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Pupils at St John Henry Newman celebrate their Outstanding Ofsted report.

From Building Site to Outstanding School

In just under three years, St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School in Peterborough has undergone a transformation few could have imagined — from a building site to a thriving, growing primary school rated Outstanding in its very first Ofsted inspection. Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ Opened in September 2022 with only 37 pupils spread across two Reception classes and a mixed Year 1/2 class, the school has grown at an extraordinary pace. Within a month of opening, the local authority approached the school to take in additional pupils without school places — an early recognition of both the community's need and the confidence placed in the school's leadership. Today, the school has 380 pupils across all primary year groups and continues to grow.

Headteacher Mark Cooper has been at the heart of this journey from the very beginning. Nearly seven years ago, he was part of the diocesan working group that began planning the school's educational vision. Appointed Head in January 2022, Mark started the job that April and opened the doors that September — just months after overseeing the final phase of construction. "I spent ten very happy years at Sacred Heart School, and I always said it would take something truly special to tempt me away. St John Henry Newman has been exactly that. It's been a privilege to be part of the journey from the very beginning — from a construction site to an Outstanding school.

One of our mottos here is 'keeping what is important, important', and as we grow, that principle guides everything we do. In July 2029, our very first Reception pupils will finish their time with us. By then, they may be graduating from a school 15 times the size of the one they joined — but it will still have the same outstanding staff, strong support network, and vibrant school community.

I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved so far and genuinely excited for

what lies ahead for St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School."

The pace of growth has brought challenges as well as blessings. At one point, the school interviewed 27 candidates in a single month to ensure staffing kept pace with pupil numbers. Despite the pressure, Mark and his team have built a school community marked by warmth, mutual respect, and shared values.

The school's Catholic identity remains central to its ethos. A third of the children are Catholic, a third Muslim, and the rest from other Christian denominations or of no faith. The families share an appreciation for the school's Catholic values, which are lived out daily in teaching, assemblies, and relationships. The recent Outstanding Ofsted report praised the school's Catholic culture in particular — an aspect not often highlighted in inspection reports — noting the strength of Catholic social teaching and the impact it has on the school environment.

Children, too, benefit from the rapid growth in unique ways. With so many joining at different points, pupils quickly learn empathy, ■ story continues on page two.

Children's pilgrimage: Joyful gathering at Walsingham

■ Under warm skies and the gaze of Our Lady of Walsingham, families and children from across the Diocese of East Anglia gathered on 31 May for the Diocesan Children's Pilgrimage, culminating in a special Jubilee Mass for Families.

The day, filled with joy, prayer and togetherness, was led by Bishop Peter Collins and held at the National Catholic Shrine of Our Lady in Walsingham — a place long held sacred as England's Nazareth.

Pilgrims arrived from all corners of the Diocese, bringing with them laughter, energy, and a deep sense of faith. For many young people, this was their first pilgrimage experience, and it was heartening to see so many children and families engaging so actively in the celebration. Their presence was a powerful reminder that the Church is not only built on tradition but also renewed daily by the lives and enthusiasm of its youngest members.

The National Catholic Shrine at Walsingham continues to be a beacon of hope, healing, and devotion. For centuries, pilgrims have journeyed here to entrust their prayers to Our Lady. That tradition was beautifully upheld during this year's pilgrimage, with a lively procession, times of quiet reflection, and moments of shared joy.

Following the Jubilee Mass, families enjoyed the grounds of the shrine, building friendships and strengthening the bonds of community. The sense of unity among the pilgrims was palpable, creating a true atmosphere of celebration and shared faith.

The day served as a reminder of the importance of nurturing faith in children, not only through catechesis but by inviting them to experience the life of the Church in a vibrant, communal setting. The pilgrimage showed us that our young people are not just the Church of tomorrow — they are a vital part of the Church today.



Pilgrims en route to the Shrine at Walsingham.



Success at St John Henry Newman Primary

■ **story continued from page one.** inclusion, and how to welcome others — creating a community that is both dynamic and deeply caring.

The parish's involvement is also a source of pride for the school, and the close relationship with families is a key element of its success. Mark personally gives every prospective family a tour — a gesture that exemplifies the school's commitment to personal connection and pastoral care.

Though still young, St John Henry Newman is already shaping up to be one of the most significant Catholic primary schools in the Diocese of East Anglia. With the capacity to become a three-form entry school in the future, that potential is likely to be realised sooner rather than later.

Andy Stone, Director of Schools' Service for the Diocese, said:

"We are delighted by the flourishing of St John Henry Newman School. The Ofsted result is a wonderful affirmation of the hard work and commitment that has gone into building a caring, faith-filled, and high-achieving school community. We give thanks to God for the many blessings this school has brought and continues to bring."

As the school looks ahead, its focus remains clear: nurturing a generation of children who are not only well-educated but compassionate, resilient, and rooted in faith. St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School has already achieved a great deal — and its journey is only just beginning.

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 Friday, 15 August.

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Pilgrims honour St Walstan with walk to well

■ **On Sunday 1 June, parishioners from the Church of Our Lady and St Walstan in Old Costessey undertook a pilgrimage to St Walstan's Well in Bawburgh, the site where the saint was buried in 1016.**

The four-mile walk, a cherished tradition within the parish, commemorates the life and witness of St Walstan, who is venerated as the patron saint of farm workers and the countryside. Along the way, walkers reflected on the saint's humility and devotion, thought to have included his work as a labourer at Breck Farm.

