

Diocese of  
Shrewsbury  
*Ad Clerum*

2024/02 February





Dear Fathers and Deacons,

## LENT 2024

Lent begins early this year as next Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February, we begin the 40-day journey to Easter. I will send a Pastoral Letter next week to be read at all Masses on the First Sunday of Lent, 18<sup>th</sup> February. The Chrism Mass will be celebrated this year in Birkenhead at Saint Michael and All Angels Woodchurch on Wednesday of Holy Week, 27<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00 pm.

## THE HOLY SEE

### *On the Validity of the Sacraments*

The Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith has issued a document on the valid celebration of the Sacraments *Gestis Verbisque* (attached) personally approved by Pope Francis. I was struck by the words of Cardinal Fernandez who recalls the promises we made on the day of ordination to faithfully celebrate the Sacraments as the Church has handed them down to us. The Cardinal Prefect writes to us: "We ministers are required to have the strength to overcome the temptation to feel like owners of the Church. On the contrary, we must become very receptive to a gift that precedes us: not only the gift of the life or grace but also the treasures of the Sacraments that have been entrusted to us by Mother Church. They are not ours! And the faithful have the right, in turn, to receive them as the Church provides: it is in this way that their celebration corresponds to Jesus's intention and makes the Easter event current and effective.

With our religious respect as ministers towards what the Church has established regarding the matter and form of each Sacrament, we manifest before the community the truth that "the Head of the Church, and therefore the true president of the celebration, is Christ alone."

## THE DIOCESE OF PLYMOUTH

Please remember the clergy and people of the Diocese of Plymouth at this time. The following statement was made on 1<sup>st</sup> February: "The Episcopal Ordination of Canon Christopher Whitehead will not take place on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2024 as expected. Canon Paul Cummins continues as Diocesan Administrator. A canonical process is currently underway, and no further comments will be made until the process has been concluded. Canon Christopher Whitehead has stepped back from active ministry whilst this process is ongoing."

Please keep Canon Christopher and everyone concerned in Plymouth and Clifton in your prayers.

## PRAYER FOR THE KING

Cardinal Nichols has assured His Majesty King Charles of the prayers of the Catholic community in England and Wales for a "full and speedy recovery" following the diagnosis of cancer. Let us keep the King and the Royal Family in our prayers.

## CLERGY

### CLERGY APPOINTMENTS

I am grateful to the clergy who are generously taking up appointments at the beginning of Lent:

**Father Godlove Amungwa** to continue as Assistant Priest at Saint Vincent's, Altrincham.

**Father Stephen Roberts** to undertake the pastoral care of Holy Spirit Marple and Saint Bernadette's, Brinnington during the convalescence of Father Bill Fitzgerald with the support of Canon Michael Gannon VG.



**Father Robert Dykes** to join the Wythenshawe Team Ministry resident at Sacred Heart, Baguley

**Father David Irwin** to join the Wythenshawe Team Ministry resident at Saint Anthony's, Wythenshawe and to assist Father David Long in the provision of Sunday Mass at Lymm and Knutsford.

**The Blessed Sacrament Fathers - Father Ramesh Amaldoss and Father Antony Praveen** to undertake the pastoral care of Holy Apostles and Martyrs Wallasey during Canon Phil Moor's convalescence.

## CANON PHILIP MOOR VG

I am very happy to report that Canon Phil Moor is making steady progress and has now moved to Clatterbridge Hospital for a period of rehabilitation. He is very grateful and encouraged by the prayers that so many have offered, and by the kind messages of support he has received. During this time of rehabilitation Canon Phil needs space and time to build up his strength, and to help him with this he has asked that clergy do not visit him for the time being. Please continue to keep him in your prayers.

## FATHER GERARD MCGUINNESS

Father Gerard has been admitted to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital with a chest infection and Covid symptoms and is presently in isolation. Please keep Father Gerard in your prayers.

## FATHER BILL FITZGERALD

Father Bill continues his convalescence and hopes to be able to return to pastoral duties at the end of the summer. Please keep Father Bill in your prayers.

## CLERGY LENTEN DAY OF RECOLLECTION

A reminder that the *Clergy Lenten Day of Reflection* will be held at the Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistaston Hall, on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2024 (Shrove Tuesday).

## CLERGY HOLY HOUR AT SAINT JOSEPH'S, STOCKPORT

Our Diocesan Eucharistic Shrine at Saint Joseph's, Stockport will host a Clergy Holy Hour with Father Pablo Escriva de Romani and Sister Briege McKenna on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March from 2.30pm to 3.30pm and will consist of a time of Eucharistic Adoration, a talk by Sister Briege McKenna, followed by tea and coffee in the Parish Hall. Sister Briege will be happy to pray with members of the clergy and to receive particular prayer intentions. Parking in the school car park is very limited (as this will be in term time) but there are plenty of parking options in Stockport Town Centre.

## FOR THOSE RECENTLY ORDAINED

Our priests recently ordained, will meet at the Cathedral on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> February for Mass and a Eucharistic Holy Hour and a presentation by Mr. Ben Gilchrist on the work of Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury and on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February for a morning session with Canon Michael Gannon VG.

## CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS

**Father Tony Elder's** telephone number has been entered incorrectly in the 2024 yearbook.

The correct number is **07394 944717**.

