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Pictured is Bishop Peter with the catechumens and candidates, at the Rite of Election. Picture by Keith Morris. You can view a full gallery of the Rite of Election at: <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjBeE5e>



## Bishop's welcome at the Rite of Election

**At the Rite of Election in St John's Cathedral in Norwich on February 18, Bishop Peter Collins welcomed over 80 catechumens and candidates from across the Diocese of East Anglia who will be received into the Church at Easter. Keith Morris reports.**

■ Catechumens and candidates were in attendance from across the diocese, including from Peterborough, Cambridge, Ipswich, Norwich Costessey, Huntingdon, Great Yarmouth, Gorleston, North Walsham, St Neots, Sawston and Cambourne.

In his homily, Bishop Peter said: "I rejoice to welcome you all to this mother Church of our diocese for our celebration of the Rite of Election and the call to continual conversion.

"Those of you who are preparing for

baptism and those of you who are preparing to complete your Christian initiation by entering into full communion with the Catholic Church – each one of you has a unique story to tell, yet your stories will share some common ground.

"The societal environment we occupy is now secular, despite the fact that our history and culture have been most profoundly fashioned by the Christian faith.

"You who are candidates for the sacraments of Christian initiation, whether you approach from a background where no faith was previously acknowledged, or where your previous experience of faith developed within the framework of a non-Christian religion, or where you commenced within another Christian community. You have all had to contend with many challenging questions from without and from within.

"I want to quote to you from the life of St Augustine of Hippo. Book one of Augustine's Confessions reads: 'Yet these humans, due part of your creation as they are, still do long to praise you. You arouse us so that praising you may

bring us joy, because you have made us and drawn us to yourself and our heart is unquiet until it rests in you.'

"This last phrase is well known and defines our entire journey towards the godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. From the dawn of time, through the very fabric of creation, God has established and developed his covenant with us."

The catechumens were then each called by name and stood up. Their sponsors declared that they were sufficiently prepared to be enrolled among the elect. The catechumens were then invited to declare that they wished to fully enter into the life of the Church through the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist. They were then greeted by Bishop Peter and invited to write their names in the Book of the Elect.

Following this, candidates for reception into the Church were asked to stand and were affirmed by their sponsors and the assembly. The bishop then asked them if they wanted to enter fully into

■ story continued on page two.

## Bishop honour in Cambridge

■ At an academic ceremony on February 13, Bishop Peter Collins was formally admitted as an Honorary Fellow of St Edmund's College, Cambridge, reaffirming strong links between the Diocese and the College.

Taking its name from St Edmund of Abingdon, a pre-reformation Archbishop of Canterbury, the college has traditionally Catholic roots and was founded by Henry Fitzalan-Howard, 15th Duke of Norfolk (who also funded the construction of St John's Cathedral in Norwich), and Baron Anatole von Hügel, the first Catholic to receive a Cambridge degree since the deposition of King James II in 1688.

Bishop Peter, who was accompanied at the ceremony by Bishop Emeritus Alan Hopes, Mgr Eugene Harkness and Fr Peter Wygnanski, said: "I am grateful to the Master and Fellows of the college for conferring an honorary fellowship in recognition of its Catholic heritage and identity within the University of Cambridge. It is my great wish to support the important mission of the college in the coming years as it exemplifies the contribution the Catholic faith can continue to make in higher education and research."





## Welcome at Rite of Election

■ story continued from page one. the sacramental life of the Church.

Each parish group of candidates were then greeted individually by Bishop Peter.

The Rite of Election, held on the First Sunday of Lent in cathedrals across the world, marks an important stage along the journey to undergo the final stages of RCIA (Rite of Catholic Initiation of Adults) and prepare to be baptised and confirmed, or to be received into the full Communion of the Church and confirmed. New members of the Church will also receive the Eucharist for the first time at the Easter Vigil.

Catechumens are adults who have never been baptised and seek to become members of the Catholic Church through the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. Candidates are adults who have been baptised in one of the other Christian denominations and now seek to become members of the Catholic Church through the Rite of Reception, whereby they will receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist.

**Catholic EastAnglia**

Newspaper of the Diocese of East Anglia

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Articles and photographs for the next edition are very welcome and should be sent to the editor, ideally via email, by Monday April 8.

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Picture courtesy of the Vatican Photography Service.



## Bishop Peter meets Pope Francis

■ Bishop Peter Collins met Pope Francis at the Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls in Rome alongside the Anglican Bishop of Beverley, Stephen Race, on January 25 at the IARCCUM gathering.

They were jointly commissioned by Pope Francis and the Archbishop of Canterbury as representatives from England and Wales, amongst other pairs of Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops from across the world. They were commissioned to engage in joint mission and witness and to promote reception of the agreements already reached in theological dialogues between the two traditions.

# Second Caritas Festival in Ipswich

The second Caritas Festival in East Anglia was held in the Ipswich deanery festival on Saturday February 24. Jane Crone from CAFOD in East Anglia reports.

■ The day, hosted by St Mary's parish in Ipswich, started with Mass, celebrated by Bishop Peter and was broadcast live on Radio Maria.

During his homily, the Bishop reflected on the call to engage in works of charity in the collect of the day, and the challenge to show love to all in the gospel (Matthew chapter 5 v 43-48).

At the end of Mass Fr John Warrington, Caritas in East Anglia Chair, thanked Bishop Peter for celebrating Mass and supporting Caritas. He went on to explain that Caritas East Anglia was established in November 2019 to encourage, support and co-ordinate works of social outreach in the diocese.

It is a member of the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN), the social action arm of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. Deanery Caritas festivals celebrate ways in which our Catholic community puts its faith into action



through Caritas and other outreach organisations and encourages new volunteers to get involved.

Fr John concluded by inviting everyone into the church hall for refreshments and an opportunity to meet representatives from organisations actively engaged in social outreach in the Ipswich area.

Local organisations represented included Compassionate Companions, FIND (Families in Need), Helping Hands the Diocesan Cambodia link and Ipswich town pastors. National and international organisations included the Catenians, Stella Maris, Radio Maria SVP

and CAFOD.

At the end of the morning a representative from Helping Hands in Felixstowe summed up her day:

"I have learnt so much from visiting all the stalls today. Meeting other volunteers was heartening and encouraging. So much wonderful work is going on in our deanery!"