Upon arriving at the Well, they were joined by parishioners who had travelled by car, as well as nuns from the Convent of Our Lady of Walsingham in Dereham — regular and much-loved visitors to the parish. A short service was held at the Well, bringing everyone together in prayer and thanksgiving for St Walstan's life.

Following the service, all enjoyed a shared picnic in the peaceful surroundings. Those who had driven kindly offered lifts back to Costessey, ensuring the walkers

St Walstan's reputation for holiness endures to this day, especially his gift for healing both animals and people. The pilgrimage served as a joyful expression of

community, faith, and enduring devotion to one of East Anglia's beloved saints could return comfortably.



Pilgrims at the well. Photo courtesy of David Ward.

MP Clive Lewis Visits St John the Baptist Cathedral

Clive Lewis MP recently visited the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich to learn more about the challenges it is currently facing, and to understand why it has been added to Historic England's *Heritage at Risk* register.

■ Mr Lewis MP was joined by Tony Calladine, Regional Director at Historic England, and Trudi Hughes, Heritage at Risk Architect and Surveyor, who have been closely involved in supporting the cathedral. Together, they discussed the structural and financial issues that have led to the building's inclusion on the register.

Matthew Champion, Heritage Officer for the Diocese of East Anglia, gave an overview of the historic lack of maintenance and the long-standing funding difficulties experienced by both the cathedral and the Diocese. He explained that, while many essential repairs have been identified, limited resources have made it difficult to keep pace with the building's needs.

The team from Historic England has been instrumental in advising on necessary works and securing expert assessments, which they shared with Mr Lewis during the visit.

Their ongoing support has been crucial in developing a plan for the building's conservation.

Richard Maguire, Heritage Officer at the Cathedral, guided Mr Lewis around the ground floor, pointing out the exceptional craftsmanship and quality of materials used in its original construction. He also showed areas where the fabric of the building has deteriorated significantly in recent years.

Cathedral Manager Charley Purves then led the group into the roof space, where some of the most pressing issues were evident. Water ingress has caused damage to the structural timber, and roofing contractors are now on-site beginning specialist repairs,

including work to address splits in the lead roofing that have contributed to the damage.

Mr Lewis expressed a strong interest in the works underway and in the broader funding landscape available to the Diocese. He acknowledged that public funding is under considerable pressure but pledged to advocate for continued and increased support for buildings like St John the Baptist, which form a vital part of the region's cultural and spiritual heritage.

His visit was welcomed by the Cathedral team and the Diocese, who were grateful for the opportunity to share their concerns and hopes for the future of this much-loved place of worship.



Richard Maguire showing Clive Lewis MP issues with the Cathedral roof.



A packed St Pancras for the culmination of the pilgrimage.

A feast of unity and devotion in Ipswich

Fr Luke Goymour reflects on the inaugural Ipswich Deanery Walking Pilgrimage, a joyful and unifying celebration of the Feast of the Visitation (31 May) in honour of Our Lady of Ipswich.

■ It was a glorious day and a landmark moment for the Ipswich Deanery. The inaugural Ipswich Deanery Walking Pilgrimage for the Feast of the Visitation was not only a significant spiritual event but also a powerful demonstration of collaboration, devotion, and the shared faith that unites our community.

The idea was first conceived over a year ago, when three parish priests — Fr Joseph Welch, Fr Jude Belnas, and myself — gathered informally and began exploring how our central Ipswich parishes might come together in celebration and prayer. What began as a casual conversation quickly turned into a spirit-led initiative to deepen devotion to Our Lady of Ipswich.

A source of inspiration was the recent commissioning of a replica of the Nettuno statue of Our Lady for St Pancras Church — a tangible sign of renewed interest in the ancient devotion to Our Lady of Ipswich. This statue became a focal point for what would become a cherished celebration.

As we considered the geographical layout of our parishes — St Mary Magdalen, St Mary's (Woodbridge Road), St Mark's, and St James — it became clear that St Pancras, situated in the heart of the town, was the natural destination for a pilgrimage. The fact

that the Feast of the Visitation would fall on a Saturday in 2025 offered a perfect opportunity to organise a walking pilgrimage converging on St Pancras for Mass and devotions. What began as a parish initiative soon blossomed into a deanery-wide event, reflecting the unity and shared purpose of our Catholic community.

On the day of the Feast, pilgrims set off from various locations in Ipswich, united in prayer and devotion. Groups departed from St Mary Magdalen, St Mark's, St Mary's Woodbridge Road, and Lady Lane — the historic site of the medieval shrine of Our Lady in Ipswich. Carrying rosaries, the faithful prayed earnestly for their parishes, the deanery, and the wider town, embodying the spirit of the Visitation as they journeyed. This was not merely a physical walk but a spiritual pilgrimage, an act of unity and reverence echoing through the streets of Ipswich.

Along the way, many pilgrims paused at the Ecumenical Shrine of Our Lady of Grace at St Mary Elms, where they were warmly welcomed by Anglican priest Fr John Thackray and members of the Guild of Our Lady of Ipswich. This ecumenical moment added depth to the experience, strengthening bonds of shared Christian faith and mutual devotion.

