month due to a serious deterioration in the health of his mother. Please keep his mother in your prayers. Canon Phil is continuing with his pastoral duties in the care of the parish; however, he will be temporarily stepping back from diocesan responsibilities. Please contact Canon Michael Gannon VG or Mrs Carol Lawrence with any matters which normally be referred to Canon Phil Moor.

NEW DIRECTOR OF THE DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

I am grateful to **Canon Christopher Matthews** for accepting my invitation to become the new Director of our Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Please give him every support in this task of leadership and organisation. I also wish to record all our thanks to **Father David Long** for his leadership and dedicated service of the Lourdes Pilgrimage, not least through the difficult years of the pandemic and post-pandemic period. I am



very grateful that David will continue to direct and organise our Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The next pilgrimage to the Holy Land is being organised for October 2023.

ADVENT CLERGY DAY OF RECOLLECTION

The Advent Clergy Day of Recollection will take place on Wednesday. It is good to hear how many have already signed up for this day of prayer, reflection and fraternity which also provides an extra opportunity for sacramental confession.

DIOCESE

MR VINCENT ROPER R.I.P

We have received the sad news of the death of Mr Vincent Roper who served our Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage for so many years as Chief Brancardier. Please remember Vincent and his family in your prayers. May he rest in peace.

CARITAS AT CHRISTMAS

➤ Christmas Appeal

At the end of last month, I sent a letter and poster to parishes announcing this year's *Caritas at Christmas Appeal*. Parishes are invited to take a collection over a weekend of their own choice as Christmas approaches. I hope you will also have received a hard copy of the poster directly from Caritas ready for display on your parish notice boards. If you would like any additional information, please contact Ben Gilchrist at the email address below.

➤ Cost-of-Living Campaign

A message from Ben Gilchrist, Caritas DOS:

Caritas Shrewsbury are supporting the new Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) Cost-of-

Living Campaign and are inviting parishioners to write to their MP to amplify the 'asks' of Government issued by the Bishops' Department for Social Justice on 5th September. If Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury can support you in this initiative in any way please do get in touch via mobile: 07824 329 344; or email: ben.gilchrist@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk and claire.griffiths@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk

THE IMPACT OF OUR MISSION TOGETHER

Our Mission Together has been a remarkable initiative for the Diocese, marked by the generosity of so many and the development of areas of mission and strengthening our parishes. The latest 'Impact Brochure' has been prepared at the Curial Offices and will be sent out to parishes and donors in the coming weeks.

THE NEW LECTIONARY FOR MASS

The bishops gave their final approval this week to the new Lectionary before its definitive approval in Rome. The Lectionary will use the English Standard Version – Catholic Edition and the Abbey Psalms and Canticles. It is hoped following the required approval of the Holy See the Lectionary may still be published and ready for use in the parishes for the beginning of Advent 2023.

ALIGNMENT OF THE CIVIL AND CANONICAL AGE OF MARRIAGE

The bishops, during their plenary meeting in Leeds last week, agreed in accordance with Canon 1083.2 to align the canonical age of marriage with that now determined in England and Wales by the Marriage and Civil Partnership (Minimum Age) Act 2022 establishing the minimum age for marriage at 18.



A CULTURE OF VOCATION

The bishops noted the importance of promoting a culture of vocation and specifically our need to encourage vocations to the Priesthood. The bishops ask that prayer for vocations finds a regular place in the life of every Catholic parish and community. It was noted that many who come forward today as candidates for the Priesthood specifically mention the example and encouragement given by priests themselves.

CARE OF THE ENVIROMENT

The bishops are urging all Catholics to refresh their weekly observance of Friday Penance by abstaining from eating meat on that day. We received a recent study from Cambridge University which suggests the Friday Abstinence of Catholics in England and Wales undertaken with the supernatural motive of self-denial on the day of the Lord's Passion and Death has had a surprising impact on reducing carbon emissions by as much as 55,000 tonnes each year. We were told this was equivalent to 82,000 people taking return flights from London to New York.

I am grateful to our own Diocesan Environment Group which has been meeting with the co-ordination of Mrs Carol Lawrence to continue work on practical measures and responses to reduce carbon emissions across the Diocese. Many simple steps and the promotion of good practice in parishes are helping contribute to the care of the environment. The bishops also commended a *LiveSimply Award* in response to the Holy Father's invitation in *Laudato Si* to "*work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us.*"

THE SYNODS ON SYNODALITY

I have wanted to keep you updated as best I can on the process leading to the synods on synodality in October 2023 and October 2024. I reminded you in a previous Ad Clerum, that we are presently in the continental phase of the process. Episcopal conferences across Europe have been asked to send delegations to a gathering in Prague at the beginning of February 2023, to provide further discernment on the three themes we addressed in the diocesan listening phase of communion, participation and mission.

The secretariat for synods has been in touch since I last wrote describing a stage called "restitution", whereby local bishops have been asked to facilitate a consideration of the three themes in a working document produced at a meeting in Frascati. I have asked our synod team who prepared the synthesis for the Diocese to reconvene for this stage of restitution. The reflections will be forwarded to the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales for wider consideration. The *Instrumentum Laboris* as the working document for the first International Synod of Bishops is expected to be published following in June next year.