For more information about Caritas in East Anglia see [www.rcdea.org.uk/caritas-east-anglia](http://www.rcdea.org.uk/caritas-east-anglia).

The next Caritas Festival will be on Saturday May 25, at St Peter's Church in Gorleston



# Sisters lead a three church Ipswich mission

The Sisters of the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham led a mission for three churches across two parishes in Ipswich during February. Sr Catherine COLW reports.

■ It was a joy to be invited to lead a mission for the parishes of St Mark's, Holy Family and Mary Magdalen in Ipswich at the invitation of Fr Luke Goymour. From February 17 to 25, we were present in the parish giving accompaniment, making pastoral visits and giving teachings twice a day. In addition to spiritual nourishment we also ensured physical sustenance was provided through a steady supply of homemade bread, cakes and soups!

The title we have been using for our parish missions is: 'Called the Fullness of Joy.' We recognise that a life lived in deep union and authentic relationship with God brings true joy. However, living out of this joy isn't always easy and so we try to make our teachings, based on Scripture, the Catechism and the lives of the Saints, as practical and relevant as possible so that each person who attends is equipped with ways of putting these teachings into practice in their day-to-day lives. We see Our Lady of Walsingham as a model for this, the one who said 'yes' to God in each and every moment and from this flowed a profound joy which permeated every aspect of her life.

Each day of the Parish Mission explored a different facet of the theme, such as prayer, trust and gratitude. We also incorporated activities for all ages which included a rosary-making workshop, a Divine Mercy evening, a Sunday quiz and activities for children.

One of the parishioners commented: "I really enjoyed the retreat days... despite being well over 70 years old, I got a lot out of the addresses... the retreat and your prayers have helped. I so enjoyed seeing you all – and seeing you in action as a community." Another said: "This week has been potentially life-changing!"

Fr Luke said: "I had a thought about having a parish mission for some time. As a parish priest, I am limited in what I can offer people. Most hear me for 10 minutes a week in the homily, so to be able to give people the opportunity to go deeper in their spiritual life and seriously explore prayer was very attractive. The sisters spoke beautifully about prayer and our relationship with God and with others. Their infectious joy, deep prayerfulness and eloquent teaching made a deep impact on many in the parish... we are already looking forward to welcoming the community back for follow-up events."

We are grateful to Fr Luke for his invitation as this journey into a deeper relationship with Christ is the greatest gift we have and to be able to share this gift with others is one of our deepest joys.



Pictured during the Ipswich Mission are top, Sr Catherine, left the COLW Sisters and, below Fr Luke Goymour.



## news in brief



## Tribute paid to former Abbot

■ Former Abbot of Worth Abbey and Titular Abbot of St Edmund's Abbey, Bury St Edmunds, the Rt Rev Stephen Ortiger, died on January 27, after a period of ill health.

Fr Stephen, aged 83 years, former Abbot of Worth, Sussex, was widely known in Catholic circles and renowned for his wisdom and knowledge. Educated at Downside, he went on to study history at Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

He was active in the Cambridge University chaplaincy at Fisher House and became president of the university's student-run Catholic society.

From university he entered Worth as a novice, taking his religious name of Stephen. He was ordained a Benedictine priest in 1967 and taught in the Abbey's secondary school, eventually becoming headmaster.

His links to East Anglia were rekindled when he became titular Abbot of St Edmund's Abbey, Bury St Edmunds.

Local historian John Saunders explained, "A titular abbot is one who holds the title of abbot derived from a destroyed or suppressed abbey. In this instance Abbot Stephen was offered the title of an ancient abbey and happily chose Bury St Edmunds. A man of humour, Abbot Stephen defined the difference between a ruling abbot and a titular abbot as the latter having no trouble with his monks! In this case the monks departed the town in 1539."

Retiring as Abbot in 2002, he returned to Fisher House in Cambridge before resuming his monastic life at Worth and becoming Episcopal Vicar for Religious Life in the Arundel & Brighton Diocese. In 2020 he became priest in charge of Our Lady Star of the Sea in East Preston, West Sussex. His funeral took place on February 17 at Worth Abbey.

### St Peter & All Souls – Easter Mass Times

#### Maundy Thursday – Pascal Triduum

7.30pm Mass

#### Good Friday

3.00pm Liturgy of Lord's Passion All Souls

#### Holy Saturday

7.30pm Easter Vigil Solemn Mass

#### Easter Sunday

Masses: 8.30am, 9.15am OLOL, 9.30 am, 10.45am, 12.30 pm Portuguese, 2.00pm East Timor, 4.00pm Lithuanian, 6.00 pm



# Easter people know the power of the resurrection

**Are you interested only in the power of the resurrection or are you also happy to know the fellowship of Jesus suffering, asks Fr Alvan Ibeh in the latest of the Voice of Hope series.**



■ We are grateful to God for the privilege of experiencing yet another Easter. We are all Easter people, for without the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we would have been lost forever. You can imagine how it would have been if Jesus, after promising that He was going to rise on the third day (He said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men.

They will kill him, and after three days he will rise”), and then after the third day, nothing happened. Where are we going to be in God?

I am sure there will not be anything called Christianity today, because that would have been the end of that movement. The disciples of Christ would have all dispersed in shame and utter disappointment because people would have mocked them to say their leader has scammed them. This is because Jesus also made a public declaration about his resurrection on the third day, though they didn't understand what he meant when He said: “Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days”. So in essence, whenever we celebrate Easter, we are reminded once again that our God is a faithful God. He is a promise keeping God who never goes back on his promises. He promised that He will bring back His Son from the dead, and He did exactly as He said, and because Christ has been resurrected from the dead, we have firm hope that when we die in Him, we will also be resurrected on the last day.

It was indeed after the resurrection of Christ and His appearance to His followers as a proof that He is alive that made their courage

to witness to the good news stronger and more powerful. The resurrection of Christ came with power for all who believed in Him. It was this power that St Paul desired to know about in Philippians 3:10 – “that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection”.