The procession from Lady Lane was especially poignant, led by Fr Joseph and accompanied by members of the Guild of Our Lady of Ipswich. Their steps echoed with centuries of prayer and the hopes of the many pilgrims gathered across the deanery. This convergence was a powerful witness to our unity and commitment to honouring Our Lady of Ipswich.

More than a hundred people, representing

a wide range of parishes and communities, arrived at St Pancras for the culmination of the pilgrimage. The Mass was celebrated by myself with Fr Joseph Welch preaching a heartfelt homily. His reflection on the Visitation drew parallels between Mary's journey to Elizabeth, the faithful's pilgrimage to Our Lady at St Pancras, and Mary's ongoing visitation to humanity. He reminded us that Our Lady, through the statue of Our Lady of Grace, continually offers her Divine Son to all who seek her intercession.

Following Mass, the congregation gathered before the statue of Our Lady for the Litany of Loreto, praying for Ipswich and the wider community. This devotion was a fitting conclusion to the pilgrimage, encapsulating the unity, faith, and hope that defined the day. Afterwards, parishioners from St Pancras offered generous hospitality, providing a splendid buffet in the parish hall where pilgrims could share fellowship and celebrate the occasion together.

The Ipswich Deanery Walking Pilgrimage for the Feast of the Visitation was more than just a successful event — it marked the beginning of what promises to be a beloved tradition. It illustrated the strength of collaboration between parishes, the depth of our shared devotion, and the beauty of coming together to honour the sacred.

From its humble beginnings in a conversation among priests to its realisation as a vibrant, deanery-wide celebration, the pilgrimage showed what can be achieved when we walk together in faith. The renewed devotion to Our Lady of Ipswich, fostered through this pilgrimage, serves as a lasting reminder of the deep faith that binds us as a community.

Hamish MacQueen live in concert to support young people

■ Join Hamish MacQueen for a special one-night concert on Saturday 19 July where he'll share his journey of faith and music — raising funds to support youth pilgrimages and leadership.

Many in the Diocese of East Anglia will know Hamish MacQueen as the long-serving Director of Youth Service, a passionate advocate for young people's faith journeys and a familiar face at diocesan youth events and pilgrimages. But what you may not know is that before he stepped into that role, Hamish was touring the UK and Europe full-time as a member of the Catholic rock band Revelation.

Now, for one special evening, Hamish will return to the stage — not just to perform, but to share his journey of faith and music through songs he has written over the past 30 years. This unique gig promises to be more than a concert; it will be a heartfelt reflection on a life shaped by music, mission, and ministry.

All profits from the evening will go directly towards supporting young people from our diocese. The funds will help cover the cost of pilgrimages and provide training opportunities for future young leaders — continuing Hamish's legacy of empowering youth in the Church.

Whether you, your children, or grandchildren have been to a Flame event, World Youth Day, or a diocesan pilgrimage, chances are Hamish has played a role in making that happen. This event offers a wonderful chance to celebrate and support his ongoing ministry, while enjoying a night of uplifting and inspiring music.

The gig will take place on Saturday 19 July in the Narthex, St John the Baptist Cathedral, Norwich. Tickets are expected to sell out quickly, so early booking is recommended.

Don't miss this inspiring evening of music, faith, and community as Hamish returns to the stage — all in support of the next generation of young Catholic leaders.

For tickets and more information, visit www.hamishmacqueen.live.



Clergy gather in prayer and fellowship for annual retreat

Bishop Peter Collins was joined by 37 priests from across the Diocese of East Anglia for this year's annual clergy retreat — a five-day period of prayer, study and fraternity.

■ The retreat was held at the peaceful High Leigh Christian Conference Centre in Hoddesdon, Hertfordshire, a historic retreat venue set in beautiful grounds that provided the perfect setting for rest and reflection.

Leading the retreat was Fr Richard Ounsworth OP, a Dominican Friar and biblical scholar. Currently serving as parish priest in Leicester, Fr Richard has taught for many years at Oxford University and brought both theological depth and pastoral sensitivity to the retreat. Each day, his talks invited clergy to revisit and meditate on key passages of Scripture, drawing fresh connections between the Old and New Testaments. He encouraged participants to deepen their understanding of how Christ is revealed throughout the whole of the Bible, and to read the Old Testament through the lens of the New.

The converted barn chapel at High Leigh became the spiritual heart of the retreat,

where clergy gathered daily for morning and evening prayer, celebrated Mass, and concluded each day with a holy hour, Compline and Benediction.

In addition to the spiritual nourishment, the retreat offered ample opportunity for priests to enjoy one another's company, relax in the serene surroundings, and strengthen the bonds of fraternity. The fine weather and natural beauty of the setting added to the grace-filled atmosphere of the week.

The retreat was a blessed time of renewal — spiritually rich, prayerfully reflective, and deeply supportive of the pastoral mission shared by our diocesan clergy.



Clergy from across the Diocese outside High Leigh Christian Conference Centre.

St George's parish joins Walsingham pilgrimage

■ Members of the Parish of St George in Norwich recently came together for a joyful outing to Walsingham, joining the wider Diocese of East Anglia for the annual pilgrimage.

The trip was inspired by the parish's newly-formed "Get Up and Go" group, which aims to encourage greater participation in parish life through shared

experiences and spiritual enrichment.

The day provided a wonderful opportunity for parishioners to grow closer as a community through prayer, fellowship and a shared sense of purpose. Many reflected on how uplifting it was to join with others from across the diocese in this important act of pilgrimage.

