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Pope Leo XIV. Picture
credit: Mazur/CBCEW

Habemus papam! We have a new Pope

The Diocese of East Anglia joins the global Catholic community in giving heartfelt thanks to God for the election of Pope Leo XIV, born Robert Francis Prevost, the 267th Bishop of Rome. We offer our deepest prayers and steadfast support as he begins his Petrine ministry, asking the Holy Spirit to guide him with wisdom, strength, and peace. Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ Pope Leo XIV's life has been marked by a deep commitment to the Gospel, missionary zeal, and a pastoral heart shaped by years of service in both the United States and Latin America. Born on 14 September 1955 in Chicago to parents of French, Italian, and Spanish heritage, his roots reflect the richness of cultural diversity within the Church. From an early age, his journey with the

Order of Saint Augustine, making him the first Augustinian Pope, formed a foundation of community, contemplation, and service.

After theological and canonical studies in Chicago and Rome, Father Prevost was ordained a priest in 1982. Soon after, he embraced missionary life in Peru, dedicating over a decade to pastoral ministry, formation of young Augustinians, and teaching in the Archdiocese of Trujillo. His tireless work in impoverished communities, as well as his leadership in seminary education and parish life, testify to a man deeply engaged with the people of God.

Following his time in Peru, he was elected Prior General of the Augustinian Order, serving two terms and leading the worldwide community with humility and vision. In 2014, Pope Francis entrusted him with new episcopal responsibilities in Peru, where he served as Bishop of Chiclayo and Apostolic Administrator of Callao. His episcopal motto, "In Illo uno unum" — "In the One, we are one" — echoes Saint Augustine's vision of unity in Christ and remains a guiding principle of his ministry.

His elevation to Cardinal in 2024 and

appointment as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops placed him at the heart of Church leadership, helping shape the future episcopate and contributing significantly to the global Synod on Synodality. His knowledge of Canon Law, his multilingual and multicultural sensitivity, and his pastoral experience make him exceptionally well-prepared to lead the Church in these times of both challenge and renewal.

Now, as Pope Leo XIV, he steps into the role of universal shepherd, continuing the legacy of his predecessor, Pope Francis, with whom he shares a missionary heart and a passion for a more synodal, inclusive Church. His election brings fresh hope, especially for those on the margins, and reaffirms the Church's commitment to dialogue, justice, and evangelisation.

On behalf of the clergy, religious, and lay faithful of the Diocese of East Anglia, we extend our most fervent prayers for Pope Leo XIV. May the Lord bless him with courage and discernment, and may Our Lady, Mother of the Church, and Saint Augustine intercede for him in all things.

Ad multos annos, Holy Father!

Bishop Peter Collins welcomes election of Pope Leo XIV

■ Bishop Peter Collins welcomes the election of Pope Leo XIV with joy, affirming his deep faith, global service, and readiness to lead the Church with humility and hope.

On behalf of the Diocesan Family of East Anglia, I wish to express exultant joy and thanksgiving following the Election of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV, Successor of St. Peter and 267th Bishop of Rome. I extend to the Holy Father the assurance of our prayers as he courageously and generously embraces the responsibilities of the Papacy.

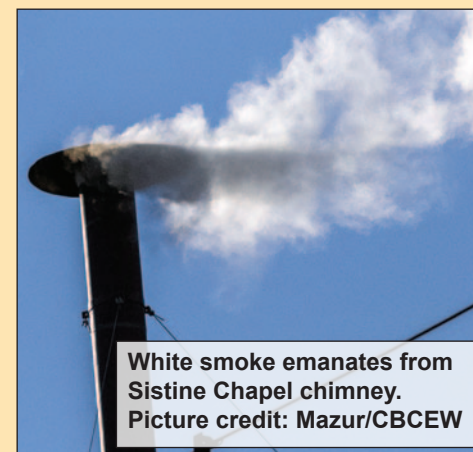
I had the privilege of meeting with the then Archbishop Prevost in September 2023 at a week-long conference in Rome, Pope Francis having appointed him a few months prior as Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops. There was unanimity among the bishops present that Archbishop Prevost was a most humble and remarkably impressive man.