Every year, we celebrate our Lord's resurrection at Easter but are we actually aware of the power that His resurrection carries? The power which St Paul himself discovered and desired to have an intimate knowledge of. The Lord's resurrection is spiritually powerful as evidencing the justification of believers (Romans 4:24-25, 1 Corinthians 15:14, 1 Corinthians 15:17-18), it assures us of our own bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20, 1 Thessalonians 4:14). And yet, His resurrection is that which constituted Him actually the life-giving second Adam, the giver of the spirit who unites the members to Him the vital head (John 7:39, John 20:22, Acts 2:33, Ephesians 4:4-16).

Paul was not only interested in knowing the power of the resurrection, he went further to add - “and the fellowship of His suffering”. Christ of course wouldn't have been resurrected if He had not suffered and died. So we

can't separate His suffering and death from His resurrection. St Paul deals with the fact that the Lord, who has redeemed him, has done it at the severest cost of pain; and that a moral and spiritual necessity calls His redeemed ones, who are united vitally to Him, to “carry the cross” in their measure, for his sake, in His track, and by His spirit's power. He implies that this cross bearing, whatever is its special form, this acceptance of affliction of any sort as for and from Him, is a deep secret of entrance into spiritual intimacy with Christ; into “Knowledge of Him” (Roman 8:17- (its only in sharing in his sufferings that we are able to share in His glory), 2 Corinthians 4:11, Colossians 1:24, 1 Peter 4:13).

As we are therefore rejoicing at the resurrection of our master, let us ask ourselves this question: “Are we only interested in the power of the resurrection or are we also happy to know the fellowship of his suffering? Do we want to share only in His glory and not in His pains? Are we only interested in the crown or also on the cross? May we also strive to know the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His suffering. Have a great Easter.

■ Social media @voice of hope family.

## Bishop prays for the sick including King Charles

**Bishop Peter Collins led a Mass for the Sick, addressing suffering and frailty amid public discourse on the King's cancer, highlighting the need for compassion and understanding.**

■ Bishop Peter led a Mass for the Sick at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist on February 10, where he delivered a homily that spoke directly to the challenges of suffering and the Christian understanding of frailty.

Bishop Peter began his homily by reflecting on the recent news of His Majesty the King's diagnosis of cancer, noting the significance of this moment for public discourse on health and vulnerability. “As we all know, this past week has seen the publication of the diagnosis of cancer for His Majesty, the King. Much commentary has been offered regarding how significant it is that the King addresses his condition publicly, how necessary it is for us as a society to acknowledge suffering and the dangers of illness,” he stated.

He emphasized the importance of acknowledging our vulnerabilities, stating, “We stand in the midst of great frailty, something that the world resists acknowledging. The promulgation of our age is to perceive human life needing to be defined in terms of strength and autonomy.” He argued that true understanding of the human condition requires placing our existence within the context of eternal transcendence and our relationship with Almighty God.

Drawing from biblical teachings, he reminded the congregation of God's endless grace and mercy, “The scriptures



**Bishop Peter and Fr Peter Wygnanski at the Mass for the Sick. Picture by Joshua Clovis.**

speak to us today of God's abundant grace and mercy. His love for us is like a river in spate. It casts an abundance upon us.” This message of divine compassion and support was central to his reflections on facing illness and frailty.

Bishop Peter addressed the societal tendency to deny or ignore suffering and illness, warning of the dangers this poses to both individual and communal well-being. “There is a reluctance to even face the realities of illness... Acknowledging that frailty should be a strength in itself,” he said, advocating for a more accepting and compassionate approach to our limitations.

The Mass also included the anointing of the sick, a sacrament administered by Bishop Peter and other priests. This act reinforced his message that in moments of vulnerability, there is a profound opportunity for spiritual growth and connection with God.

In conclusion, Bishop Peter invoked the intercession of the Blessed Mother and St. Bernadette of Lourdes, emphasizing the church's role as a haven of grace and healing. “God's grace alone sets us free and alleviates us and brings healing in every sense,” he affirmed, encouraging those present to find solace and strength in their faith.



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# Lent Masses across Diocese

**Bishop Peter Collins has celebrated Lenten Station Masses at the seven deaneries across the Diocese of East Anglia.**

■ The first Mass took place on February 20 at St Peter's & All Souls in Peterborough, reports Oliver Wessex.

The evening began at 6pm with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, accompanied by the opportunity for the faithful to participate in the Sacrament of Confession. This sacred time of prayer and reflection allowed parishioners to deepen their connection with the Lord and seek spiritual renewal as they embarked on their Lenten journey.

Following this period of devotion, Bishop Peter Collins presided over a solemn Lenten Station Mass with 10 Peterborough deanery priests concelebrating. There were also four deacons in attendance. The parish choir was guiding the congregation through a sung meaningful liturgy that encapsulated the essence of the Lenten season — a time of penance, reflection, and preparation for the celebration of Easter.

The presence of Bishop Peter added a special significance to the evening, fostering a sense of unity and spiritual communion among the parishioners. His words and pastoral presence resonated deeply with all those in attendance.

As the Mass concluded, parishioners gathered in the Parish Hall for a delightful experience. The evening culminated with the sharing of Polish Bigos, a traditional winter cabbage dish showing off the rich cultural diversity within the parish community. This communal meal provided an opportunity for championship, strengthening the bonds of friendship and faith among parishioners.

■ On March 7, St Mary's Church in Great Yarmouth was the setting for a very well-attended Lenten Station Mass by parishioners from all across the Coastal Deanery.

The Mass, led by Bishop Peter, was his inaugural Mass at the church.

Following the Mass, a substantial buffet and soup was on offer in the church hall. St Mary's extends heartfelt thanks to Bishop Peter and all those who attended.



■ A large number of parishioners gathered at the Church of Holy Family in King's Lynn on February 27, to give a warm welcome to Bishop Peter, for his first visit, after he inadvertently missed last year's Lenten Mass.

Pauline McSherry said: "The prayerful assembly began with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and time for Confessions, an hour of peace, prayer and holy quiet before Mass. That hour was indeed holy, silent prayer pervaded."

"Bishop Peter was the main celebrant and with him were 12 priests, two deacons and altar servers. In his opening words Bishop Peter made amusing reference to the Station Mass of 2023 when he lost his way. An inspiring sermon followed."

"In the Narthex we gathered as one joyful family. No strangers here, only friends together. It was such a joy, a real delight to have time to talk to so many church companions. I hope Bishop Peter had time for a bite of supper. Chat and cameras never ceased."

