

Diocese of  
Shrewsbury  
*Ad Clerum*

2023/10 November





Dear Fathers and Deacons,

## THE HOLY LAND

I am grateful to Father David Long for helping organise our Diocesan pilgrimages to the Holy Land over the past decade. The pilgrimage has been a memorable spiritual experience for many members of the Diocese and an opportunity to support the Christians of the Holy Land in their life and witness. The Covid years interrupted this pattern of pilgrimage and now the tragedy of violence and war will prevent us making the planned pilgrimage in February 2024. The pilgrimage company has already written directly to the almost 50 pilgrims advising them to ignore the balance due on their invoice and asking them not to cancel prematurely as there may be the possibility of recovering the deposit on grounds of safety in the New Year.

It is a source of sadness that we will not be able to undertake the pilgrimage next year, but I hope this will prompt both prayer for peace and renewed efforts to provide practical aid with CAFOD/Caritas International and the Friends of the Holy Land. As I write, there are hopes of a brief ceasefire to allow the release of some of the hostages and humanitarian aid to many who are suffering. I attach the statement of the Bishops of England and Wales issued last week.

## THE HOLY FATHER, THE HOLY YEAR AND THE SYNOD

The bishops also issued a statement (attached) on first session of the synod of bishops on synodality after hearing the reflections of the members from England and Wales. The bishops have taken up the Holy Father's invitation at the end of the synod for renewed prayer in adoration and in the service of charity. As Pope Francis said to the participants at the synod: *"We may have plenty of*

*good ideas on how to reform the Church but let us remember: to adore God and to love our brothers and sisters, that is the great and perennial reform."* The bishops write, *"Echoing our Holy Father's sentiments we invite every parish, school and community to look anew at how the adoration of the Lord, not least through Eucharistic Adoration, and service of the Lord in people in need, can be better connected and reinvigorated."*

I was particularly struck by Pope Francis's words to us as pastors at the concluding Mass of the synod: *"May worship be central for those of us who are pastors: let us devote time every day to intimacy with Jesus the Good Shepherd, adoring him in the tabernacle. May the Church adore: in every diocese, in every parish, in every community, let us adore the Lord! Only in this way will we turn to Jesus and not to ourselves."*

## ADVENT PASTORAL LETTER

These words at the end of the synod flow into the preparation for the Jubilee Year 2025. Pope Francis is asking us to dedicate 2024 to the renewal of prayer in all our lives. I hope this invitation will be a personal call and prompt opportunities and initiatives in parish and diocese in the year ahead. I attach a Pastoral Letter to be read at Masses on the First Sunday of Advent, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, addressing the beginning of our Diocesan preparations for the Jubilee 2025.

## CLERGY

### DEACON BERNARD BARRON RIP

I commend to your prayers Deacon Bernard Barron who died on 22<sup>nd</sup> October. May he rest in peace. According to the wishes of his family the funeral is to be private and attended by family



members only. Please keep Bernard in your prayers and remember him in the Mass.

## FATHER THADDEUS OPARA

Please also remember in your prayers the father of Father Thaddeus – Mr Jude Opera – who died on 19<sup>th</sup> November. May he rest in peace.

## ADVENT CLERGY DAY OF RECOLLECTION

Our Advent Clergy Day of Recollection will be held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December at Wistaston Hall, Crewe with Father Andrew Allman, the Vice Rector of Saint Mary's College Oscott. You will have received, by email, on 3<sup>rd</sup> November, a letter of invitation from Canon Michael Gannon VG and also a booking form to be returned to [pauline.mcculloch@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:pauline.mcculloch@dioceseofshrewsbury.org) as soon as possible.

## JUNIOR CLERGY PROGRAMME

The days of prayer, formation and fraternity for the recently ordained priests of the Diocese have continued this week focusing on the renewal and mission of the Cathedral, support for vocations and the service of the Diocesan Chancery and Tribunal.

## VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD

It is encouraging to see men continuing coming forward for the Priesthood in the service of the Diocese. I am grateful for all your prayer and encouragement, especially when possible, offering a weekly Mass for vocations. We are blessed with candidates who will be seeking to make application for the Diocese next year and an active Diocesan Vocations Group led by Father Anthony McGrath.

I hope we will soon see the 'Discernment House' project, that has proved so fruitful for the Diocese,

back into action in the year ahead and linked to the prayer of the Eucharistic Shrine at Saint Joseph's. Before the Episcopal Conference, I was able to visit our 6 seminarians at Saint Mary's College, Oscott; and will be travelling to Valladolid at the end of this week to celebrate the Solemnity of Christ the King with the college community and our own Eamon Kennedy. Please keep them all in your prayers.

## OUR THANKS TO MARGARET EVANS AND A WELCOME TO JULIE PARRY, OUR NEW CLERGY WELFARE OFFICER

After almost seven years of service our Clergy Welfare Officer, Margaret Evans, will be retiring at the end of this month. I know that Margaret has been a great support to the clergy in time of sickness and especially to the growing number of our retired clergy. We record all our thanks for her devoted work and welcome Mrs Julie Parry who began her service as Clergy Welfare Officer joining Nuala Dutton and shadowing Margaret Evans from the beginning of November.

