

Diocese of
Shrewsbury
Ad Clerum

2024/12 November





Dear Fathers and Deacons

ADVENT PASTORAL LETTER

I attach an Advent Pastoral Letter *on Returning to the Heart of Jesus* to be read at all Masses on the First Sunday of Advent. My Pastoral Letter takes up the theme of Pope Francis's fourth Encyclical Letter in the light of the Holy Year beginning on Christmas Eve.

HOLY YEAR PREPARATIONS

It was good to reflect together in the Council of Priests on the preparations for the Holy Year 2025 in the parishes and the deaneries. It was especially good to hear of the number of pilgrimages to the Cathedral being planned next year and we look forward to welcoming you. I hope to prepare a short series of videos from the Cathedral during the course of the next twelve months to celebrate the Holy Year and especially the anniversary of the Nicene Creed. Following the official opening of the Holy Year in the Diocese on 29th December in Shrewsbury and on 12th January in Stockport our Catechetical, Marriage, Youth and Schools teams will also be meeting with Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury and Cafod to prepare special events to reflect on the meaning of the Jubilee Year.

ASSISTED DYING BILL

The Assisted Dying Bill will be debated in Parliament on Friday. It has been impressive to see all our parishes have done in defence of the sanctity of life and some of the most vulnerable members of our society in letter writing to Members of Parliament, petitions, private and public meetings. We pray that wise counsels will prevail in the parliamentary debate and in the decisive vote on the principle of medically assisted suicide.

CLERGY

ORDINATION OF ADAM BAMBER AND JOSEPH FAWCETT WOOD

On Saturday 14th December, Archbishop Bernard Longley will ordain to the Diaconate, **Adam Bamber** and **Joseph Fawcett Wood**, in the Chapel of Saint Mary's College, Oscott. We will look forward to Adam and Joseph being ordained to the Priesthood in the Holy Year.

For the final part of their formation, called by the new Ratio "Vocational Synthesis." I have appointed Adam Bamber to serve as Deacon at Our Lady & Saint Christopher's, Romiley and Joseph Fawcett Wood to serve as Deacon at Saint Vincent's, Altrincham. Please remember them both in your prayers on 14th December and as they begin their ministry in the Diocese.

OUR DECEASED BRETHREN

During this month of November, we remember all the departed bishops, priests, deacons and people of our Diocese. In this same month we have celebrated the funerals of two of our longest-serving priests, Monsignor Peter Walton and Father Denis Maher ordained in 1961 and 1964 respectively.

On Thursday 7th November, I celebrated the Requiem Mass for *Father Denis Maher* at Saint Paul's Hyde. It was good to see so many who came together for Denis's farewell.

On Tuesday 19th November I celebrated the Requiem Mass for *Monsignor Canon Peter Walton* at Saint Alban's, Wallasey. On a wintry morning, when travelling conditions were difficult, it was impressive to see so many concelebrants and so many of the faithful gathered in Saint Alban's.



Please remember Denis and Peter in your prayers. May they rest in peace.

CHAPLAINCY AT HMP STOKE HEATH

An advertisement has been circulated for the full-time post of Catholic Chaplain to His Majesty's Prison Stoke Heath. Deacon Joseph Stefanazzi will be retiring as Chaplain at the start of the New Year, and I wish to record my thanks to Joe for his dedicated service which has helped to build-up a strong Catholic Chaplaincy as part of the wider chaplaincy team for the prison.

ADVENT DAY OF RECOLLECTION

Our Advent Day of Recollection will be at the Oblate Retreat Centre, Wistaston Hall on Thursday 5th December. The day will be led by Father David Potter, a priest of the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Booking forms were sent out via email and should be returned to: Pauline.mcculloch@dioceseofshrewsbury as soon as possible.

EPISCOPAL VICAR FOR RELIGIOUS

I am grateful to Father Sean Davidson for accepting my invitation to serve as my Vicar for Religious. I record my thanks to Canon Jonathan Mitchell for his more than a decade of service as Episcopal Vicar.

CHANGE OF CONTACT DETAILS

Father John Pascoe has moved to a new address:

Flat 8, Lexington Building,
Bow Quarter
60, Fairfield Road,
LONDON,
E3 2UH

Father John's email and mobile number remain the same.