"Thank you to all who made our Station Mass such a memorable gathering."

Lenten Masses were also held at: Ipswich Deanery – St Mary – February 29; Bury St Edmunds – St Edmunds – March 5; Norwich Deanery – St John's Cathedral Norwich – March 12; Cambridge Deanery – Our Lady and the English Martyrs – March 14.



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## Bishop Peter's engagements

■ **Mar 26, Tue:** Bishop to Chrism Mass, St John's Cathedral, 11.30am

■ **Mar 28, Thur:** Bishop to Maundy Thursday of the Lord's Supper, St John's Cathedral

■ **Mar 29, Fri:** Bishop to Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord, St John's Cathedral, Tenebrae, 10am

■ **Mar 29, Fri:** Good Friday Solemn Liturgy of the Passion, Cathedral, 3pm

■ **Mar 30, Sat:** Tenebrae, St John's Cathedral, 10am

■ **Mar 30, Sat:** Solemn Vigil and First Mass of Easter (with Baptisms and Confirmations), St John's Cathedral, 8pm

■ **Mar 31, Sun:** Bishop, Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord, Solemn Pontifical Mass, St John's Cathedral, 11am

■ **Mar 31, Sun:** Easter Sunday Solemn Pontifical Vespers, Cathedral, 4.30pm

■ **Apr 2 – 9:** Bishop on leave after Easter

■ **Apr 12 – 19:** Bishop to Spring Plenary Assembly & Retreat of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Buckfast Abbey

■ **Apr 20 – 24:** Bishop and his Personal Secretary, Fr Peter Wygnanski, to Valladolid, Madrid

■ **Apr 25, Thur:** Bishop to meet with the MAT CEOs, White House, Poringland, 10am

■ **Apr 26, Fri:** Requiem Mass, The Holy Family & St Michael, Canon Michael Hazell on the anniversary of his burial during covid

■ **Apr 26, Fri:** Bishop to meet with the Ignite Team at the White House, Poringland, 6pm

■ **Apr 29, Mon:** Bishop to Confirmation Mass, St Peter & All Souls, 7pm for 23 candidates

■ **Apr 30, Tue:** Bishop to attend a training day, Poringland, Governance Around Safeguarding which will be presented to the Diocesan Trustees, Bishop's Council and Deans

■ **May 3, Fri:** Bishop to visit St Edmund's Primary School, Bury St Edmunds – 10:00 Mass and then visit with children and staff

■ **May 3, Fri:** Bishop's visit to St Joseph's Primary School, Sudbury – 13:30 Bishop to visit with children and staff

■ **May 4, Sat:** Bishop to Caritas Steering Committee Meeting, 11:00 Poringland

■ **May 4-5:** Bishop to join Ignite Youth Festival at the St Benedict's School, Bury St Edmunds

■ **May 6, Mon (Bank Holiday):** Bishop to lead the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham, 12:00 to 16:30

■ **May 7, Tues:** Bishop's Council Meeting, Poringland 11:00

■ **May 7, Tues:** Bishop to Confirmation Mass at Walsingham for the parish at Wells-next-the-Sea

■ **May 9, Thurs:** Bishop to St Mary's College Oscott for the Conferral of Candidacy for Peter Ho and Anthony Reilly at 16:45

■ **May 11, Sat:** Bishop to Ely Cathedral for the Annual Mass of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre at 10:30

■ **May 12, Sun:** Bishop to celebrate Mass and preach at St Edmunds College, Cambridge at 10:30

■ All future dates at: [www.rcdea.org.uk/bishop-peter-collins/bishops-diary/](http://www.rcdea.org.uk/bishop-peter-collins/bishops-diary/)

# Day of Prayer for Eng



**The Diocese of East Anglia has introduced a Day of Prayer for Engaged Couples, inviting them to receive a special blessing, emphasizing the spiritual foundation of marriage amidst their preparations. Antonia Braithwaite reports.**

■ The months leading up to a wedding can be very stressful and busy as an engaged couple, along with their family and friends, work their way through their long To Do list of dresses, flowers, food, shoes, jewellery, wedding cars and so on, all to be ready for the wedding day!

But as important as these practical aspects are, it's all over in one day. Far more important in these months leading up to a couple's wedding is their interior preparation for the lifetime of marriage. The wedding is just one day. The marriage is for a lifetime.

The couple's engagement time leading up to the wedding is a time when couples should prepare themselves for their lifelong commitment to each other. They need to prepare them-

selves spiritually, emotionally and practically for the many years ahead.

Our Diocese runs a comprehensive marriage preparation programme for engaged couples. The Catholic Church also offers couples a beautiful Blessing for Engaged Couples which serves as a moment of grace, asking God's special blessing on the couple to guide and strengthen them during this crucial phase as they prepare for their marriage.

Our Diocese held its first Day of Prayer for Engaged Couples on February 11. On that Sunday all parishes in the Diocese were asked to especially remember engaged couples during the Prayers of the Faithful during Sunday Mass. In addition, the engaged couples of each parish were invited to attend one particular Mass in the parish and at the end of Mass they were invited forward to receive the Blessing for Engaged Couples.

In this way, they ask God's blessing that the happiness promised by their engagement will be brought to fulfilment in a fruitful marriage.

"As they prepare themselves for the sacrament of marriage and pray for your grace, grant that, strengthened by your blessing, they may grow in their respect for one another and cherish each other with a sincere love." – excerpt from the Blessing.







Pictured clockwise from above are couples from St Philip Howard Cambridge, St Mary's Catholic Church Thetford, Our Lady of the Assumption and the English Martyrs Cambridge and Sacred Heart Dereham.



Pictured from right to left: Anthony Reilly, Deacon Anthony Asomugha, Fr Bienn Carlo Manuntag, Peter Ho.

# East Anglia quartet at Returners' Mass

Four Diocese of East Anglia clergy and seminarians joined the Oscott College Returners' Mass on February 6, the feast of St Paul Miki and Companions, reports Peter Ho.

■ In keeping with a cherished tradition at Oscott College, the echoes of newly ordained Oscotians reverberated through the hallowed halls as they returned to celebrate Mass and reconnect with the Birmingham college, staff, and fellow seminarians.

