

Diocese of
Shrewsbury
Ad Clerum

2023/01 January





Dear Fathers and Deacons,

THE DEATH OF POPE BENEDICT

On the last day of 2022 we received the sad news of the death of Pope Benedict XVI. May he rest in peace. The Holy Father presided at his Requiem Mass on 5th January. I sent a Pastoral Letter to be read at all Masses on the following Sunday 8th January: *On the Death of Pope Benedict XVI*. For information, I attach with this Ad Clerum the *Rogito* or brief summary of Pope Benedict's pontificate which according to custom was placed in his tomb.

THE HOLY FATHER'S LETTER FOR THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE SICK

I enclose Pope Francis's Message for the World Day of Prayer for the Sick on 11th February, the liturgical memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes.

CLERGY

AS LENT 2023 APPROACHES

I last wrote to you in the last Ad Clerum just a few days before Christmas and as I write now in mid-January, we are now little more than five weeks away from the beginning of Lent.

CLERGY DAY OF RECOLLECTION

On the first Thursday of Lent, 23rd February we have a Day of Recollection for the Clergy at Wistaston Hall. The day will be led by Father Andrew Robinson who teaches Scripture at Oscott College. I enclose a letter of invitation and a booking form. Please complete the booking form and return it to Cannon Michael Gannon: michael.gannon7@ntlworld.com by Thursday 16th February at the latest.

DAY FOR PRIESTS AT THE PARK ROYAL HOTEL

A gathering for all priests in the Diocese will be held on **Thursday 16th March** at the Park Royal Hotel, Stretton with the option of an overnight stay. The day will begin at 11.00am and will include Lunch at 1.00pm ending with a Celebratory Dinner at 6.30pm. The programme will include presentations by our Diocesan Clergy Welfare Officers and Father Gerard Byrne, Director of Saint Luke's Centre in Manchester. For the Concelebrated Mass at 12.10pm I would be grateful if you would bring an alb and purple stole. A booklet will be provided for Evening Prayer of the Church at 4.00pm. Further details and booking forms will be with you by the end of January.

JUBILARIAN CELEBRATION OF PRIESTHOOD ~ PALAZZOLA: 20th to 24th NOVEMBER 2023

All diocesan priests of England and Wales who are celebrating forty, fifty or sixty years of Priesthood are being invited to a celebration of Priesthood at the Palazzola Centre and the Venerable English College. The dates this year will be Monday 20th November to Friday 24th November 2023. Jubilarians will receive an invitation directly from the Venerable English College.

Congratulations to all our Shrewsbury Jubilarians in 2023:

Diamond

- ❖ *Father Joseph Donlan – 9th June 1963*
- ❖ *Father Gerard McGuinness – 16th June 1963*

Golden

- ❖ *Canon John Gordon – 7th July 1973*

Ruby

- ❖ *Father Paul O'Grady – 10th December 1983*



Silver

- ❖ *Father Keith Butterworth – 20th March 1998*
- ❖ *Father Colin Wilson – 21st March 1998*
- ❖ *Father John Pascoe – 22nd March 1998*
- ❖ *Canon Philip Moor – 4th July 1998*

PLEASE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Those who have died recently:

- ❖ Please remember in prayer and in the Mass, the father of Father Iain Griffiths and the father of Father Stephen Roberts who have died in the past few days and the brother of Father Simon O'Connor who died before Christmas. May they rest in peace.
- ❖ Please also remember Sister Mary Cecily Boulding OP who died after Christmas and will be remembered by many priests who trained or taught at Ushaw. May she rest in peace.

Those who are sick:

- ❖ Please remember our most senior priest, Canon John Marmion who is gravely ill in Arrowe Park Hospital.
- ❖ Please remember Deacon Les Arch who has been unwell over the Christmas period and is awaiting surgery.
- ❖ Please also remember Bishop Christopher Budd, the Emeritus Bishop of Plymouth who is facing serious illness.
- ❖ Please also keep in your prayers Archbishop Patrick Kelly the Emeritus Archbishop of Liverpool who, following a bad fall before Christmas, is suffering fractures to his neck and has also contracted Covid which delayed the possibility of surgery.

DIOCESE

FIRST YEAR OF PREPARATION FOR THE HOLY YEAR 2025

Pope Francis has announced a two-year preparation for the Holy Year 2025. This first year, 2023, invites us to re-visit the four Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council on the Sacred Liturgy, the Church, Divine Revelation and the Church in the Modern World.

An online course available to all parishes has been prepared by Barbara Davies, the Co-ordinator of New Evangelisation and Doctor Stephen Yates of our Diocesan Catechetical Mission Team.

LENTEN MATERIALS FOR REFLECTION FOLLOWING THE DIOCESAN LISTENING PHASE AND IN PREPARATION FOR THE HOLY YEAR 2025

In the Diocesan Listening Phase, there were requests for on-going formation in spirituality, Scripture and specifically the teachings of the Second Vatican Council. The Department for Evangelisation is following this up with several initiatives which also link to first preparatory year for the Holy Year 2025. The first will be a presentation of two major documents of the Second Vatican Council the Dogmatic Constitutions, *Dei Verbum* and *Lumen Gentium*. This will take the form of a recorded conversation between Miss Barbara Davies (Coordinator for New Evangelisation) and Dr Stephen Yates (Senior Mission Catechist). The mp3 recordings will be available on the diocesan website from the beginning of Lent; they will not be time-bound.