Pope Leo has been gifted with so many talents, all of which have been employed consistently across his lifetime in service to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. His family and many of his friends have already offered testimony to the qualities of his character which were revealed from an early age.

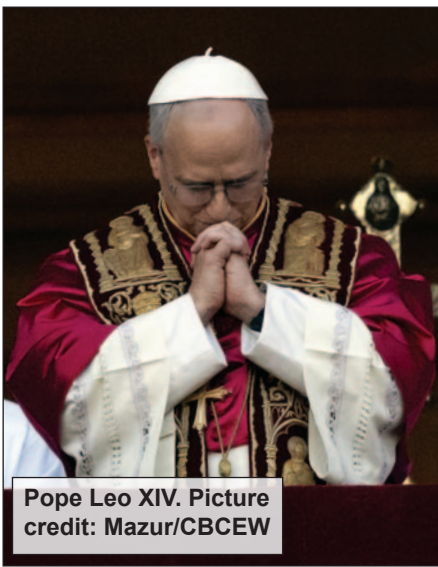
Having graduated in mathematics from the University of Villanova in Pennsylvania, the young Robert Francis Prevost followed the pathway to a priestly vocation within the Order of Saint Augustine. Returning to his native Chicago, he further graduated in philosophy and theology at the Catholic Theological Union. He would later undertake yet more study and research in Rome, obtaining a licentiate and doctorate in canon law at University of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Pope Leo has Italian, Spanish and French ancestry and thus encapsulates a multi-cultural and multi-lingual inheritance. He has a missionary heart, having spent fourteen years

■ story continued on page two.



White smoke emanates from
Sistine Chapel chimney.
Picture credit: Mazur/CBCEW



Pope Leo XIV. Picture credit: Mazur/CBCEW

Bishop Peter Collins' statement

■ **story continued from page one.** In Peru following his ordination as a priest. He served as a pastor amidst the poorest communities, undertook significant roles in the formation of young members of his Order as well as lecturing in seminary and university. He was then taken into the international arena, being twice elected by his Augustinian brethren to serve as Prior General. In this capacity he governed and visited Augustinian communities across the world. In 2014 Pope Francis returned Fr. Prevost to Peru, appointing him as Bishop of Chiclayo, before finally calling him to Rome in 2023 to assume responsibility for the appointment of bishops across the world. Having received the Red Hat from Pope Francis in late 2023, Cardinal Prevost entered the Conclave on Wednesday 7th May 2025 only to emerge the next day as Pope Leo XIV.

The Universal Church embraces the Successor of St. Peter in the fullness of faith, within the expanse of hope and under the power of charity. Inspired by the workings of the Holy Spirit, the Universal Church is once more blessed with the Charism of its Supreme Pastor. We can be sure that Pope Leo will be a Servant of Truth, a Herald of Hope and a faithful Shepherd of the Flock of Jesus Christ.

Annuntio Vobis Gaudium Magnum: Habemus Papam.

Catholic East Anglia

Newspaper of the Diocese of East Anglia

EDITOR:
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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, 13 June.

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Beloved Headteacher retires after 18 years

■ **After 18 years of dedicated leadership, Mr Joseph McCrossan has retired as Headteacher of St Alban's Catholic Primary School, Cambridge.**

His final day on Friday 4 April was marked with warmth, gratitude, and celebration, as the school community gathered to honour his exceptional service.

The farewell began with a beautiful end-of-term Mass at Our Lady of the English Martyrs (OLEM), Cambridge, celebrated by Monsignor Harkness. The Mass offered a poignant moment of reflection and thanksgiving for Mr McCrossan's commitment to Catholic education.