I have received a couple of letters about the synod process following the diocesan phase earlier this year and they reminded me that it is important to reassure the faithful that this process is not about changing Catholic doctrine rather it should "*Express the desire of the Church that walks with Christ under the guidance of the Spirit to fulfil its mission of evangelisation.*" This is a complex process, and I think it will be important to keep our focus on the impetus for new evangelisation.



HEALTH & SAFETY

A message from Julie Tinsley:

A serious fire related incident recently occurred in one of our churches. A large candle, close to the base of a statue had not been extinguished at the end of Mass. The smouldering candle and adjacent objects created excessive smoke and due to the high vaulted ceiling, a chimney effect caused dense black smoke to fill the church and permeate though the whole building. The Fire Brigade advised that the building should not be occupied for the foreseeable future and a specialist cleaning company will be required to repair the smoke damage.

It is fortunate that the incident was observed when it was, and an extensive fire did not result. Smoke also consists of unburnt flammable gases, which could have formed an explosive layer near the ceiling.

This occurrence highlights the importance of ensuring candle safety in all our premises and the necessity of extinguishing candles, in church, at the end of each Mass. At this time of the year, candles and seasonal decorations, including electrical Christmas lights, are used more often and continued vigilance is required.

The Diocesan Health and Safety Guidance Note 'Safe Use of Candles' is enclosed. Please ensure that this document is shared among all keyholders within your parishes.

EVENTS AND COURSES

RELIC OF BLESSED CARLO ACUTIS

LPA 21 are hosting a Relic Exhibition of Blessed Carlo Acutis at Saint Alban's Parish Hall, Liscard, Wallasey from December 3rd to 4th from 10.30am until 5.00pm. The visit of the relic will include Holy Hour, Benediction, Witnessing, Eucharistic

Teachings and Veneration at Saint Alban's, Wallasey and Saint Joseph's, Seacombe during the weekend and will also include activities and workshops for children and teenagers. I have attached a suggested newsletter insert from Father Ramesh and a poster which you may wish to share in your parishes.

We have also been very grateful to receive a relic of Blessed Carlo for the new shrine of Eucharistic Adoration at Saint Joseph's Stockport.

CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP FORMATION PROGRAMME FOR SIXTH FORMERS *Christian Heritage Centre ~ Stonyhurst*

Applications for are now open for 2023's Christian Leadership Formation Programme. The programme (Catholic in content and liturgy although open to students of any Christian denomination) is a unique opportunity for students currently in Lower Sixth, who are committed to their faith and who wish to pursue public-facing careers. It provides philosophical and theological formation around fundamental themes that underpin the common good, as well as spiritual accompaniment and training in practical skills. It aims to prepare them to become passionate defenders of the faith in the vocation they choose.

Please see the attached poster. Application forms are available on the programme's website: www.christianheritagecentre.com/clf

FINANCE ~ GENERAL

MARY'S MEALS – DOUBLE THE LOVE

A message from Anna Houghton – Mary's Meals UK

From 1st November 2022 to 31st January 2023, donations made to Mary's Meals will be doubled by a group of generous supporters, up to £1.5million. Today, we face some of our greatest



challenges yet in a world devastated by conflict, food insecurity and the cost-of-living crisis, which we know is affecting people here in the UK as well as in the countries where we work. With *Double the Love*, your donation will be matched, and your kindness will go even further – meaning we can reach even more desperately hungry children with a life-changing school meal. There are many ways to get involved, find out more at <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/>

FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

The Friends of the Holy Land have contacted me regarding their national crib offerings appeal at Christmas. We already have our annual appeal for *Caritas at Christmas*. The Friends of the Holy Land have suggested to me that Epiphany might be an appropriate feast to ‘offer gifts’ to the most vulnerable Christian families in the Holy Land. I know how many calls there are upon the generosity of parishioners, and I would leave it to your judgment as to how best to respond to this request. If you would like further information on this appeal, please visit the website: www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

PACT MASSES

15/22 Mgr Canon Peter O’Neill (Birmingham)

Died 19/11/22

FINALLY ...

Advent and Christmas are times marked by a renewed spirit of generosity across society. I am conscious, writing this Ad Clerum, that you are being approached by many charities seeking urgent support for their work. Alongside the outstanding work of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul; parish projects for refugees; shared initiatives in foodbanks and support for the homeless, I hope we can also prioritise the Caritas at Christmas appeal for those in poverty in

families and communities across this Shrewsbury Diocese.

Pope Benedict reminded us that our service of charity bears the hallmarks of responding to immediate needs and specific situations; making present the love humanity needs independent of parties and ideologies and by example offering witness to Christ Himself. May Advent and Christmas be marked by this work and witness of charity in all our communities.

Advent always seems to pass quickly for us. I hope amid the many demands of the weeks ahead we will be able to enter more deeply into the prayer and supernatural hope of this beautiful season of the liturgical year.

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Enc.

- *Candles – Safe Use Document*
- *Blessed Carlos Acutis poster and newsletter insert*
- *2023 Christian Leadership Formation - flier*