The Parish of St George looks forward to continuing to build on this spirit of togetherness through future events and initiatives.



Pilgrims from St George's with their banner.

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Recollection inspires vocational discernment

■ On Friday 24 May, St Mary's Parish in Thetford welcomed nine men discerning a possible call to the priesthood for a special day of recollection organised by the Diocese.

The event, which began with Mass at 10:30am, was designed to support individuals at any stage of their vocational journey — from the simply curious to those more seriously considering a priestly vocation.

Marked by a spirit of fraternity, prayer and mutual encouragement, the day provided an opportunity for participants to walk together in a reflective and supportive environment. They heard from Fr Gregory Pearson OP, Fr Christopher Smith (Diocesan Director of Vocations), and Professor Richard Maguire (Cathedral Heritage Officer), each of whom offered personal insights from their respective roles within the life of the Church.

Moments of silent prayer and reflection were interwoven with open conversation and fellowship, enabling the group to form meaningful connections as they explored the theme of vocation. Many left the day feeling uplifted and more open to where the Lord may be calling them.

Anyone interested in future discernment events or in learning more about the process of discerning a vocation to the priesthood is warmly invited to contact Fr Christopher Smith at christopher.smith@rcdea.org.uk.



STELLA MARIS

**13th July is
Sea Sunday.**

**Please pray for seafarers
and fishers and support
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Joyful celebration of marriage



Bishop Peter Collins with the married couples and families. Picture by Charlie Bohan-Hurst.

More than 200 people gathered at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich on Saturday 14 June to celebrate the gift of marriage and family life at the Diocese of East Anglia's annual Marriage Celebration Mass. Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ Presided over by Bishop Peter Collins, the Mass brought together couples from across the diocese to give thanks for the sacrament of marriage, with anniversaries ranging from one year to an extraordinary 65 years of married life.

In a moving part of the liturgy, all married couples present were invited to stand and renew their commitment to one another, reaffirming the vows they made on their wedding day. This powerful gesture of love and fidelity was witnessed by family, friends, and fellow members of the diocesan community.

The Mass was organised by Dr Antonia Braithwaite, the Diocese's Marriage and Family Life Coordinator. A collection was taken during the service to support the continuing work of the Marriage and Family Life Commission, which promotes and nurtures the vocation of marriage throughout East Anglia.

The readings chosen for the Mass spoke poignantly to the beauty and depth of married love. The first reading, taken from Tobit 8:4b-8, is a touching prayer of trust and unity offered by Tobias and Sarah on their wedding night. It reflects the sacred dimension of marriage as a covenant rooted in faith and mutual

support.

The Gospel reading, from 1 John 4:8b, 11, reminded all present that "God is love", and that love of one another is both a reflection of God's own nature and a central calling for married couples.

Following the Mass, there was a joyful gathering in the narthex, where cake and refreshments were shared. Bishop Peter took

time to speak personally with couples and families, offering his congratulations, encouragement, and prayers.

Among those present were couples celebrating milestone anniversaries, with the longest marriage honoured on the day reaching an impressive 65 years. A couple celebrating their first wedding anniversary was also warmly applauded, representing the ongoing witness



Sheila and Derek Bye (64 years married) and Joan and John Sorrell (65 years married) with Bishop Peter Collins.

riage at Cathedral



of love and new beginnings.
The event was a joyful and prayerful celebration of the enduring vocation of marriage,

and a testament to the strength and faithfulness of Catholic couples across the Diocese of East Anglia.

Bishop Peter's engagements

JUNE

- Jun 27, Fri:** Bishop to the Walsingham Trustees Meeting.
- Jun 28, Sat:** Bishop to celebrate Mass for the Friends of the Cathedral at 11:00.
- Jun 28, Sat:** Bishop to meeting in Newmarket at 17:00 followed by prayer and vigil with Youth ahead of the Youth Pilgrimage to Rome in July 2025.
- Jun 29, Sun:** Bishop to celebrate Mass at Holy Apostles, Earlham at 10:00.
- Jun 30 – Jul 4, Mon – Fri:** Bishop to Valladolid for AGM and Reunion.