A host of speakers paid tribute to Mr McCrossan's outstanding contribution to the school and the wider diocesan community. Among them were Dr Andy Stone, Director of Schools' Service for the Diocese of East Anglia; Flavio Vettese, CEO of the Our Lady of Walsingham Multi-Academy Trust; Christopher Wright, Deputy Headteacher at St Alban's; Lia Campos, Chair of Governors; and Susan Hutchison, representing the St

Alban's Parents and Friends Association.

Mr McCrossan began his career in Catholic education in the diocese at St Laurence Catholic Primary School, Cambridge, in 1997, before joining St Alban's in 2007. Over the course of 23 years, he has made a lasting impact on generations of pupils, staff, and families, guided always by his deep

faith and commitment to nurturing a vibrant Catholic ethos.

His leadership, compassion, and vision have left an indelible mark on the school and the wider diocesan family. As he embarks on a well-earned retirement, we give thanks for his years of faithful service and wish him and his family every blessing for the future.



Mr McCrossan during Mass at OLEM.

Jubilee youth pilgrimage to Rome in 2025

At the conclusion of World Youth Day in 2023, Pope Francis extended a heartfelt invitation to young people aged 16 and over to join thousands from across the globe in Rome in 2025.

■ The occasion is the Jubilee Youth Pilgrimage – a week-long journey of faith and renewal – calling young people to become "Pilgrims of Hope".

In his message, the late Holy Father said: "You are the joyful hope of a Church and of a humanity which is always on the move. I would like to take you by the hand and walk the path of hope with you. I would like to speak with you about our joys and hopes, but also about the sadness and anguish in our hearts and of our humanity that suffers."

In response to this invitation, 35 young people from the Diocese of East Anglia have committed to journeying to Rome at the end of July, joining hundreds of thousands of other young pilgrims. All are seeking to deepen their faith and be inspired and supported as they grow as disciples of Christ.

With such high demand for travel and accommodation, the associated costs are not be possible without the support of their families, friends, parishes, and wider communities. Since September 2024, these young pilgrims have been hard at work fundraising.

At the chapel of St Vincent de Paul (part of the OLEM parish) in Cambridge, two parishioners, Simran and Rita, were among the first to sign up. They began their fundraising efforts by serving mulled wine and mince pies after a Festival of Lessons and Carols at Christmas, and have since continued with Sunday refreshments after Mass. Fellow parishioners have rallied around them – two have made jam and marmalade to sell, while another donated plants from their garden.



Young people at St Laurence's fund-raise for their pilgrimage to Rome.

Despite the challenges of being part of a small community without access to a parish hall, the girls have been uplifted by the generosity around them. As Rita recently shared in an update:

"Your kindness and generosity has truly made a difference, and we are grateful to have such a supportive parish family."

At the neighbouring parish of St Laurence's, where seven young parishioners are preparing for the pilgrimage, the Parish Pastoral Council has generously pledged to cover a third of the cost for each participant. Inspired by this support, the young people have come together to fundraise and have already held two successful bake sales, raising over £1,000.

Across the Diocese, many more such efforts are underway. If you are able, please do support these young pilgrims – whether financially or through your prayers (to support financially, please contact the Diocesan Youth

Office – dys@rcdea.org.uk).

In this Jubilee Year, as we are all encouraged to make a personal pilgrimage, whether to Rome or somewhere closer to home, let us take to heart the words of Pope Francis:

"The Jubilee pilgrimage is meant to be the outward sign of an inward journey that all of us are called to make towards our final destination. It is my hope that this Jubilee pilgrimage will become for each of us a moment of genuine, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus. I encourage you to approach this experience with three fundamental attitudes. First, thanksgiving, with hearts open to praise God for his many gifts, especially the gift of life. Then, a spirit of seeking, as an expression of our heart's unquenchable thirst to encounter the Lord. And finally, penance, which helps us to look within, to acknowledge the wrong paths and decisions we have at times taken and, in this way, to be converted to the Lord and to the light of his Gospel."



A packed marquee at Ignite Festival 2025.