This annual event serves as a poignant opportunity for the freshly ordained to revisit their Alma Mater, express gratitude to the staff, and impart the experiences garnered from their pastoral ministries in the parish.

Fr Bienn Carlo Manuntag and Dcn Anthony Asomugha, both ordained last July, graced Oscott with their presence for the returner Mass. They joined current seminarians Peter Ho and Anthony Reilly.

Fr Bienn had the honour of being the principal celebrant for this solemn occasion. In his heartfelt address, he revealed that his year group had chosen him as the celebrant due to his resonance with the Martyr Pedro Bautista, a 16th-century Spanish Franciscan missionary in the Philippines who later became the first bishop of the Diocese of Nueva Caceres.

This event also served as a joyous reunion for Fr Bienn and Dcn Anthony, allowing them to reconnect with their peers from East Anglia, including fellow priests and seminarians who are both teaching and studying at Oscott. The returner Mass not only symbolises a spiritual homecoming but also stands as a testament to the enduring bonds forged within the seminary community.

As the echoes of the returner Mass fade away, the shared experiences and spiritual resonance continue to resonate, underscoring the enduring significance of Oscott College in nurturing the vocations of countless dedicated servants of the faith.

## FEPOW memorial service

■ An Ecumenical Far East Prisoners of War (FEPOW) Memorial Service is set to take place at Our Lady & St Thomas of Canterbury in Wymondham, which houses the official FEPOW memorial, on Sunday May 12 at 12:30pm.

Norfolk Deputy Lieutenant Lt Col Ian Lonsdale will attend the service and

will lay a wreath. The speaker this year will be Jane Flower, FEPOW historian, whose father, as CO of the 9th Northumberland Fusiliers, was himself a FPOW. She has a wealth of experience in researching FEPOW matters. All are welcome to attend. More details from Peter Wiseman on 01953 604144.



# Online safety focus at conference



Pictured below are the Two Johns giving their online dangers for children presentation and, above, event attendees with Bishop Peter Collins.

**This year's annual Diocese of East Anglia safeguarding event saw Parish Safeguarding Representatives and other delegates from across the diocese gather at Wymondham to share experiences; to listen to safeguarding experts and to pray together. Rebecca Bretherton reports.**

■ The Two Johns from EST Safety Training gave a very informative presentation on the Dangers of Strangers online for children using the internet. They emphasized how, as the digital world changes so quickly, parents are often unaware of the risks that children are exposed to when gaming or chatting online. They explained the increasing impact of social media influencers on young people's lives and gave tips for digital wellbeing.



Steve Ashley, CEO of the Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) joined the delegates and explained that the CSSA was created to provide a regu-

latory body for the Catholic Church's safeguarding work. He reviewed the Diocese of East Anglia's recent safeguarding audit by CSSA which was awarded a

Comprehensive Assurance grade and thanked everyone who had supported this achievement.

Throughout the day on March 2, victims and survivors of abuse were remembered in prayer and at Mass prayers were offered for the Parish Safeguarding Reps and everyone working to keep our parish communities safe.

Simon from Sheringham and Cromer parish summed up the day: "A really stimulating, thought-provoking, supportive and informative day – I found the input in relation to safeguarding young people in an online context to be especially helpful. It highlighted the need for fresh thinking when it comes to how we can all best provide protection and support. We enjoyed a wonderful Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter, as well as sharing some lovely food and drinks. I think I can speak for the others when I say that we felt both valued and encouraged in our roles as parish safeguarding representatives."

Visit: [esafetytraining.org](http://esafetytraining.org)

## Parish introduces marriage course

■ In January and February, St Peter & All Souls Parish launched a transformative marriage preparation course, guiding couples towards stronger, faith-based unions under the leadership of Fr Adam Sowa and deacons.

The parish was abuzz with activity as several couples embarked on a transformative journey towards marriage under the guidance of their parish priest, Fr Adam Sowa, and deacons John Bedford with his wife Patricia, and Claudio Chiapinelli with his wife Joanna.

Recognising the significance of marriage as a sacred covenant, All Souls Parish has initiated a comprehensive marriage preparation course tailored to meet the unique needs of each couple. With a commitment to nurturing strong and enduring unions, the course delves into various aspects of marriage, including communication, conflict resolution, financial management, and spiritual intimacy.

The marriage preparation

course at St Peter & All Souls Parish is not merely an academic endeavour but a deeply enriching experience designed to foster meaningful connections and spiritual growth.

Through a combination of group sessions, individual counselling, and interactive workshops, couples are equipped with practical skills and insights to navigate the joys and challenges of married life.

As the course ended, the engaged couples' rings were blessed during a special Mass on Sunday February 4.

They also received their certificates of accomplishment of the marriage course and were invited by the Diocesan Marriage and Family Office to attend a one-day preparation at Newmarket, led by experienced marriage counselors.

With a firm foundation rooted in faith and love, these couples are poised to embrace the blessings and responsibilities of married life with confidence and grace.





# Parish's three-day celebration

Diss Parish has celebrated the life and martyrdom of St Henry Morse, one of the 40 English Martyrs, whom the parish church is named after, during a three-day festival at the start of February, reports Dcn David Croucher.

■ Our time started with a candlelit service and Rosary with a reflection on both Our Lady of Walsingham and the works of St Henry on January 30.

On Wednesday, January 31, morning Mass was followed by a four-hour period of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament concluded by full Benediction given by myself.

Thursday, February 1, was the Patronal Feast of St Henry Morse with the highlight of Mass and the commissioning of the first four of our newly-recruited Extraordinary Ministers, with a further four to follow. We are delighted by the responses to the recent Stewardship programme, with its great responses across parish activities.

After Mass, our "traditional" gathering with bacon rolls took place in the community room, with this year, the added bonus of a "Saint Henry Morse" quiz about his life and ministries was given, drawn up by Dcn Patrick Limacher. With 38 questions, all teams showed a great knowledge of our patron saint.

To round the three days off, a parishioner presented the church with a glass table with tokens of the history of St Henry and of the Tyburn Martyrs.



Pictured are Dcn David Croucher, back, Fr Alex Anaman and the first four newly-commissioned Extraordinary Ministers.