## DIOCESE

### NATIONAL TRIBUNAL SERVICE

I attach information from an *Introduction to the National Tribunal Service of England and Wales*. This document outlines the origins, constitution and work of the National Tribunal Service established by the Bishops of England and Wales. There will soon be a website with more information, but in the meantime, if you have any questions concerning the work of the NTS, you can email: [tribunal.office@catholictribunal.org.uk](mailto:tribunal.office@catholictribunal.org.uk)



## PASTORAL STATISTICS REMINDER

I attach the Parish Pastoral Statistics form for 2023 which should be completed as soon as possible following the new year and returned to Mrs Theresa Stones at the Bishop's Office in Shrewsbury by the end of January.

Please ensure that you use the attached form and not an old version as it is changed and please notice the guidance notes on how to complete it.

## CURIAL OFFICE CLOSING TIMES AT CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

The Curial Offices will close this year at 5.00 pm on Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> December and re-open on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January.

## YEARBOOK AND ORDO 2024

The 2024 Yearbook and Ordo are going to print and should be with you in the parishes by the end of Advent.

## NEW EMPLOYEES FOR THE DIOCESAN YOUTH MISSION AND OUR YOUTH CHOIR INITIATIVE

We welcome Mr Micheal Nwakamma who has joined the *Shrewsbury Youth Mission Team* beginning in September. We also welcome three new employees joining our *Diocesan Youth Choir* initiative to work part time alongside John Barton, they are: Jo Dennis, Motje Wolfe and Thea Sheppard.

## THE NEW LECTIONARY

The Catholic Truth Society made a presentation at the Bishops Conference about preparations for the publication of the new Lectionary. The Lectionary will come into use at the First Sunday of Advent next year and from the designs I saw

will certainly be worthy in appearance. The estimated cost for parish budgeting is hoped to be between £500 and £600 for the full set of volumes. A Book of the Gospels will also be available. Order forms should be with you in the parishes after Easter next year.

## NEW CONTACT DETAILS

**Deacon Antony Nuttall** has the following new contact details: Email: [a.nuttall40@gmail.com](mailto:a.nuttall40@gmail.com)  
Tel: 07924 978168

**Father Peter Phillips** has a new address:  
403 Portland Court, Wellington Road, Wallasey  
CH45 2NH  
Tel: 07579 050062

## GENERAL

### CARITAS AT CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2024

I wrote to the parishes in September to highlight this annual appeal which takes place on the Sundays before Christmas. 100% of your donations will go to those in the most vulnerable situations within our Diocese ensuring they receive crisis food vouchers and practical support as quickly as possible when it is most needed.

You can also donate online at: [www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk](http://www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk)

Thank you for your generosity and support.

### PETERS PENCE

I received a letter dated 3<sup>rd</sup> October, from Doctor Maximino Caballero Ledo, Prefect for the Secretariat for the Economy in Rome, to acknowledge the donation of £4,727.24 from the Diocese of Shrewsbury to Peter's Pence, which has been gratefully received as our contribution to support the work of the Holy Father.



## FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND APPEAL

I received a letter from Brendan Metcalf, CEO of the Friends of the Holy Land asking me to publicise the urgent needs of Christians in Holy Land, especially at this tragic and traumatic time.

Parishes or parishioners can donate directly via: <https://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/> or by using the charity's bank details:

**Name:** Friends of the Holy Land.

**Account:** 24591211. **Sort Code:** 60-05-41

For further information or prayer material, please contact Jen Hill - telephone 01926 512980 email: [jen.hill@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](mailto:jen.hill@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk)

## PUBLICATIONS

### ANOTHER 50 CATHOLIC CHURCHES TO SEE BEFORE YOU DIE ~ Elena Curti

I enclose information received concerning this new publication by Elena Curti about historic Catholic churches. This sequel includes three of our own diocesan churches: Shrewsbury Cathedral, Saints Peter, Paul and Philomena, New Brighton, and English Martyrs, Wallasey.

### ENDNOTE

*The two Diocesan gatherings to welcome the Apostolic Nuncio in Stockport and Shrewsbury were very happy occasions. Thank you for your efforts to travel to Stockport to come together in prayer at the Eucharistic Shrine. It was an afternoon I will long remember, in bringing together the clergy of the Diocese and many of the lay people who pray at Saint Joseph's for our sanctification and for new vocations. I wish to record all our thanks to Father Sean Davidson for organising this time of prayer and extending a warm welcome to Saint Joseph's in the face of the building problems.*

*I appreciate this was a special occasion for the clergy to welcome Archbishop Maury Buendia as Pope Francis's personal representative. However, we might consider whether the clergy gathering is something to be repeated at the Eucharistic Shrine especially dedicated to prayer for our vocation.*

*I look forward to seeing many of you at the Clergy Day of Reflection at Wistaston and wish you all a truly blessed Advent.*

**+ Mark**

**Bishop of Shrewsbury**

*Enc:*

- *The Bishops of England and Wales's statements on the Conflict in Gaza and The Synod on Synodality (1 document)*
- *Advent Pastoral Letter ~ Prayer Comes First*
- *Introduction to the National Tribunal Service of England and Wales*
- *Pastoral Statistics Form and Guidance Notes for 2023*
- *Another 50 Catholic Churches to See Before You Die flyer*