The aim is to give an overview of each document and enough insight into their content and ongoing importance to encourage people to read the texts for themselves. Designed to facilitate



both individual and group reflection, additional references and handouts will be available for those who wish to pursue this.

Should you have any questions about this, please contact either Barbara or Stephen directly:

barbara.davies@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

stephen.yates@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

THE HOUSE OF COMMONS CONSULTATION ON ASSISTED SUICIDE

A reminder that the online inquiry into Assisted Suicide closes on Friday. I have forwarded the briefing papers from the Anscombe Centre. It barely takes five minutes to complete the six brief questions online. If you haven't been able to complete the form so far, please click on this link: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/M66AML/>

OUR DIOCESAN MISSION FOR CATECHESIS

It is good to see many new initiatives developing in the Diocese since we emerged from the pandemic. I am happy to provide the updates below from our Diocesan Mission for Catechesis and Promotion of the Vocation of Marriage.

Lisa Martinez left the team in mid-December to help care for her elderly parents in the USA. We record our thanks to Lisa for her service of the Diocese. Mrs Natalie Orefice currently the Archdiocese of Birmingham's Advisor for Formation and Mission has been appointed as a new team member. Natalie's first degree is in Psychology, and she also has an MA in Pastoral Theology (Religious Education and Catechesis). She joins the team from early February.

● A Catechist Day has been organised for catechists in all the parishes, on February 4th, 2023, at Saint Columba's Parish Centre, Chester. It is hoped there will be a roll out further days for

other LPA/LMA's across the Diocese. If Deans would like to arrange such a day with us, please contact Jane Deegan Director of the Mission for Catechesis at jane.deegan@dioceseofshrewsbury.org or call mobile: 07517 906435

● A Marriage Preparation Course entitled *Betrothed* will be offered at Saint Vincent's, Altrincham over two Saturdays, February 25th (Catechetical input) and March 4th (Relationship Education and Skills training input). All engaged couples are welcome. Registration is essential. To register, please contact Jane Deegan: Email: jane.deegan@dioceseofshrewsbury.org or mobile: 07517 906435

● Mrs Pilar Cas from St Vincent's Parish in Altrincham has volunteered to train to become a Natural Fertility Awareness Practitioner. Her training commences in February. Once this training is completed, Pilar will be available to couples throughout the Diocese.

An introductory video for the Shrewsbury Diocese has been prepared by Freda McMahon an experienced Natural Fertility Awareness Practitioner. The presentation explains natural fertility practice works and how it is now a holistic and sophisticated means for helping couples manage their fertility and how the practice deepens the communion of a couple. She specialises in helping couples who struggle to conceive. Please follow this link to see a video which can be used in Marriage Preparation where a practitioner is not available to teach couples:

<https://www.naturalfertilitymatters.com/home/about-us>. It would need, however, to be accompanied by catechesis on the teaching of the Church on the truth and meaning of the sexual embrace as the sign of the Sacrament of Marriage, which the Diocesan Team are happy to provide on request.



● There will be another Day for the Discernment of Gifts and Service on Saturday, June 24th 2023, at Saint Columba's Parish Centre, Chester. All are welcome.

OTHER COURSES AND EVENTS

RESIDENTIAL MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE

The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst College, Clitheroe is offering a residential weekend marriage preparation course from Friday 24th March to Sunday 26th March.

The course will provide couples with a foundation in the Catholic understanding of Matrimony, as well the chance to reflect on the sacred promises that they are preparing to make. Married couples are also welcome to join this weekend as an opportunity for enrichment.

For further details and to book: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/marriage-preparation/>

Or contact: events@christianheritagecentre.com

SHROUD OF TURIN EXHIBITION

The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst will also be hosting an exhibition during Lent on the Shroud of Turin from Thursday 9th March to Wednesday 22nd March 2023.

Exploring the religious and scientific background to the Shroud, the exhibition includes a life-sized replica of the Shroud. A public talk by the curator of the project will take place at 7.00pm on Thursday 9th March. The exhibition will be open to public viewing from Friday 10th to Sunday 12th March. From Monday 13th March, the exhibition can be booked by parish groups for exclusive viewing. For further details and to book:

<https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/shroud-of-turin-exhibition/>

Or contact: events@christianheritagecentre.com

FINALLY ...

As our thoughts turn towards Lent, it is good to recall that we are daily supported in our life and ministry by the prayers of so many. I recently visited Saint Joseph's, Stockport where I am pleased to report Eucharistic Adoration has been established throughout the day for the sanctification of priests and for new and generous vocations to the Priesthood.

This year we look forward to seeing further ordinations to the Priesthood for the Diocese and with the help of your prayer for our ten seminarians and new vocations, we are also seeing new enquirers come forward to begin their discernment. In so many ways we are reminded how of much depends on prayer!

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Enc.

- *Rogito of Pope Benedict's pontificate*
- *Pope Francis' Message for World Day of Prayer for the Sick*
- *Clergy Day of Reflection for Lent – letter and booking form*