DIOCESE

2025 YEARBOOK AND ORDO

The Diocesan Yearbook and Ordo for 2025 have gone to print in the next couple of weeks and should be delivered to each deanery within the first two of weeks of Advent.

I wish to record my thanks to Mr Anthony Timothy and Canon Christopher Matthews and all who have helped and co-operated in their production.

ADVENT REFLECTIONS ON THE NEW LECTIONARY

I am grateful to the Catechetical Office for organising a series of Diocesan Advent Reflections to welcome the arrival of the new Lectionary. It has been good to see the beautifully prepared volumes in the parishes with their fresh and more accurate translation. I hope we will quickly become acquainted with the new format.

A message from Natalie Orefice -

I enclose a flyer with information on the series of talks to coincide with the launch of the new Lectionary, which will be held at 7.00pm on Wednesdays in December at the Parish Hall, Holy Angels, Hale Barns, Altrincham, WA15 0HG.

- **Wednesday 4th December**, Father Paul Denney of the Diocese of Motherwell, who has a Licentiate in Sacred Scripture from the Pontifical Biblical Institute and has recently served on the editorial board for the new Lectionary as the delegate of the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, will be speaking about the new translation of the Lectionary.
- **Wednesday 11th December**, Father Marco Egawhary of the Archdiocese of Birmingham,



who completed further studies at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome will speak on why it is important to pray with the scriptures and how to pray with them.

- **Wednesday 18th December**, Father David Irwin and Natalie Orefice, Director of Evangelisation and Catechesis, will present Dei Verbum on Divine Revelation from the Second Vatican Council.

After each talk there will be Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Benediction and Compline in Holy Angels Church.

For further information please contact Natalie Orefice:

Natalie.orefice@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

Tel: 07730526826.

OLD LECTIONARIES AND MASS BOOKS

I consulted the Council of Priests on a proposal for the green re-cycling of the old Lectionaries and Mass books. A suggestion was made that these might be given as gifts to parishioners who would treasure them. Alternatively, the Curial Offices will be in touch with you this week regarding a "Collect and Recycle" scheme which involve boxing and double taping the books in boxes of no more than 20kg in weight and delivering them to a collection point within the Diocese.

WINTER PARISH PREPARATIONS

A message from Health and Safety advisor, Julie Tinsley:

At this time of year, the weather can be unpredictable and the potential for icy and snowy conditions are increasing. All parishes should be checking that the external lighting is working properly and you have supplies to suitably grit your pathways as the weather turns frosty.

A revised '**Parish Winter Safety Preparations**' risk assessment is attached. Each parish should complete or revise their previous assessment in line with this updated document, in time for the weather changes.

Please also ensure that your **Christmas Mass Risk Assessments** are reviewed taking into account the calculated Maximum Capacity of your church, which has been determined by your Fire Risk Assessment.

If you are opening your parish facilities as a '**Warm Space**' please ensure you have completed or reviewed your risk assessment for that activity.

The risk assessments and accompanying guidance notes are available in your church's Health and Safety File. There is also a copy of these risk assessment templates attached to this Ad Clerum.

CARITAS AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas Appeal 2024

At the end of September, I sent a letter and poster to the parishes announcing this year's *Caritas at Christmas Appeal*. Parishes are invited to take a collection over a weekend of their own choice as Christmas approaches.

These contributions will ensure that *Caritas* can keep providing vital services and support to those most in need and it has been good to see the growing impact of *Caritas* in response to the increasing needs of people in so many communities of our Diocese.

If you would like any additional information or resources regarding the appeal, please contact Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury:

Email: info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk

Telephone: 0151 652 1281 or visit the website:

www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk



OTHER/COURSES AND EVENTS

WORD ON FIRE ~ UK BIBLE CONFERENCE 2025

From Friday 21st to Saturday 22nd February 2025, the *Evangelisation & Culture: The Bible* conference will be taking place at the Excel Centre, East London. The conference theme is to gain a deeper appreciation of the Sacred Scriptures and their relevance to the Church's mission today.

Speakers include Bishop Robert Barron, N.T. Wright, Professor Tracey Rowland and more.