Hundreds gather for Ignite Festival 2025

On the weekend of 3–4 May, nearly 400 young people and leaders from across the Diocese of East Anglia gathered at St Benedict's Catholic School, Bury St Edmunds, for what proved to be the most powerful and uplifting Ignite Festival yet.

■ From the outset, the atmosphere was electric. The large festival marquee, filled with anticipation, soon erupted into life thanks to the infectious energy of MCs Alex and Ariana. Their joy set the tone for a weekend of spiritual depth, dynamic talks, passionate praise and worship, and profound encounters with Christ.

The opening session featured Father Frankie Mulgrew, whose blend of comedy and heartfelt faith left a lasting impact. As the son of legendary comedian Jimmy Cricket, Fr Frankie captivated the audience with humour

that disarmed and a message that empowered.

Following a hearty dinner provided by the skilled catering team, the Reconciliation Service offered one of the most moving moments of the weekend. Alex Curley-Warren of the Ignite Team shared a personal and vulnerable testimony about God's mercy and forgiveness. His words prompted many young people to receive the Sacrament of Confession, with priests from across the diocese on hand to welcome them. This outpouring of grace was followed by a joyful celebration, as Fr Alvan led a late-night music session filled with dancing, singing, and gratitude. The evening drew to a serene close with Compline, prayerfully led by Sister Catherine of the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Sunday began with a stirring time of praise and worship, led by the Sybil Collective – a group of Catholic musicians from East Anglia who supported the festival throughout the weekend. What followed was a unique and moving performance from mime artist Steve Murray, whose silent yet expressive storytelling conveyed deep truths of the Gospel.

With hearts uplifted, Holy Mass was celebrated by Bishop Peter Collins, whose presence was a highlight for many. After Mass, the bishop generously engaged with young people's questions during a lively Q&A session, joking that he was ready to answer anything – “except maths!”

The afternoon brought a rich offering of formation and fun. Sr Catherine Maria, also of the Commu-

nity of Our Lady of Walsingham, spoke passionately on what it means to be a ‘Pilgrim of Hope’, drawing young hearts toward a future rooted in Christ. This was followed by a vocations panel chaired by Fr Peter Wygnanski, offering practical and prayerful insights into discerning God's call. Workshops and activities then ranged from rosary-making to dodgeball, ensuring something for everyone.

The Sunday evening session was deeply impactful. Luc, a member of the Ignite Team, shared a powerful testimony of personal transformation and invited others to recommit their lives to Christ. “This isn't just my story,” he declared. “It's what Jesus is doing – for me, for others, and He can do it for you too!”

Fr Luke Goymour and Fr Gladson Dabre, Provincial of the Augustinians, then led a beautiful time of Eucharistic Adoration. As Jesus was brought to each person, many were visibly moved – some to tears, others to a profound sense of peace. In a moment of collective witness, over 300 young people raised their hands to say they had felt the presence of the Lord.

The evening ended with a final, exuberant rendition of the festival anthem “Praise,” followed by a joyful celebration disco and Night Prayer. On Monday, around 150 of the attendees joined the diocesan pilgrimage to Walsingham, continuing the journey of faith begun over the weekend.

A heartfelt thank you goes to St Benedict's School for their hospitality, the priests who gave so generously of their time for Confession, the catering team for their excellent meals, and the many volunteers who made the festival possible. Thanks to their dedication, Ignite Festival 2025 was not only a success but a truly unforgettable encounter with Christ for hundreds of young people.



Matthew Hardy.

St Peter's raises over £12,000 for organ rebuild

■ A remarkable 10-hour organ-playing marathon was successfully completed by organist Matthew Hardy at St Peter's Church, Gorleston, on Thursday 10 April, in aid of the church's organ rebuild fund.

Throughout the day, a steady stream of visitors passed through the church to show their support, including a special visit from the Mayor of Great Yarmouth. Members of The Chorus of St Cecilia also joined the occasion, leading popular hymns that were enthusiastically received by those in attendance.