JULY

- Jul 5, Sat:** Bishop to Northampton for the 175th Anniversary of the Diocese.
- Jul 6, Sun:** Bishop to lead the SVP Pilgrimage to Walsingham.
- Jul 7, Mon:** Bishop to attend a morning of Theological Reflection with Professor Katherine Dell at Powcher's Hall, Ely Cathedral at 10:00.
- Jul 7, Mon:** Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at St Peter and All Souls, Peterborough at 19:00.
- Jul 8, Tues:** Bishop to attend Bishop's Council Meeting in Poringland from 11:00.
- Jul 10, Thurs:** Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at St Luke's, Peterborough at 19:00.
- Jul 11, Fri:** Bishop to visit St Benedict's Catholic High School, Bury St Edmunds with Mass at 09:45 followed by visiting the children in class and meeting with the school leaders and Governors.
- Jul 11, Fri:** Bishop to celebrate Mass with the Grace and Compassion Benedictines at Montana Care Home, Bury St Edmunds at 16:00.
- Jul 12, Sat:** Bishop to attend MFL Commission Meeting held in Newmarket at 11:00.
- Jul 12, Sat:** Bishop to celebrate Catechists Mass in Newmarket at 14:00.
- Jul 13, Sun:** Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at Our Lady of the Assumption & the English Martyrs at 11:00.
- Jul 15, Tues:** Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at Sacred Heart and St Oswald, Peterborough at 19:00.
- Jul 17, Thurs:** Bishop to Diocesan Board of Trustees Meeting at 10:30, Poringland.
- July 17, Thurs:** Bishop to celebrate Farewell Mass for Dr Andy Stone, Director of Schools' Service, in Poringland at 15:00.
- Jul 17, Thurs:** Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at St George's, Norwich at 19:00.
- Jul 19, Sat:** Bishop to Ordain two men to the Permanent Diaconate at the Cathedral at 11:00.
- Jul 19, Sat:** Bishop to attend an Ignite Fund Raiser at the Narthex at the Cathedral for the Youth Pilgrimage to Rome at 19:00.
- Jul 20, Sun:** Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes Sawston at 11:15 and then Confirmation Mass at St John Fisher, Cambourne at 17:00.
- Jul 24, Thurs:** Bishop to attend Diocesan Liturgy Commission Meeting held in Poringland at 11:00.
- Jul 25, Fri:** Bishop to Sacred Heart & St Margaret Mary, Dereham to celebrate Mass for the 109th Celebration at 18:00.
- Jul 25 – 27, Sat – Sun:** Bishop to Middlesborough for the Golden Jubilee of Ordination for Bishop Draine and Diamond Jubilee for Bishop Crowley at St Mary's Cathedral at 12:00.
- Jul 28 – Aug 3, Mon – Sun:** Bishop in Rome for the International Jubilee for Young People.

AUGUST

- Aug 4 – 21, Mon – Thurs:** Bishop on leave.
- Aug 22 – 29, Fri – Fri:** Bishop leading Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes.



Bishop Peter Collins performing baptism.

Faith on the rise: East Anglia reflects wider growth

■ In the Diocese of East Anglia, we're witnessing a story of hope and growth – one that reflects a broader and quietly growing trend of increased Church attendance, particularly among younger and international communities.

Recent figures show that Mass attendance across our Diocese rose by an impressive 13% from 2023 to 2024 – a sign not only of local vitality but also of how East Anglia is very much part of a wider movement of renewed interest in faith and worship. This isn't just about numbers – it's about lives touched, communities strengthened, and a deepening relationship with God.

A key part of this growth can be seen in the strength and devotion of our international Catholic communities. In towns and cities across the Diocese – from Norwich to Cambridge and beyond – the Church is enriched by the presence of worshippers from the Philippines, Poland, East Timor, India, and many other parts of the world.

Their faith, culture, and sense of community are bringing new life to our parishes. In Norwich, the vibrant Filipino community is flourishing, while in Cambridge, increasing numbers of Cantonese-speaking Catholics are deepening the Church's presence. Our Polish communities remain a steady and joyful part of parish life, and across the Diocese, the growing diversity of our congregations shows that Catholicism here is both universal and truly alive.

This rising

attendance mirrors findings from across the country, where interest in faith – especially among younger people – is showing signs of revival. The national trend may come as a surprise to some, but for us in East Anglia, it confirms what we already see every Sunday: the Church is still a home, a source of strength, and a place where people encounter God.

Of course, challenges remain. We continue to discern how best to serve a growing and diverse flock, to support clergy and lay leaders, and to ensure our young people feel at home in the Church. But these are good challenges – signs of a Church that is alive and looking to the future with confidence.

This period of growth is a moment to give thanks – and to recommit ourselves to the mission ahead. In East Anglia, as across many parts of the country, there is renewed interest in what the Church has to offer: meaning, community, hope, and a deep connection with God. We are part of a positive trend – and it's one worth celebrating.

May we continue to be open to the Holy Spirit, ready to welcome all who seek Christ, and eager to share the Good News in every corner of our Diocese.



Bishop Peter Collins anoints candidate for Confirmation.



The Cantonese community in Cambridge after Mass.

Love God and love your neighbour

Parishioner Irene Law reflects on the profound experience of attending a Cantonese Mass in Cambridge celebrated by the priest who baptised her, sharing his inspiring journey of faith and encouraging others to trust in God and love unconditionally.

■ I heard that Father Pierre Lam Minh would be celebrating a Cantonese Mass on 18 May 2025 at Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Church in Cambridge. I was thrilled to learn this, as I was baptised by Fr Lam in 2003 at St Peter's Church in Aberdeen, Hong Kong. Time truly flies – it's been 22 years. I never imagined I would receive Holy Communion from him again, and certainly not here in the UK.

Today's Gospel was about how Jesus loves us. He gave His life on the Cross to save us from sin and offer us new life. Fr Lam reminded us to love God and to love our neighbours unconditionally.

He also shared his personal story of responding to God's call. Born into a Catholic family in Vietnam, his parents had migrated from Chaozhou, China. Though his mother didn't speak Vietnamese or Latin, she still attended daily Mass in Latin. Fr Lam said, "God is the same God everywhere." Even if we do not speak the local language, we can still at-

tend Mass and receive Holy Communion. This was an encouraging reminder for those of us who have recently arrived in the UK – language should never be a barrier to our faith.

When Fr Lam was about to start school, his mother prayed they could find a flat near the parish. He explained that when we pray for simple necessities, God answers. From a young age, he served the parish as an altar server, a member of the Legion of Mary, and as part of the choir. He was deeply inspired by the priests who shared the Word of God and the Good News not only with Catholics but also with non-Catholics. As a mother myself, I found myself reflecting on how I can be a role model for my son and bring him closer to God.