## Church bell rings again after years of silence

■ After years of silence, Kesgrave's Church of the Holy Family and St Michael's bell rings again, revealing a mysterious maritime past and a legacy intertwined with local history.

The church bell is ringing once more, much to the joy of the local congregation. The bell had been immobile and unapproachable, accessible only from outside.

With the assistance of Cummings Roofing, the bell has been repaired and now sounds to summon parishioners to Sunday services and other significant events.

Dcn Chris Brighten revealed that the bell's inactivity was due to the rope breaking just before the Covid pandemic, with repair efforts being delayed due to lockdowns and difficulties in finding interested and reasonably priced builders. This was probably the original rope from 1934.

An intriguing discovery was made during the repair – the bell, installed on July 2, 1934, three years after the church was constructed,



is engraved with 'Sancta Maria'. It was donated by Captain Herbert Vaughan R.N., related to Michael Rope in whose memory the church was built, and his sister Margaret Agnes Rope, the creator of the church's stained-glass windows. It has been suggested that the bell may have originated from a First World War ship.

Despite the bell being operational since last October, its full history, particularly its potential maritime origins, remains a mystery.

Any information regarding the bell's past is welcome.

If you know anything, please contact Dcn Chris at [chris.brighten@st-mary.org.uk](mailto:chris.brighten@st-mary.org.uk)



■ St Mary's Church in Great Yarmouth celebrated the addition of a new defibrillator on February 29, the 300th installed by charity Heart 2 Heart Norfolk.

Discussions about bringing a defibrillator to the church began five years ago between Brian Lafferty, Chairman of St Mary's Church Finance Committee, and Jayne Biggs, founder of Heart 2 Heart Norfolk. While unforeseen circumstances caused a temporary delay, the project is now finally complete.

"In the past, we've had medical emergencies where retrieving a defibrillator required a significant distance," said Brian Lafferty. "Having this new defibrillator readily available gives us much more confidence, knowing every second counts in these situations."

Heart 2 Heart Norfolk generously

provided the defibrillator and cabinet. Breckland Fabrications Ltd and Jorge Silva Carpentry collaborated on constructing the housing frame, with electrical functionality ensured by Bowers & Barr Ltd. It is easily accessible for public use.

The defibrillator is registered with the National Defibrillator Network. When calling 999, the ambulance service will provide the code to access the cabinet.

Fr Anthony Nwankwo said he is proud to have this vital piece of equipment to serve the community.

Heart 2 Heart Norfolk is a volunteer-run, non-profit organisation dedicated to saving lives by increasing access to defibrillators throughout the region.

**Pictured above, from the left, are Fr Anthony Nwankwo, Brian Lafferty and Jayne Biggs from Great Yarmouth.**



# Series looks at East Anglia religious communities

## The Daughters of Divine Charity (FDC)

■ In response to the call of God, on November 21, 1868, Servant of God Franziska Lechner (1833-1894) founded the Congregation of the Daughters of Divine Charity (FDC), in Latin Filiae Divinae Caritatis.

In Vienna, Austria, seeing the many young women who were coming to the city searching for work, Franziska recognised the urgent need to save them from becoming victims of exploitation and from moral dangers. She started her apostolate by organising training schools and boarding houses for young women to enable them to receive the required education free of charge, to have a safe place to grow in understanding of their own dignity and to have an opportunity to learn about the faith.

The work of the Congregation grew rapidly as various needs of the poor women and children were recognised. The Sisters continue that work today, striving to make the invisible love of God visible, incorporating in the world the motto their Foundress left them: "To do good, to bring joy, to make happy, and to lead to Heaven". Today about 880 Sisters live in the international communities located in 20 countries.

The Sisters of the Vice-province of the Sacred Heart have been serving God for 110 years in England. They run a Nursery in Chesterfield (Sr M. Jacinta Ćirko FDC, Sr M. Francis Ridler FDC, Sr Monika Szlagor FDC and Sr Maryjohn Kamps FDC), a youth

Pictured from back, left to right, Sr Maryjohn, Sr M Linda, Sr Mary, Sr Danuta, Sr Monika, front, Sr Anna, Sr M Jacinta, Sr M Leonarda, Sr M Francis, Sr M Thomas More.



**In a series about the Religious Congregations living and working in the Diocese of East Anglia, Fr Karol Porczak MS, Vicar for the Religious, introduces two more communities – the Daughters of Divine Charity and the Society of Christ for Polish Migrants.**

ministry in Middleton, Greater Manchester (Sr M Linda Pergega FDC, Sr M. Leonarda Pergega FDC and Sr Anna Yeo Chai Luan FDC) and St Theresa's Convent in Hunstanton, Diocese of East Anglia (Sr Danuta Wloczka FDC (Superior), Sr M Thomas More Prentice FDC and Sr Mary Gonçalves FDC), offering care to the elderly.

The Sisters make a visible presence in the

Diocese of East Anglia attending various events especially for young people, such as the Ignite Festival in Swaffham, where they help as volunteers and periodically organize recollection days for young women.

One of the Sisters works as a Pastoral Assistant in Our Lady and the English Martyrs Parish, Cambridge, and is a member of the Diocesan Vocations Team. Another Sister of that Community runs Bible group meetings for the parishioners as well as regular recollection days for the Lay FDC Associates.

## The Society of Christ for Polish Migrants (SChr)

■ In 1918, after 123 years of being partitioned, Poland regained independence. Following this, the Church leaders in Poland could not ignore the requests raised by Poles calling for Polish priests to minister to them in all corners of the world.

The Polish Primate, Cardinal August Hlond (1881-1948), consulted the Holy See to find a solution to this demand. Subsequently, the Cardinal established the Society of Christ for Polish Migrants as a new religious congregation on September 8, 1932.

The congregation's charism is based primarily on the spirituality of its founder, Venerable August Cardinal Hlond, which was implemented by Fr Ignacy Posadzy SChr (1898-1984), the Society's co-founder. The external sign of that is simple piety, based on a deep life of prayer and well-prepared liturgy.

The first priests of the Society started

Fr Sławomir Strycharski SChr, left, and Fr Marek Ogorzały SChr (Superior).



their pastoral work among the Polish diaspora in Paris and London in 1937. The Main House in Poznań (Poland) has become the centre of the Society and its headquarters.