The day featured a wide variety of hymn requests, organ voluntaries, and musical offerings that demonstrated both Matthew's stamina and the community's deep love for sacred music. The marathon concluded with a moving service of evening hymns, including *The Day Thou Gavest, Lord, is Ended, The Magnificat*, and *Nunc Dimittis*. Around 30 people gathered around the altar to sing together, followed by a prayer and blessing given by Fr Alvan.

The event has so far raised an incredible £12,200 towards the organ rebuild, thanks to the generous contributions of over 200 donors. The fund will remain open throughout the year, with further musical events planned to continue the fundraising effort. Lunchtime concerts are scheduled for June and July at St Peter's Church, and a Christmas Tree Festival will be held from 17 December.

Matthew and the parish extend heartfelt thanks to all who contributed, attended, and supported the marathon in any way, helping to ensure the future of music ministry at St Peter's.



Mayor of Great Yarmouth & Matthew Hardy.



Young people from Norwich at Ignite Festival 2025.

Diocese unites in joyful Walsingham pilgrimage

On Monday, 5 May 2025, the Diocese of East Anglia gathered in faith and fellowship for its annual pilgrimage to Walsingham, England's Nazareth and a place of deep spiritual significance for Catholics across the country. Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ Led this year by The Rt Rev'd Alan Hopes, Bishop Emeritus of East Anglia, who kindly stepped in for Bishop Peter Collins during his attendance at the Spring Plenary Assembly of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, the pilgrimage drew hundreds of the

faithful from parishes across the diocese. Pilgrims assembled at the old Railway Station in Walsingham on a bright but blustery morning. Spirits were high as Bishop Alan welcomed all present and led the Rosary Procession along Pilgrim's Way to the Basilica and National Shrine of Our Lady. As the procession moved through the Norfolk countryside, the joyful mysteries of the Rosary were prayed with devotion. The air was filled with hymns led by David Greal, Director of Music for the diocese, fostering a sense of unity, prayer, and shared purpose. Upon arriving at the Shrine, the pilgrims took part in the crowning of the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham — an emotional and symbolic moment. Bishop Alan blessed the crown, sprinkled it with holy water, and reverently placed it upon the statue's head



Bishop Alan offers incense in honour of Our Blessed Mother.

before offering incense in honour of Our Blessed Mother. The act underscored the deep reverence the faithful hold for Our Lady, especially in this sacred place of pilgrimage. This was followed by the celebration of Solemn Mass, where crowds gathered in large numbers both inside and outside the Basilica. Bishop Alan presided, joined by clergy from across the Diocese. Fr Robert Billing, the Rector of the Shrine, welcomed the pilgrims warmly, thanking them for their presence and offering prayers for Bishop Peter and the other bishops meeting at Buckfast Abbey. After Mass, the joyful sense of community continued as pilgrims shared lunch together. The afternoon brought moments of quiet

reflection during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, along with the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The day concluded with Solemn Benediction, drawing the pilgrimage to a peaceful and prayerful close. Walsingham holds a special place in the hearts of English Catholics as a sanctuary of prayer, healing and hope. For many who walked Pilgrim's Way, the experience was profoundly moving — a chance to reconnect with their faith, their community, and their Blessed Mother. The annual pilgrimage once again proved to be a beautiful expression of devotion and unity, reminding all present of the enduring power of prayer and the maternal care of Our Lady of Walsingham. *More photographs available online.*

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Restoration work in Felixstowe

An ambitious restoration and conservation project has begun at St Felix Catholic Church in Felixstowe, aiming to return the church's magnificent great east window to its former glory.