Because of war and the restrictions imposed by the Communist regime in Vietnam, Fr Lam was unable to pursue his vocation there. He later fled to Malaysia, where he stayed in a refugee camp for nine months before moving to France. During his first two years in France, he often questioned why God had brought him there. Life was difficult – he had no identity as a refugee and missed his family dearly. Yet, he placed his trust in God. Eventually, the Diocese of Bordeaux accepted him for priestly formation. After serving in France for some years, he

was sent to Hong Kong where he could truly serve the Chinese community.

As newcomers in the UK, many of us face our own challenges and uncertainties. Fr Lam's story teaches us to remain faithful and to wait patiently for God's answers to our prayers.

At the end of the Mass, Fr Lam gave each of us a candle – a "light of hope" which he had brought from Hong Kong. In this Jubilee Year of Hope, he encouraged us to keep our hope in God and to love the people around us.

What a blessing it was to participate in the Cantonese Mass today. Thank you very much, Fr Lam!



Fr Pierre Lam Minh.

Celebration of the Priesthood

On Wednesday 12 June, Bishop Peter Collins led a joyful Celebration Mass for the Priesthood at Our Lady of the Annunciation, Poringland, joined by over forty priests from across the Diocese of East Anglia.

■ This annual gathering offers a special opportunity for clergy to come together in fraternity and thanksgiving for the gift of the priesthood. The Mass, rich in solemnity and warmth, was marked by heartfelt prayers, stirring music, and a profound sense of unity among those present.

The Mass was followed by a convivial lunch at the adjacent Diocesan White House, where priests had the chance to relax and reconnect with one another. The atmosphere was one of joyful fellowship, with many expressing gratitude for the occasion to pause, reflect, and support each other in their shared vocation.

As the day drew to a close, the spirit of communion and gratitude lingered, reminding all in attendance of the deep bonds that unite them in their ministry. The Celebration of the Priesthood not only honors the sacred calling of the clergy but also strengthens the sense of purpose and brotherhood that sustains their service. It stands as a testament to the enduring commitment of the priests of East Anglia and the vital role they play in nurturing the spiritual life of the diocese.



Bishop Peter Collins with clergy from across the Diocese.

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Live – in Community Worker

Opportunities in the Ipswich Community
Life sharing can be life changing

Considering how to use your gap year before university? Just graduated and unsure what's next? Contemplating a career break?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, then sharing your life in L'Arche alongside people who have a learning disability might just be the thing for you!

It's a great way to do something impactful and make a positive difference in someone's life. And as well as learning some key life-skills, sharing your life in L'Arche could change your whole outlook on the world too.



What's involved?

As a Live-In Community Worker, you will be making your home in a L'Arche house, alongside people who have a learning disability.

You'll be building relationships of mutuality, community and spirituality, enabling people we support to be independent within a network of relationships and friendships. And where appropriate, you'll be helping L'Arche Support Workers who are employed to provide ongoing care and support to people with learning disabilities.

Living in a L'Arche Community is an intense experience that requires a big commitment. It asks you to immerse yourself in a lively community and to slow down at the same time. It brings routine and the unexpected.

As a Community Worker, you will be provided with full board and lodging, as well as a monthly allowance. You'll live in an alternative, inclusive model of society whilst gaining a deep understanding of social care in UK today. You'll develop deep, meaningful connections with individuals, and also have a community for life.

Read about Danny's experience of living in L'Arche, and watch the video below to see what L'Arche Live-Ins love about the role. Go to: <https://www.larche.org.uk/dannys-gap-year>

Who can apply?

You can! You don't need previous experience in social care to apply to L'Arche – we just ask that you are friendly, inquisitive, empathetic and committed. The rest we'll train you on.

Apply online at:
<https://www.larche.org.uk/live-in>



East Anglian pilgrims share in joy of new Pope

Pilgrims from East Anglia have had the joy and privilege of witnessing the early days of Pope Leo XIV's pontificate first-hand in Rome.

■ The Eternal City, already preparing to welcome visitors for the Jubilee Year with freshly-cleaned buildings, revitalised fountains, and a newly-opened pedestrian square easing processions to St Peter's Basilica, has been the backdrop to scenes of celebration and devotion. Large crowds have gathered to welcome and pray for the new Holy Father —



Matthew Allen.

and some of our own parishioners and clergy were blessed to be among them.

One East Anglian already living in Rome is seminarian Matthew Allen, currently preparing for ordination to the diaconate next month while completing exams at the Pontifical Beda College. He found himself among the multitude in St Peter's Square for Pope Leo's first appearance on the papal balcony. In the days that followed, he was also able to attend the Holy Father's first public Mass in the square and the moving liturgy at which the Pope took possession of the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls — conveniently close to Matthew's seminary.

Reflecting on these remarkable days, Matthew said:

"Just one month into Pope Leo XIV's pontificate, what has struck me most is his deep sincerity and instinctive pastoral warmth. His first greeting — 'Peace be with all of you' — spoke volumes about his desire to reach out to everyone, not just Catholics, but all people of goodwill."

"In his inaugural homily, Pope Leo spoke of service, humility, and the hope of a diverse yet united Church. He emphasised that his ministry, like St Peter's, is rooted in love, not power. In a world so often marked by division, his call to inclusive love and pa-



Pilgrims in Rome.

tient unity already feels like a timely and hopeful witness."