After the Second World War, the Communist authorities made obtaining a passport very difficult; despite this, the Society continued to prepare and train

candidates for the eventual possibility of working abroad.

1956 was the year when the Society undertook its foreign mission on a larger scale.

Currently, the Society carries out its mission in Poland, in six foreign provinces, and a select number of countries in which priests answer directly to the Superior General.

The Province of the Sacred Heart of Jesus of the Congregation provide pastoral care for Poles in England and Wales.

34 priests from the Society of Christ work in 24 parishes as part of the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales. The Polish Catholic Mission coordinates the pastoral care of the Society of Christ in the UK. Today, the Society is in charge of nearly 70

parishes in over 200 towns, where Mass is celebrated in the Polish language on a regular basis.

In our Diocese there are currently two Polish members of the Society of Christ working in Peterborough providing pastoral care for the Polish community in the city located at the church of Our Lady of Lourdes.

## Faith in the Home: living our Catholic faith each day

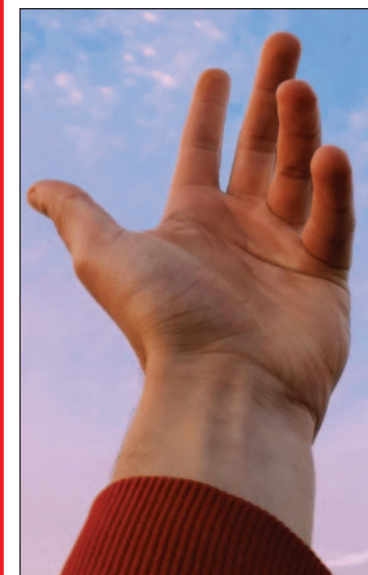
Pope Francis has proposed a simple way of remembering who we should pray for – simple enough for children to understand explains Marriage & Family Life Co-ordinator, Antonia Braithwaite, in her Faith in the Home column.

■ "Let us remember all those who need our prayer..."

We hear these words almost every week during the Prayer of the Faithful at Mass.

Many years before he became Pope, Pope Francis proposed a simple way of remembering who to pray for, and the method is simple enough for children to understand.

Hold out your hand, with your fingers spread apart:



■ **1st finger, Thumb:** This finger is closest to us, so we start for praying for those people who are closest to us... our parents, our brothers and sisters, our grandparents and extended family, our godparents, our Priests, our friends and parishioners and work colleagues.

■ **2nd finger, Index finger:** Pray for those who teach you, instruct you and heal you. They need God's help and guidance as they direct others.

■ **3rd finger, middle:** This is the tallest finger and reminds us to pray for our government leaders and those who have authority. They need the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

■ **4th finger, ring:** This is our weakest finger, and so reminds us to pray for the weakest amongst us – the sick, the poor, the unborn, the lonely, those suffering with other problems.

■ **5th finger, little finger:** our smallest finger reminds us to pray for ourselves, for our own physical and spiritual needs, and that we will do God's will in our life.

Photo by Samir Jammal.



# Vatican II Reflections – Constitution on the Liturgy

In preparation for the Jubilee Year of 2025, Pope Francis encouraged a return to the documents of Vatican II, refreshing awareness of the fruits of that Council. To encourage your own study of those documents, Fr Peter Wygnański here continues a short series of articles about the four major constitutions.

## Reflecting on the Constitutions of Vatican II: 3 – Sacrosanctum Concilium and The Liturgy.

■ It is a curious thing that, of all the documents from Vatican II, the Constitution on the Liturgy creates the most division and yet is the simplest to understand. This paradox suggests that controversies arise from presumptions about the text, rather than the text itself. All the more fruitful it is, then, to let Sacrosanctum Concilium speak to us afresh and maybe even surprise us.

Sacrosanctum Concilium is built on an ancient foundation, the belief that liturgy is centred on the saving action of Jesus Christ which is made present at the Mass. (§2) Amongst the richness of our faith, sometimes we need to be reminded that first and foremost we believe in a person, an event, by which we know God, can be made holy, and be saved.

This event, the self-offering of God himself to us, is the heart of our liturgy and worship of God: As the mediator between God and humanity, Christ offers us the fullness of divine worship through the paschal mystery of His passion, death, resurrection, and ascension. (§5)

Since the time of the apostles, the Church has consistently followed the instructions of the

last supper, given under the shadow of the cross, to celebrate the Eucharist by which Christ's self-sacrifice is made real for us each time Mass is celebrated.

By the power of the Holy Spirit, (§6) Jesus comes to us in the Word of God proclaimed, acting through the person of the priest, and in giving Himself to us time and again in the Eucharist. (§7)

Taking part in the Mass, then, is not about an effortlessly received experience of joy or consolation, but the summit of the Christian life and source of abundant grace, an opportunity to actively unite ourselves with the moment of Christ's self-offering which is made present for us. (§10)

These themes, fundamental to Sacrosanctum Concilium, help us to understand the liturgical reforms described by the document. The essence of the Mass just described comes from Jesus' own instruction and so it has an ancient mystery that can never be changed, least of all to suit the fashions of the day. If this is forgotten, it is possible to be surprised by how 'traditional' the document is: far from abandoning Latin, the document preserves Latin as the primary liturgical language, affirming that all the faithful should be familiar with it for the basic parts of the Mass. (§55)

Likewise, the document affirms the importance of the mu-

sical tradition of the Church, noting that Gregorian chant should be given pride of place (§116), supported by the uniquely significant pipe organ. (§120) It is only in the context of such love for the treasures of the liturgy that the reforms to open up that wealth to all can be understood.