■ The Grade II listed building, completed in 1912 to the designs of architect F. E. Banham of Beccles, is recognised as a fine example of its kind, particularly noted for its stained glass. The church replaced an earlier wooden structure that once stood on the site now occupied by the presbytery. The great east window, a centrepiece of the original design, was gifted to the church during the initial building campaign. Over a century of exposure to the coastal elements, however, has left both the glass and the stone tracery in need of urgent repair. The restoration work will be carried out by some of East Anglia's most skilled traditional craftsmen. Specialist stonemasons from Suffolk Masonry Services will cut out the badly eroded areas of the stone tracery and replace them with carefully matched Bath stone, replicating the original design. Meanwhile, the stained glass panels will be carefully removed and conserved by experts from Devlin

Plummer Ltd. Each decorative section will be cleaned, re-leaded where necessary, and then re-installed into the repaired framework. As part of the work, an external layer of Perspex — added some decades ago in an attempt to protect the glass — will be removed, as it has since been found to have caused more harm than good. Matthew Champion, Heritage Officer for the Diocese of East Anglia, praised the initiative, saying: "The church of St Felix really is a very special building, and the parish is to be congratulated on moving forward so efficiently with this important conservation project. Dealing with such a large expanse of stained glass is always challenging, especially with a coastal church where salt, storms, and sea breezes can all impact on the historic fabric. By the time the project is complete we hope that it will be fully restored, and ready to face the next century of Suffolk's changeable wind and weather." Parish Priest Fr Michael Smith also expressed his delight at seeing the project commence and highlighted the important role played by the local community in supporting the works. Last year, parishioners were invited to 'sponsor a mystery' — a fundraising initiative based on the window's unique design, which features 15 individual panels depicting the Mysteries of the Rosary. "The window is infinitely worthy of restora-

tion and preservation," said Fr Smith, quoting his predecessor who first launched the sponsorship scheme. "We are happy to commit to this work for the benefit of — not only ourselves — but future generations of parishioners at St Felix." Each sponsor was also encouraged to share why a particular Rosary mystery held special personal significance, creating a meaningful connection between the window's spiritual symbolism and the life of the parish today. The restoration is expected to be completed later this year, safeguarding a cherished piece of Catholic heritage for years to come.



Suffolk Masonry Services set to work at St Felix.

Lenten retreat inspires Sudbury and Hadleigh communities

On the final Saturday of March, parishioners from Sudbury with Hadleigh gathered at St Joseph's Church, Hadleigh, for a Parish Lenten Retreat entitled Pilgrims of Hope. Pam Smith, Coordinator – Charismatic Diocesan Service of Communion for East Anglia reports.

■ The retreat was organised by the Charismatic Diocesan Service of Communion and featured Fr Stefan Park OSA as both speaker and principal celebrant.

Upon arrival, participants encountered a profound atmosphere of peace and calm, a grace which gently imbued the entire day. In his opening session, Fr Stefan reflected on the theological virtue of Hope, presenting it as both a natural human passion and a deep yearning for what is yet unseen. He explained how Hope stirs us to action, moving us to become pilgrims on a journey towards God, the source and summit of all goodness. It grants us confidence and assurance, guiding us along the path of faith.

The afternoon session turned to the chal-

lenges of our modern world, characterised by confusion and darkness. In response, Fr Stefan encouraged attendees to embrace three spiritual practices: to persevere in prayer, confident that our petitions are heard by a living and attentive God; to foster community with friends who share the same Faith and Hope; and to exercise careful discernment over what we choose to watch, read, and listen to.

Sincere thanks are extended to Fr Antony and the parishioners of Sudbury with Hadleigh for their generous hospitality and warm fellowship throughout the day. Special appreciation is due to our priests – Fr Stefan, Fr Antony, and Fr David Middleton OSA – for celebrating Mass, hearing confessions, and leading the renewal of our baptismal promises. The retreat concluded with a time of Adoration and prayer, invoking the graces of the Holy Spirit.

We are also grateful to musicians Adrian, Simon, and Clare Fox, who led us in uplifting Praise and Worship, as well as to the prayer ministry teams and all who served so faithfully throughout the retreat.

The day was a powerful reminder of our shared pilgrimage of Hope, and a testament to the enduring strength of faith within our diocesan family.



Fr Stefan addresses attendees at St Joseph's Church, Hadleigh.