Matthew was joined at St Paul's by Deacon Paul Raynes from Ely, whose Jubilee pilgrimage happened to coincide with the first days of Pope Leo's papacy. Deacon Paul was struck by the speed with which local Roman parishes produced new banners bearing the Pope's name, and by the resounding applause that greeted the Holy Father — even within the churches themselves.

He also joined the long lines of pilgrims queuing outside the Basilica of St Mary Major to pray at the tomb of Pope Francis. Reflecting on the experience, he said:

"It felt like people were coming from every nation and language to be close to Pope Leo and to pray for his predecessor. The atmosphere was beautifully summed up by a huge banner hanging opposite St Mary's that read, 'We're with you, Leo'. Definitely pilgrims of hope!"

Retreat for Catholic men

■ The Marriage and Family Life Commission of the Catholic Diocese of East Anglia, on behalf of Bishop Peter Collins, invites Catholic men from across the diocese to come together for a day of retreat, reflection and spiritual renewal at the Catholic National Shrine in Walsingham.

Entitled "Men of Evangelisation", the retreat will be held on Saturday 12 July 2025, offering a rich programme designed to inspire and strengthen men in their mission to live out their faith and share the Gospel.

Led by Fr Alvan Ibeh, the day begins at 9:30am with tea, coffee and a warm welcome. Fr Alvan will give the opening talk at 10:00am, followed by opportunities for confession in the Basilica, informal discussion, and networking with fellow participants.

The retreat also includes the celebration of the Pilgrim Mass at 12:00pm, a time for prayer and adoration, and a group discussion at 2:30pm focusing on the theme "Called to Evangelise". The day concludes with a walk along the Holy Mile, praying the Rosary in fellowship.

Participants are asked to bring their own packed lunch. Tea, coffee, and biscuits will be provided throughout the day, with donations gratefully received.

This day promises to be a meaningful occasion for all Catholic men seeking to grow in holiness and become active witnesses to Christ in their families, communities and parishes.

Tickets are available via the eventbrite page. Follow the QR code below.



Glorious Pentecost Mass and Confirmations fill cathedral

The Diocese of East Anglia came together in joyful celebration on Sunday 8 June for a Solemn Pontifical Mass with Confirmations at St John the Baptist Cathedral, marking the great feast of Pentecost. Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ The Mass was led by Bishop Peter Collins, who confirmed 37 young people during the liturgy (and a further 24 during the afternoon Mass) in front of a full cathedral congregation on what was a truly glorious day.

Pentecost, which falls fifty days after Easter Sunday, is one of the most signifi-

cant feasts in the Church's liturgical calendar. Often referred to as the "birthday of the Church", Pentecost commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, empowering them to go forth and proclaim the Gospel to all nations. For Catholics, it is a powerful reminder of the presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and each of its members.

In his homily, Bishop Peter reflected on the enduring power of the Holy Spirit and the importance of this moment in the lives of those being confirmed. He invited the entire congregation to pray for the candidates as they came forward accompanied by their sponsors to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, each affirming their chosen Confirmation name and being anointed with the sacred chrism oil.

The atmosphere in the cathedral was one

of reverence and celebration as families, sponsors, clergy and parishioners joined together in worship. Music and prayer filled the beautifully adorned space, contributing to a profound sense of unity and spiritual renewal.

As the Church celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the Confirmation of these young people stands as a sign of hope and commitment, reminding all present of their own call to witness the faith boldly in their lives.

The Diocese offers its heartfelt congratulations to all those confirmed and thanks the clergy, catechists, families and volunteers who helped prepare them for this special occasion. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide and strengthen them in their journey of faith.



Bishop Peter Collins with the newly confirmed.

Faith in the Home

A selection of summer reading

■ In this summer edition of *Faith in the Home*, Dr Antonia Braithwaite recommends a selection of books for children, teenagers, and adults – perfect for whiling away those long summer days!

Catholic Stories for Kids by Kathryn Griffin Swegart is a four-book series ideal for young readers. The first volume, *Heavenly Hosts: Eucharistic Miracles*, presents engaging and accessible stories of Eucharistic miracles throughout history. These well-researched accounts are designed to deepen faith in the Real Presence of Christ, not only for children but for their parents too.

Two further titles, *Miraculous!: Catholic Mysteries for Kids* and *Miraculous II*, offer fascinating tales of incorrupt saints, Marian apparitions, angels, flying priests, and other extraordinary events. Each short and captivating chapter is spiritually enriching and perfect for bedtime reading or quiet moments of reflection. The final book in the series, *Rescued! True Stories for Catholic Kids*, recounts miraculous escapes and divine interventions from Scripture and the lives of the saints. This inspiring collection makes an excellent gift for First Holy Communion or a delightful summer read for young Catholics.

For older teenagers and adults, we recommend the historical novel *The Guest of Night* by Lucy Underwood-Healy. Set during the turbulent era of the English Reformation – when attending Mass was illegal and sheltering a priest was punishable by death – the story follows three teenagers: two Catholic cousins and their Protestant friend. Together, they become involved in a daring mission to hide and distribute Catholic books across the country.

