

Diocese of
Shrewsbury
Ad Clerum

2024/07 June





Dear Fathers and Deacons

GENERAL ELECTION 2024

I attach a statement on the approaching General Election which I would be grateful if you could circulate to parishioners via the newsletters and other communications. The statement recognises that Catholics freely make prudential decisions at election time regarding present issues always informed by their faith. The faithful, of course, freely support a range of parties and hold different political opinions about how best to address the present challenges. However, some moral questions, which transcend party politics, are so central to the Christian foundations of society that we need to remind the faithful at this time of what is at stake.

We can have little doubt that the question of removing the legal protections from some of the most vulnerable members of society to allow assisted suicide/euthanasia will be debated in the new Parliament. At least one of the party leaders has indicated that he will prioritise parliamentary time to allow this to happen. My statement for the General Election of 2024 asks the faithful to raise this question with candidates seeking their support conscious that a decision to open the doors to euthanasia would dramatically change society for generations to come.

On the Solemnity of the Annunciation this year Bishop Philip Egan wrote an excellent, short letter to the Catholics of Guernsey which I attach for your information. It outlines simply and clearly what is at stake with assisted suicide/euthanasia and provides four clearly stated reasons as to why this is gravely wrong.

The Bishops Conference of England and Wales website also provides reflections on the public issues at this election time focusing on criminal justice, domestic poverty, family life and taxation, education, environment, international relations, human rights and peacebuilding, Life issues and migration. A poster and link is attached.

CLERGY

FATHER ANTHONY COGLIOLO

Father Anthony Cogliolo has now moved to Woodend Care Home in Altrincham where he is presently receiving respite care. Please keep Father Anthony in your prayers.

FATHER BILL FITZGERALD

I have been pleased to report in recent months on Father Bill Fitzgerald's continued and steady recovery. Bill has now reached a difficult decision on the basis of medical advice, to offer his resignation as Parish Priest of Holy Spirit, Marple and Saint Bernadette's, Brinnington. I wish to record my thanks to Father Bill for his devoted care of these communities and wish him every grace as he begins this new stage of his priestly life and ministry in retirement.

CELEBRET REQUESTS

It would be helpful if celebret requests could be made to my office at least two weeks prior to travel if possible. This will help requests to be processed during times of staff annual leave and absence over the summer.

DIOCESE

NEW VOCATIONS WEBSITE FOR THE DIOCESE

I am grateful to Father Tony McGrath for putting together a simple and beautiful website as a first port of call for enquirers regarding the priestly vocation in the Shrewsbury Diocese. It will be launched appropriately on Friday, the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Please make this known in the parishes shrewsburyvocations.org



THE CLOSURE OF OUR LADY OF PITY, HARLESCOTT, SHREWSBURY

The church of Our Lady of Pity, which has served the faithful in Shrewsbury for some 60 years, and for two decades was an independent parish, sadly had to close its doors on safety grounds due to structural problems. This prompted a consultation in the Parish of Shrewsbury as it has been evident that the Cathedral and Saint Winefride's Church have been able to fully provide for the growing number of parishioners in the celebration of six to seven Masses each Sunday.

The general view shared with me by parishioners was of gratitude for the place of this church in the lives of many and recognition that it had served its mission. I accordingly announced the decision in a Pastoral Letter to the people of Shrewsbury on Trinity Sunday, 26th May, that the church would now permanently close. A decree to this effect was posted on parish noticeboards the same day.

It is our intention to remove liturgical and devotional objects and move towards the demolition of the church building out of respect for its sacred character.

NEW PARISH OF OUR LADY AND SAINT PATRICK, TELFORD

Following a period of consultation which resulted in overwhelming agreement among the faithful of the parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary & Saint Luke, Trench and Saint Patrick's, Wellington, a letter regarding the amalgamation of the two parishes was read at all Masses on the weekend of 30th and 31st March 2024.

The Decree of Amalgamation (by extinctive union) of the two Parishes of Our Lady of the Rosary & Saint Luke, Trench and Saint Patrick, Wellington in order to form one new parish known as the Parish of Our Lady & Saint Patrick, Telford will take effect on Saturday 8th June 2024, the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

SEA SUNDAY ~ 14th July 2024

"Sea Sunday" on 14th July is a day to encourage prayer and financial support for the work of Stella Maris, the official maritime charity of the Catholic Church. This mandatory second collection is vital for Stella Maris and its support of seafarers and fishers in the UK and around the world.

COURSES AND EVENTS

NEW DAWN PILGRIMAGE 2024

This year's New Dawn Pilgrimage will take place from Monday 5th to Friday 9th August at the National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady of Walsingham. New Dawn is a family event with a programme of Liturgy, Sacraments, praise and worship, keynote speakers, workshops, children/youth ministries and more. Further information can be found on the enclosed poster and website at www.newdawn.org.uk

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE CENTRE, STONYHURST

Praying with St Francis of Assisi, 19th - 21st July 2024. Follow in the footsteps of one of the most-beloved saints of all time, the "poverello" of Assisi, with Father Emmanuel Mansford, CFR. Book here: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/praying-with-saint-francis/>

Retreat for Clergy: In the Footsteps of Great Sainly Priests, 14-18 October. This retreat will focus on three great priestly saints – Saint John Fisher, Saint John Vianney and Saint Pio of Pietrelcina – to offer a reflection on the character and ministry of the priestly life. Book here: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/in-the-footsteps-of-the-great-sainly-priests/>

"What we have seen and heard in heaven": A Retreat on Art & Catholic Culture, 13-15 September 2024. Join Father Dominic White OP and Dr Joey Belleza at the Christian Heritage Centre



for this special, intensive retreat on faith, art, and Catholic culture. Covering the areas of music, dance, poetry, and visual art, “What We Have Seen and Heard in Heaven” will explore key theological foundations for a proper understanding of art and its place in Christian life. Book here: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/art-and-faith>

Retreat for Permanent Deacons, 4th-6th October 2024. A weekend retreat on Saint Teresa of Avila and Saint Therese of Lisieux preached by Father Michael Miners, OCDS for permanent deacons, with the option for wives to attend and to participate. Limited single and twin rooms available. Booking required by 31st July. For more information and to book: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/st-teresa-and-st-therese/>

ENDNOTE

The Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus is the World Day of Prayer for the Sanctification of Priests. It is the prayer entrusted every day to our Eucharistic Shrine Church established at Saint Joseph's, Stockport together with intercession for new and generous vocations to the Priesthood. Let us pray for each other on Friday and for the increasing number of men enquiring and coming forward for the Priesthood.

The Diocesan Vocations Group continues to thrive as a small and active group; we are seeing a steady stream of requests to enter the Discernment Programme in Stockport and Shrewsbury; and four men have been accepted to go forward into seminary training for the Diocese at the end of the Summer.

Let us entrust all who now live and are aspiring to live this wonderful vocation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Enc:

- *Bishop Mark Davies – Election Statement 2024 (inc) Bishop Egan Letter on Euthanasia*
- *CBCEW Election Poster 2024*
- *New Dawn Poster 2024*