There are elements of the Church's liturgy that can be refreshed if that helps those taking part better to unite themselves with God's saving action. (§10) All living things require trimming from time to time if they are to flourish, and so the liturgy can be rediscovered and renewed. For this reason Vatican II encouraged more frequent reception of Holy Communion, (§55) gave the option of celebrating the Mass in different languages, especially with regards to scripture readings which assumed a more promi-

nent role. (§36) The document also allowed for celebrating other sacraments in local languages too, (§63) and encouraged wider celebration of Morning and Evening Prayer. (§89)

The liturgical reforms encouraged the faithful gathered in the liturgies to take part by means of responses, songs, actions and gestures, but crucially these are not what is meant by 'active participation' but exterior ways of encouraging true, interior, participation in the liturgy, uniting ourselves with the Sacrifice of the Mass. (§30) Minds should be attuned to voices. (§11)

Returning to the council document in this way helps avoid two extremes; the first arises as a response to failures in implementing reforms, believing they went too far and cultivating an idealistic view of what liturgy was like before Vatican II. We must never forget that it was

the experience of so many who found themselves unable to share in the treasures of the liturgy which stirred the Church to long for opening up those riches to the whole of God's holy people. Out of love of those riches, it is equally important to avoid the view that the Church has not gone far enough, as if the liturgy needs to be freed from the 'shackles' of tradition. As the Church continues to discover how to best live out the blessings of Vatican II, great generosity is required to acknowledge the need to grow, to recommit to learning how to truly participate better in the liturgy. This is how we enter, with the whole of our being, into communion with Christ and communion of the Church, rediscovering the beauty, the power, and the historical, human, and spiritual riches of the Liturgy.



Bishop Peter Collins celebrates Mass in St John's Cathedral.

## Bishop speaks at ecumenical Felixstowe service

■ St Peter and Paul Church in Old Felixstowe hosted the annual United Service on January 21, uniting multiple Christian denominations to reflect on Christian love and unity under the theme of the Good Samaritan.

The event, a cornerstone of Churches Together in Felixstowe (CTF), brought together Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Salvation Army, and United Reformed Church congregations as part of the national Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

This year's theme, drawn from the parable of the Good Samaritan, posed a poignant question: "Who is my neighbour?" It aimed to prompt reflection on the essence of Christian love and its manifestation as sacrificial selflessness.

Bishop Peter Collins, despite a challenging journey from Norwich that was doubled in time due to severe weather conditions, delivered a moving homily.

Anne Poole, the Catholic Representative on the CTF Steering Group relayed Bishop Peter's message, emphasizing the theme's significance:

"This year's theme for the week of Prayer was taken from the text of 'the Good Samaritan' and asked the question: who is my neighbour?"

"Bishop Peter was our speaker and addressed with the theme: 'If I do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.' He spoke to the ecumenical congregation of 'Christian love having the potential for being the sublime expression of sacrificial selflessness.'"

The service underscored the commitment of Churches Together in Felixstowe to fostering unity and cooperation among the town's diverse Christian communities. It served as a vibrant platform for dialogue, prayer, and worship, encapsulating the event's core message of love and unity.





# Picture gallery from parishes around the Diocese



■ The parishes of Peterborough held their annual Katharine of Aragon Mass in Peterborough Cathedral on Friday, January 26, at 8.30am with around 150 parishioners present, alongside nine priests.

In his homily, Fr Bienn Carlo Manuntag said: "If you visit the tomb of Queen Katharine of Aragon in Peterborough Cathedral, they say you should bring a pomegranate and place it on her tomb as a sign of respect to the late queen.

"Pomegranates have a lot of symbolism and meaning attached to them – they are a symbol for fertility and regeneration and in the Christian church is a sign of Christ's resurrection.

"In the heraldic badge of Queen Katherine of Aragon a pomegranate is depicted on it. The pomegranate is also used, as an emblem of charity, love and humility, all of which Queen Katherine showed."

After the Mass the congregation moved to the tomb of Queen Katharine praying the Angelus for the repose of her soul.

Pictured left are the priests at the Katharine of Aragon Mass at Peterborough

■ Around 50 people of all ages gathered to tuck into some delicious pancakes at what has now become an annual Shrove Tuesday event at St Pancras in Ipswich, reports Fr Joseph Welch.

Parishioners brought their own pancake mixture, and a few extra nibbles, and took turns to cook their own supper and join in the jollity and friendship of the parish.

For once, there was no collection and no fund-raising involved, just a pleasant way to use up all those extra foodstuffs before Lent began.

Pictured below are parishioners at the St Pancras pancake party. Picture by Stuart Haining.



■ Our Lady of Lourdes in Sawston celebrated the Feast Day of Our Lady of Lourdes on February 11 with some extra special activities for the children, reports Amy Harrison.

Our Children's Mass is held twice a term and we formed a special choir called The Angels to sing Gentle Woman which is a wonderful Hail Mary song for the occasion. Children did the readings and bidding prayers and handed out Holy Water from Lourdes after Mass.

We gathered in the church hall afterwards for a Rosary Cake and refreshments.

Dominic Bell launched our Youth Lenten appeal for Mary's Meals. Our parish has adopted Mary's Meals this year and we have been teamed up with a school in Zambia to support.

We started with a bake sale last December which raised over £1000. Dominic had the children gather in groups to come up with fundraising ideas for Lent. It takes £19.15 to feed a child for an entire school year. And he has challenged them all to raise that amount this Lent by doing swimming, baking, dancing, skipping rope or whatever they wish.

Our Catechism classes also got into the spirit of things by learning about Our Lady of Lourdes and St Bernadette. Confirmation classes learned about some of the wonderful miracle healings that have taken place there as well as learning more about Mary, Marian dogmas and how special she is to us.

Both First Holy Communion Classes and Confirmation classes made single decade Rosaries and Rosary boxes (pictured below). This was such a wonderful day to bring the parish together and celebrate our Queen of Heaven.



■ Over 40 sick and house-bound parishioners from Cromer, Sheringham, North Walsham and beyond attended a Mass and tea party in December, helped by members of the North Norfolk SVP Conference, reports Lorraine Henriksen.

Michael McMahon, Chairman of the North Norfolk SVP Conference, admitted to being profoundly moved by the Mass with Anointing for the Sick and Housebound held on December 18 at Our Lady of Refuge in Cromer, and felt that we were all blessed to have been able to fulfil our Vincentian calling in this way.

Fr Trindade Monteiro's beautiful and moving Mass was followed by tea and carols in the church hall. Attendees were helped by enthusiastic volunteers from the Parish as well as the SVP members who helped with transport arrangements, seating and organisation within the church as well as providing savouries and cakes served at the Tea Party following the Mass.

Fr Trindade said he was very impressed with the organisation and success of the event and thanked everyone for their hard work and the joy they had brought to so many who would not otherwise have been able to make it to church over the festive period.

Picture by Mary Mustoe.

