

Diocese of
Shrewsbury
Ad Clerum

2024/05 April





Dear Fathers and Deacons

CLERGY

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

At Shrewsbury and anecdotally across the Diocese, it has been wonderful to see and hear of the increased numbers who responded to the celebration of Holy Week and Easter. At the Cathedral, there were many hundreds of penitents seeking the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation throughout Holy Week. We have truly seen a great flow of grace and renewal in holiness.

The Mass of the Sacred Chrism is always a special celebration of our unity as a diocese in coming together for the blessing of the Holy Oils and the renewal of our own priestly commitment leading us into the Paschal Triduum.

I wish to record my thanks to Canon Niall Mullaley for welcoming us to Saint Michael and All Angels, Woodchurch and to Canon Christopher Matthews and Father Robert Dykes for serving as Master of Ceremonies.

A NEW VICAR GENERAL FOR THE DIOCESE

As I mentioned in the last *Ad Clerum*, Canon Philip Moor VG continues to recover from his recent illness. He is aware that the road to recovery will be a long one, and we must give Phil all the space and time to recover his health and strength.

I am grateful to **Canon Jonathan Brandon** for accepting my invitation to serve as a new Vicar General of the Diocese alongside Canon Michael Gannon VG. I am conscious that Jonathan is Parish Priest of one of the largest parishes of our Diocese, and I very much appreciate his generosity in being ready to undertake this service of the Diocese.

A CURIAL COUNCIL

I am also conscious of the numerous tasks and responsibilities undertaken by Canon Phil Moor as Moderator of the Curia. In his absence, I am

establishing a Curial Council for the oversight of the Diocesan Curia meeting every fortnight to advise and assist in strategic decisions.

I have invited Canon Michael Gannon VG, Canon Jonathan Brandon VG, Canon David Roberts and Mrs Carol Lawrence to form this council which I will personally chair. One of our tasks will be to review the departmental structures of the Diocese in the light of recent changes.

DIOCESAN BOARD OF FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Canon Phil Moor was in the process of renewing the membership of the Diocesan Board of Finance and Administration which he chairs at the turn of the year. In the absence of Canon Phil, I will personally take the chair of the Board of Finance and Administration.

THE SHROPSHIRE DEANERY

Just before Easter, Father Michael Hartley asked to step down as the Dean of the Telford and East Shropshire Deanery. I wish to record my thanks with the clergy of the deanery for his dedicated service as Dean. I am now minded to accept the recommendation made by the Shrewsbury and West Shropshire Deanery in the recent consultation for Shropshire to become one Deanery again.

I will be writing to the clergy to ask for their nominations for a new Dean for the whole of Shropshire. I will continue to consider the suggestions and recommendations made regarding our deaneries.

DIOCESE

DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

After ten years of dedicated service as Diocesan Director of Schools, Mr Damian Cunningham will be stepping down from this role in the coming term. I wish to record my thanks to Damian and that of the whole Diocese for all his work and support of Catholic Education in the ever-changing and challenging educational landscape of this past decade.



I am glad to report that from the Autumn Term, Damian will be continuing with consultancy work in the service of the Diocese and supporting the work of the Education Service. It is good that Damian will be able to support his successor in this way. Plans are now being put in place to begin the recruitment of his successor.

SAFEGUARDING AUDIT AND ANNUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT

Thank you for your response to the independent audit of safeguarding in the Diocese. The audit was interrupted on the afternoon following my own interview at the Curial Offices, due to the family circumstances of one of the auditors.

We are expecting the audit to be completed in the weeks ahead. I attach for your information the Annual Safeguarding Report for the Diocese with my thanks to Andrew O'Brien and the Diocesan Safeguarding Sub-Committee.

MONSIGNOR GEORGE HAY RIP

Canon Paul Cummins from Plymouth has written to inform us of the sad news of the death of Monsignor George Hay, formerly Rector of the Venerable English College in Rome.

Please remember Monsignor Hay and all who mourn him in your prayers.

OTHER COURSES AND EVENTS

THE CATHOLIC NATIONAL SHRINE AND BASILICA OF OUR LADY AT WALSINGHAM

The National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady in Walsingham has an online feature, encouraging pilgrims to visit as part of the Jubilee Year 2025. If you would like to share this information within your parishes, the link is: <https://www.walsingham.org.uk/shrine-home/>

MARY'S MEALS ~ PRAY IN MAY

A message from Anna Houghton ~ Mary's Meals:

We would like to invite parishes from across the Diocese of Shrewsbury to join us to 'Pray in May' with parishes across the country to celebrate the work of Mary's Meals and give thanks that we are now reaching more than 2 million children with a nutritious meal in 18 countries every school day.

Your parish could offer your prayerful support in a number of ways – more information and resources can be found here: <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/get-involved/churches-and-prayers/pray-in-may>

We ask for prayers at this time particularly for families facing extreme food insecurity and hunger in Ethiopia. We are hosting a special online session which priests and parishioners are welcome to join, where our founder Magnus MacFarlane-Barrow will share more about this under-reported crisis. This takes place on Tuesday 16th May at 7.000 pm. You can find out more about how to join this session at <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/get-involved/charity-events>

Please contact anna.houghton@marysmeals.org if you have any questions.

ENDNOTE

It was good to see so many of you at the Chrism Mass. Thank you for your Easter greetings and for sharing the good news from the parishes. I hope, following all the demands of the celebration of Holy Week, the days and weeks ahead will allow some peace and rest as we give thanks for so many graces.

I will be joining the Bishops of England and Wales at Buckfast Abbey next Friday, 12th April, for our plenary assembly and for some days of silent retreat together.

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Enc:

➤ *Annual Safeguarding Report*