As a historian of English Catholicism during the Reformation, Dr Underwood-Healy brings historical accuracy and depth to her narrative. Readers are immersed in the language and atmosphere of Tudor England, and share in the anxieties and dangers faced by its people. This gripping coming-of-age story blends suspense and strong character development with a powerful testament to the quiet heroism of those who risked everything to remain faithful.



Fountain of Hope: Day of renewal comes to Diss

■ St Henry Morse Catholic Church in Diss will be the welcoming host of a Day of Renewal on Saturday 6 September 2025, offering a powerful opportunity for spiritual growth and community fellowship.

The event will run from 10am to 4.15pm and will feature Fr Alvan Ibeh SMMM as the guest speaker.

Fr Alvan, a familiar name to readers of *Catholic East Anglia* through his regular monthly column, was ordained in 2012 and currently serves as Assistant Priest in the parish of Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. In addition to his parish duties, he is chaplain to both the local hospital and Catholic school. Fr Alvan is also a published author, with two books to his name, including *A Fountain of Hope*, which will form the spiritual theme for the day.

Through engaging talks, Fr Alvan will share insights on how we can each discover and draw from the “fountain of hope” that lies within, helping us to navigate our faith journey with renewed confidence and trust in God’s presence.

The day will begin with the celebration of

Holy Mass at 10am, followed by praise and worship, Eucharistic Adoration, and opportunities for individual prayer ministry and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There will also be time for fellowship and reflection throughout the day.

Attendees are kindly asked to bring a packed lunch; tea and coffee will be provided.

We extend heartfelt thanks to Fr Alex Anaman and the parish community of St Henry Morse for their generous hospitality in hosting what promises to be an uplifting and spiritually enriching event.

Venue: St Henry Morse Catholic Church, Shelfanger Road, Diss, IP22 4DX.

Date and Time: Saturday 6th September



Fr Alvan Ibeh will be the guest speaker at the event.

2025, 10:00 – 16:15.

For further details or to book your place, please contact: renewaleastanglia@gmail.com or Pam Smith on 07869 652115.

All are warmly welcome. Come and be renewed.

Fr Alvan Ibeh: What do you see?



In his monthly column Fr Alvan Ibeh reflects on the power of faith and positivity in the face of suffering, encouraging us to focus on God’s presence and the greater good rather than life’s hardships.

■ I was recently called out to visit a patient who had just been diagnosed with a brain tumour. On arriving at the hospital ward, I was expecting to meet someone in tears, devastated by such unexpected and life-altering news. She had been feeling well until the day she suddenly collapsed and was rushed to hospital. Following some scans, the doctors delivered the diagnosis – a brain tumour.

As I entered the room, I saw a woman lying on the bed, looking remarkably well and full of smiles. My first thought was that

she must be a relative of the patient I had come to see – perhaps her sister – while the patient herself was away for a procedure. But I was mistaken. She was the one who had asked to see a chaplain.

Her daughter and sister were with her. I introduced myself as the chaplain, and she immediately reached out to shake my hand. I sat beside her, holding her left hand, while with her right hand she clutched her cross tightly. Despite receiving such difficult news, she kept everyone smiling. Her daughter, who was crying, heard her say repeatedly, “Don’t worry, baby. I’ll be here to take care of you.”

During my time with them, I never once heard her ask why God would allow this to happen to her. She remained focused on the positive aspects of her situation. “Maybe God is trying to teach me something,” she said more than once.

As I sat holding her hand, deeply moved by her courage and faith, a story came to mind. It was about a teacher who wanted to teach his students a valuable life lesson. He went to the board and drew a small dot in the centre of it. He then asked the students to spend five minutes writing down what they saw. When he reviewed their responses, he noticed that most of them had focused entirely on the black dot. Only a few had mentioned that, while there was a black dot in the centre, the rest of the board was still white. The teacher used this to illustrate an important point: in life, we often fixate on our problems – the black dots – and fail to appreciate the vast areas of good and

beauty that still surround us.

Life, with all its twists and turns, often brings us face to face with trials, uncertainty, and suffering. In such moments, it’s easy to be overwhelmed by negativity, fear, and despair. Yet Scripture invites us to view life through a different lens – one of faith, hope, and trust in God’s providence.

Choosing to focus on the positives does not mean we deny the reality of hardship. We cannot pretend the black dot is not there. But by shifting our gaze, we declare that God is greater than our troubles. When we step back and see the bigger picture, we recognise that God’s plan is always at work – even through pain. This perspective has certainly helped me in dealing with difficult situations in my own life.

Seeing the positive side of life doesn’t mean ignoring our pain. Rather, it means recognising God’s presence within it. The Bible is filled with stories of people who, faced with darkness, chose to walk in the light: Joseph, in Genesis 37–50; David, in Psalm 42:11; Paul and Silas, in Acts 16:25–26; and of course, Jesus, in Hebrews 12:2. Each saw hope in hopelessness and found beauty amid brokenness.

To look on the bright side of life is to live by faith – to trust that “all things work together for good for those who love God” (Romans 8:28). As we follow the example of Joseph, David, Paul, and Jesus, may we, too, be given eyes to see good even in the storm, and hearts that believe the best is yet to come.

Stay positive, always.

Picture gallery from parishes around the Diocese



■ On 15 June Bishop Peter Collins celebrated Confirmation Mass at the University of East Anglia alongside Fr Peter Wygnański, Catholic Chaplain to the University.

■ On 7 June Bishop Peter Collins attended the Bishop's Council for Laity Meeting held in Newmarket.

