

Diocese of
Shrewsbury
Ad Clerum

2023/11 December





Dear Fathers and Deacons,

A NEW BISHOP OF PLYMOUTH

On Friday 15th December, the Holy Father appointed Canon Christopher Whitehead of the Diocese of Clifton as the Tenth Bishop of of Plymouth in succession to Archbishop Mark O'Toole, translated to Cardiff and Menevia in June 2022. Please remember Bishop-elect Christopher in your prayers as he prepares for his episcopal service of the Plymouth Diocese.

FIDUCIA SUPPLICANS - ON THE PASTORAL MEANING OF BLESSINGS

A week before Christmas, the Dicastery for Doctrine issued a declaration which has produced some misleading headlines in the media. The declaration far from granting any approval for same sex unions provides a theological reflection on what it means to offer a blessing (see document attached).

The declaration insists we must "avoid any form of confusion or scandal." The Church's teaching is clear and unchanging that sexual relations only "find their natural, proper, and fully human meaning" in the "exclusive, stable and indissoluble union between a man and a woman." With non-liturgical blessings, the dicastery states "there is no intention to legitimize anything, but rather to open one's life to God, to ask his help to live better ..." People may spontaneously ask for the blessing of a priest and the document states "even when a person's relationship with God is clouded by sin, he can ask for a blessing, stretching out his hand to God, as Peter did in the storm when he cried out to Jesus, "Lord, save me!" It suffices to say, as this document indicates, we can only ever act according to the coherence of Catholic teaching as nothing could be a less pastoral than to in any way mislead souls. In times of confusion, we point to Christ who came

"to save us from our sins" and so help many to hear and respond to his call to holiness not least in the beauty of holy purity and chaste love.

CLERGY

DEACON JOHN CONWAY – RIP

The Requiem Mass for Deacon John Conway who died on 27th November, was celebrated at All Saints, Sale on 13th December. I am grateful to Canon Michael Gannon VG for representing me at the funeral. Please keep Deacon John and his family in your prayers. May he rest in peace.

FOR OUR CLERGY IN TIME OF SICKNESS

Please remember three of our priests as Christmas approaches.

Father Bill Fitzgerald underwent heart surgery last week in Wythenshawe Hospital. Bill is grateful for the remembrance in the Mass and in your prayers and asks you to continue to pray for him as he begins a long convalescence.

Canon John Gordon has been admitted to Leighton Hospital with a serious infection. Please keep John very much in your prayers over Christmas.

As we were going to print with this Ad Clerum, I received news that **Father Paul Lomas** has been admitted to a hospital in Birmingham. I have no further details but please keep Paul in your prayers.

JUBILARIAN CELEBRATION OF PRIESTHOOD 2024 ~ PALAZZOLA

The Rector of the Venerable English College in Rome will once again be inviting all diocesan priests of England and Wales who are celebrating forty, fifty or sixty years of priesthood, to a



Celebration of Priesthood at Palazzola near Rome, from Monday 4th November to Friday 8th November 2024.

All eligible priests will receive an invitation directly from the Venerable English College.

DIOCESE

CONFIRMATIONS 2024/25

The new cycle of Confirmations begins from Easter 2024 to Easter 2025. If you are intending to celebrate Confirmations in your parish during this time, please email Theresa.stones@dioceseofshrewsbury to arrange a date (if you have not already done so).

RICHARD CRAWFORD

The recent interview process to appoint a successor to Richard Crawford as Diocesan Property Director has proved unsuccessful. I am very grateful to Richard who has agreed to stay on for us in the capacity of a consultant until the application and interview process can be revisited in the year ahead.

PARISH WINTER PREPARATIONS

A message from Diocesan Health & Safety Officer, Julie Tinsley:

It is, once again, that time of the year when the weather can be unpredictable and the potential for icy and snowy conditions are increasing. All parishes are reminded of the precautions and preparations they should be considering. This should include checking that the external lighting is working properly, and you have supplies to suitably grit your pathways as the weather turns frosty.

'Parish Winter Safety Preparations' risk assessment should be completed or your previous assessment reviewed in time for the weather changes. The Risk Assessment template for this is available in your *Parish Health and Safety File*.

Please ensure your **'Christmas Mass Risk Assessments'** have been revised in line with the guidance we received from the diocesan insurers earlier this year. This new *Risk Assessment Template* and accompanying guidance notes, were sent to all parishes last month. A copy of both of these assessment templates are attached to this Ad Clerum, for ease of reference.

YEARBOOK AND ORDO

The new Yearbooks and Ordos should have arrived in your deanery just after the Third Sunday of Advent. I wish to record my thanks to Anthony Timothy and Canon Christopher Matthews and all who have helped and co-operated in their production.

If you have not yet received your copies, please refer to the distribution points set out below to arrange collection or delivery:

- ☉ LPA 1-3 Cathedral – Parish Office
- ☉ LPA 4-5 Saint Mary's, Telford – Rev Michael Hartley
- ☉ LPA 6-7 Sacred Heart & Saint Theresa, Wilmslow – Rev Anthony Cogliolo
- ☉ LPA 8-9 Saint Mary's, Middlewich – Rev Peter Dutton
- ☉ LPA 10-11 Saint Werburgh's, Chester – Rev Paul Shaw
- ☉ LPA 12-13 Saint John Henry Newman, Warrington - Rev Peter Montgomery
- ☉ LPA 14 Sacred Heart and St Peter, Wythenshawe – Rev Owen Gallagher
- ☉ LPA 15 -16 Saint Vincent's, Altrincham – Rev Jonathan Brandon