**Canon Niall Mullaley** has a new email address: [niall.mullaley@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:niall.mullaley@dioceseofshrewsbury.org)



## DIOCESE

### PASTORAL STATISTICS

I am grateful to all the parishes who sent their Parish Pastoral Statistics to the office via email or post, meeting the 31<sup>st</sup> January deadline. If you have not met the deadline, please return the forms as soon as possible to enable us to return the collated figures from the Diocese to the Holy See.

If you are having any difficulties or would like a paper copy posted to you, please contact: [Theresa.stones@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:Theresa.stones@dioceseofshrewsbury.org)

Tel: 01743 290052

### CARITAS SHREWSBURY – GOOD SHEPHERD APPEAL

*From Caritas Shrewsbury CEO, Ben Gilchrist:*

Caritas Shrewsbury has recently sent information about this year's 'Good Shepherd Appeal' to all schools via post and email. The materials are also available on their website: <https://www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk/get-involved/good-shepherd-collection/>

including a Good Shepherd presentation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNhqMsjk24U&t=6s> for assemblies and meetings.

Caritas would greatly value any ways you can support this appeal. For further assistance with fundraising activities in schools and parishes, contact: [trish.spencer@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk](mailto:trish.spencer@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk) or [claire.griffiths@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk](mailto:claire.griffiths@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk)

### MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

"After 110 years, and with a declining membership, The Union of Catholic Mothers

[UCM] is hoping to re-launch itself in 2024 in an effort to increase numbers and be able to carry on with our aims and objectives in parishes.

We hope during this year to contact Parish Priests to explain about the UCM. As an organisation we are open to all women who support our aims and objectives of upholding marriage and family life and helping families who are experiencing difficulties both at home and abroad and we would like the opportunity to invite them to join us.

In parishes where there is already an active Foundation, we give active support to the parish and clergy in many different ways. We also have a long history of working with and supporting other organisations within and outside of the Church with our prayers and actions. We were instrumental in the setting up of CAFOD and our members continue to actively support them now.

We continue to pray for Parish Priests and we ask you to welcome members of the UCM should you be approached about the possibility of setting up a foundation in your parish.

### CAFOD – LENT FAMILY FAST DAY

*A message from Christine Allen, Executive Director of CAFOD:*

"CAFOD's Family Fast Day falls on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February. This Lent, we are sharing the story of our work with a fishing community in Liberia with parishes and schools in England and Wales.

This is one example of CAFOD's work around the world. By remembering our sisters and brothers like James and supporting them through CAFOD's Lent appeal, Catholics in England and Wales engage in encounters that show the face of Christ. Below are a series of links to our available resources, but please do contact your CAFOD Community Participation Coordinator if you have any questions.



Family Fast Day Resources:

<https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/family-fast-day>

Parish Resources:

<https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/parish-fundraising>

Big Lent Walk Resources and sign up here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/big-lent-walk>

On behalf of the people and communities we stand with, thank you for your unwavering support."

## RETREATS AND COURSES

### INTERCESSION FOR PRIESTS RETREAT

*Guest Speakers: Father Pablo Escriva de Romani & Sister Briega McKenna, OSC*

The Intercession for Priests will be held at Hinsley Hall, from Monday, 24<sup>th</sup> June to Friday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Arrivals from evening of Sun 23<sup>rd</sup> June). This retreat is a wonderful opportunity for renewal and is open to all priests. Deacons are also welcome! As accommodation is limited, early booking is strongly recommended.

Please contact Su Goodyear at Hinsley Hall by email: [info@hinsley-hall.co.uk](mailto:info@hinsley-hall.co.uk) or Tel: 0113 261 8000.

### PRIESTS' RETREAT AT BUCKFAST ABBEY

*From Carol Davies, Buckfast Abbey:*

"When I am weak then I am strong" An opportunity to reflect on priestly ministry in a changing landscape of church.

Monday 8th April to Friday 12th April 2024

Led by Father Gregory of Buckfast Abbey.

After the celebration of Holy Week and Easter why not join us in the beautiful surroundings of

Buckfast Abbey for a reflection and relaxation with fellow priests from across the country.

Price for half board four nights in Northgate Hotel £500

Price for half board four nights in St Petroc's House £425

To book and for more information [www.buckfast.org.uk/retreats](http://www.buckfast.org.uk/retreats)

### ENDNOTE:

*This week I would have been travelling to the Holy Land with the Diocesan Pilgrimage. The cancellation of our pilgrimage is a poignant reminder to pray for the peace of the people of the Holy Land and undertake whatever charitable support is possible to aid the plight of the suffering.*

*I had anticipated celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my ordination to the Priesthood during this pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Alternatively, I will be making a personal pilgrimage to Lourdes for three days of prayer and thanksgiving. It is the first time I have been in Lourdes for celebration of this Feast of Our Lady on which I was ordained.*

*I hope, if God spares me, to have a Diocesan Celebration for my Golden Jubilee of the Priesthood in 10 years' time which is the same year when I must offer my resignation to the Holy Father on my 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. However, I am very conscious there is so much to be done and strived for in the decade in between!*

*Please pray I can serve the Diocese with faithfulness and ever greater generosity.*

**+ Mark**

*Bishop of Shrewsbury*

*Enc:*

➤ *Gestis Verbisque (English)*