I enclose a flyer for the events and for more information and to register, please visit: <https://events.wordonfire.org/the-bible-event>

FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND

The Friends of the Holy Land have contacted me regarding their national Christmas appeal 'The Gift of Hope'. We already have our own Diocesan Crib Offerings Appeal for *Caritas at Christmas*, and I am aware of how many calls there are upon the generosity of parishioners, so I would leave it to your judgment as to how best to respond to this request.

If any parishes would like further information or any prayer material, please contact the Office Manager Jen Hill: Tel: 01926 512980, Email: jen.hill@friendsoftheholylan.org.uk or visit the website: www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

MARY'S MEALS

A message from Anna Houghton ~ Mary's Meals

This Advent you are invited to support the work of Mary's Meals, a global feeding charity that reaches over 2.4 million children in 17 countries

across the world with nutritious meals in their place of education.

Please consider taking home one of their collection boxes to put your spare change in, if you feel you can. For the cost of just £19.15 a child can be fed for a whole school year. This works out at around 10p a meal. If you could kindly return the money at Christmas and then Mary's Meals will let us know how many children as a parish we have managed to feed for a year.

If you would like any of these boxes sent to your parish, please contact Anna Houghton - anna.houghton@marysmeals.org and for more information:

<https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/get-involved/churches-and-prayers>

THE CHRISTIAN HERITAGE CENTRE AT STONYHURST

From Stefan Kaminski, Director

Please see details of upcoming events below:

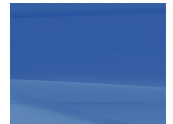
Approaching a Theology of the Body clergy conference series: November, January, March

Three, day-long conferences for clergy in November, January and March, examining Pope Saint John Paul II's vision of the person as created for communion, the character of conjugal communion, and formatting for authentic love. The conferences are stand-alone, although they offer a progressive itinerary through related themes.

For more information and to book: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/tob-clergy-days/>

The Fatherhood of the Priest clergy retreat, 28th April to 2nd May 2025

Father Jose Granados, Superior General of the Disciples of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and Vice-President emeritus of the Pontifical John



Paul II Institute for Studies in Marriage and Family Life, will preach our spring clergy retreat. Father Granados will address two, intertwined questions that are at the heart of priestly identity: masculinity and spiritual paternity. As a widely respected sacramental theologian, a consultor to multiple Vatican Dicastery's, author of numerous articles and volumes, as well as an experienced pastor and formator, this is a unique opportunity to engage with a theme of fundamental importance to priesthood.

For more information and to book: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/the-fatherhood-of-the-priest/>

Men's Spiritual Exercises, 31st March to 5th April 2025

A 5-day version of the Ignatian Exercises offered specifically for men (whether lay or ordained), this retreat will be preached by the Benedictine Monks of St Joseph's Abbey, France. Founded in 1988, this community has retained its charism of a specific apostolate to men and of engaging them through a shortened version of the Ignatian Exercises. One-to-one direction will be offered alongside the talks. Priests are welcome to attend and concelebrate or celebrate their own Mass.

For more information and to book: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/mens-spiritual-exercises/>

PUBLICATIONS

CHRISTOPHER BUTLER: MONK, THEOLOGIAN, BISHOP ~ *Father Peter Phillips*

The Weldon Press is publishing Father Peter Phillips' book titled, **Christopher Butler: Monk, Theologian, Bishop**. With a publication date of December 8th, the press is offering at 10%

discount and free postage and packing to books ordered before this day.

Orders from <https://douaiabbey.org.uk/bishop-christopher-butler-osb.php>

PACT MASS

09/24 Rev Mgr Graham Wilkinson
Died 30/10 (Birmingham)

ENDNOTE

I will begin the celebration of Advent with the staff and seminarians at Valladolid leading the Advent Retreat for the College and I look forward to being back to join the Diocesan Clergy at Wistaston Hall for our Advent Day of Recollection on 5th December.

I hope this short but beautiful season will be a time of many graces and a special time of preparation for the Jubilee Year ahead.

+ **Mark**

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Enc.

- *Advent Pastoral Letter on Returning to the Heart of Jesus*
- *Advent Talks Poster*
- *Health and Safety Documents*
 - *Parish Winter safety Preparation*
 - *Christmas Masses ~ Risk Assessment Form*
 - *Parish Warm Spaces Form*
- *World On Fire Bible UK Event ~ poster*