- ⊗ LPA 18 Saint Mary's, Duckinfield – Rev Isidore Madueke
- ⊗ LPA 19 -20 Our Lady and the Apostles, Shaw Heath – Rev Martin Onuoha
- ⊗ LPA 21 St Alban's, Wallasey – Rev Ramesh Amaldoss
- ⊗ LPA 22 Our Lady of Pity, Greasby – Rev Michael Lester
- ⊗ LPA 23-24 Saint Anne's, Rockferry – Rev Mario Uche - Ashuikaka
- ⊗ LPA 25 Saint Joseph's, Birkenhead – Rev Niall Mullaley

COURSES AND EVENTS

UNPACKING APOSTOLIC MISSION

Monsignor John Armitage, Master of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, is hosting a conference led by Monsignor James Shea on February 21st, 11:00am at Westminster Cathedral Hall, for diocesan clergy and seminarians.

Monsignor James Shea, President of the University of Mary, and priest of the Diocese of Bismarck, North Dakota, will deliver two keynote addresses unpacking the main themes of "From Christendom to Apostolic Mission" (University of Mary Press, 2020) for our British context. There will also be a Q&A session (with questions submitted as part of the booking process), a buffet lunch, a time of Eucharistic Adoration, and the opportunity to meet clergy from across the UK.

Tickets are limited and demand is high, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

To sign up, go to: www.guild-ransom.co.uk/events

You may purchase a copy of *From Christendom to Apostolic Mission* from CTS:

<https://www.ctsbooks.org/product/from-christendom-to-apostolic-mission/>

LENTEN RETREAT FOR PRIESTS IN WALSINGHAM

The Catholic National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady, at Walsingham, will be hosting its Third Lenten Retreat for Priests from Monday 4th to Friday 8th March 2024.

The retreat leader will be Bishop Michael Campbell OSA and the cost is £400 per priest [full board]. To register, please visit www.walsingham.org.uk/priestretreat or email our Reservations Team on: reservations@walsingham.org.uk or telephone: 01328 820 217.

CHRISTIAN HERITAGE CENTRE, STONYHURST COURSES 2024

The Priest as Spouse and Bridegroom (retreat for clergy)
8-12 April 2024

The retreat, preached by Fr Anthony Doe of the Diocese of Westminster, will focus on the priest's identification with Christ as the bridegroom of His bride, the Church. It will consider the priesthood in its spousal character, beginning with the priest's configuration to Christ and his participation in Christ's love for his Church through pastoral charity. Priestly celibacy will then be considered as the expression of a man's self-gift in the priesthood, as founded on an intimate friendship with Christ. The Priest as Spouse and Bridegroom - The Christian Heritage Centre

Christian Leadership Formation 2024

The 2024 CLF programme uniquely offers a combination of stimulating and high-quality intellectual content, spiritual nourishment, personal development, inter-personal skills,



team-building and socials in a tightly-knit community experience, with expert academics and professionals. Open to any student in Lower Sixth/Year 12/S5 who is motivated by their faith and their studies, with bursaries available as needed. More information and applications via our [new website](http://www.christianleadershipformation.com) www.christianleadershipformation.com and please encourage your parishioners and contacts to follow us on Instagram (@christianleadershipformatio) for all the latest updates.

PACT MASSES

16/23 Died 20/11	Rev Father Sean Turley (Birmingham)
17/23 Died 28/11	Rev Father Owen McGreal (Menevia)

DIARY DATES FOR 2024

Seminarians' New Year Gathering

✠ Tuesday 9th January ~ Cathedral House

Lenten Clergy Day of Recollection

✠ Tuesday 13th February

Meeting of Deans

✠ Wednesday 7th February

✠ Tuesday 8th October

Deanery Conferences

✠ Week beginning 26th February

✠ Week beginning 28th October

Council of Priests

✠ Tuesday 12th March

✠ Tuesday 26th November

Junior Clergy Gatherings - continued

✠ 23rd/24th January

✠ 20th/21st February

✠ 19th/20th March

✠ 23rd/24th April

✠ 21st/22nd May

Diocesan Trustees

✠ Wednesday 6th March ~ 4.00pm

✠ Wednesday 5th June ~ 4.00pm

✠ Wednesday 2nd October ~ 4.00pm

✠ Tuesday 10th December ~ 4.00pm

RCIA

✠ RCIA Retreat Day ~ Saturday 3rd February

✠ Rite of Election ~ Sunday 18th February

Chapter/Jubilarians Mass

✠ Friday 24th May

Marriage Mass

✠ TBA

Saint Beuno's Clergy Retreat

✠ Monday 10th June to Friday 14th June

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

✠ 26th July to 1st August (by air); 25th July to 2nd August (overland)

Youth Pilgrimage ~ 24th July to 2nd August

ENDNOTE

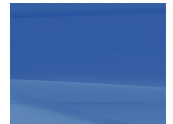
I notice the list above takes us all the way through 2024! As we look forward to a new year, we do so in the grace and light of the Christmas celebration, asking the protection of the Holy Mother of God on the first day of January.

Thank you for all your kind messages and greetings for Christmas and the New Year. I hope the celebrations ahead will be greatly blessed in all our parishes and afterwards you will be able to enjoy some time of rest and quietness.

+ **Mark**

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Diocese of Shrewsbury - *Ad Clerum*



Enc:

- *Fiducia Supplicans - Text in English*
- *Health & Safety:*
 - *Parish Winter Safety preparation RA Form*
 - *Risk Assessment Form – Christmas Masses*