A joyful and colourful Holy Week in Fakenham

■ Holy Week at St Anthony of Padua in Fakenham was a particularly busy and vibrant time this year, with a series of special events bringing together the local community and visitors from across the region. Parishioner Margaret Hulme reports.

Palm Sunday began with a joyful procession, as parishioners were joined by a contingent from St Mary's in Ipswich. Together they celebrated the Palm Sunday Mass, marking the beginning of Holy Week. The festivities continued afterwards with a very enjoyable lunch, where the two communities shared food and fellowship.

On Holy Saturday, the church was once again full for *Święcenie Pokarmów* — the beautiful Polish tradition of the blessing of Easter baskets. Families from across East Anglia travelled to St Anthony's, bringing with them carefully prepared baskets filled with foods rich in symbolic meaning, such as bread, eggs and sausages. The blessing ceremony was a moving occasion, and the joy and devotion of all present made it a truly special celebration.

Holy Week at St Anthony's this year was a powerful reminder of the richness and diversity of Catholic tradition, and of the strong bonds that unite our diocesan family.



Palm Sunday at St Anthony of Padua.

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Bishop Peter’s engagements

June

- **Jun 2, Mon:** 19:00, Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at Our Lady of the Annunciation, North Everard Street, King’s Lynn.
- **Jun 3, Tues:** Bishop holding a days’ meeting with Newly Ordained Priests.
- **Jun 5, Thurs:** 10:45, Bishop to attend the Diocesan Schools’ Commission Meeting in Poringland.
- **Jun 5, Thurs:** 19:00, Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at St Pancras, Ipswich.
- **Jun, 7 Sat:** 19:30, Bishop to attend the 100th Anniversary Celebration of the Norwich Catenian’s.
- **Jun 8, Sun:** 11:00, Bishop to celebrate Pentecost Sunday Solemn Pontifical Mass with Confirmations at the Cathedral.
- **Jun 12, Thurs:** 11:00, Bishop to attend the Celebration of Priesthood in Poringland.
- **Jun 14, Sat:** 11:30, Bishop to celebrate Marriage and Family Life Celebration Mass at the Cathedral.
- **Jun 15, Sun:** 11:00, Bishop to celebrate Mass at the Cathedral including the Year End Mass of Thanksgiving for the Ignite Team.
- **Jun 17, Tues:** 10:00, Bishop to visit St Laurence Primary School, Cambridge with Mass/Worship followed by meeting the children, staff and Governors.

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Requiem Mass for late



Bishop Peter Collins addresses a full Cathedral on Easter Sunday. Picture by Charlie Bohan-Hurst.

A deeply moving and solemn Requiem Mass for the late Pope Francis was held at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich on Thursday 24 April, led by Bishop Peter Collins. Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ Clergy from across the Diocese gathered in prayerful remembrance, including Bishop Emeritus Alan Hopes, to honour the life and legacy of the Holy Father. Before the Mass began, the faithful queued quietly to sign the book of condolences placed at the front of the nave — an act of personal tribute that spoke volumes of the affection in which Pope Francis was held.

The Gospel reading, taken from Luke 24:35–48, recounted the Risen Christ appearing to His disciples, offering them His peace, and asking for food to eat as a sign of His bodily resurrection. He then opened their minds to understand the Scriptures and commissioned them to preach repentance and forgiveness in His name. This passage, echoing themes of hope, revelation and mission, was particularly poignant in light of Pope Francis’ own ministry — a life rooted in proclaiming the Gospel, healing division, and embodying God’s mercy.

In his homily, Bishop Peter Collins reflected with great depth on the theme of hope, one of the three theological virtues and a defining thread of Pope Francis’ pontificate. Bishop Peter described Pope Francis as a “prophetic voice of hope for the whole of humanity”, and reminded the congregation that hope is what binds faith with charity. He quoted the Catechism of the Catholic Church, noting that hope sustains us in abandonment, purifies our aspirations, and lifts our hearts towards eternity.

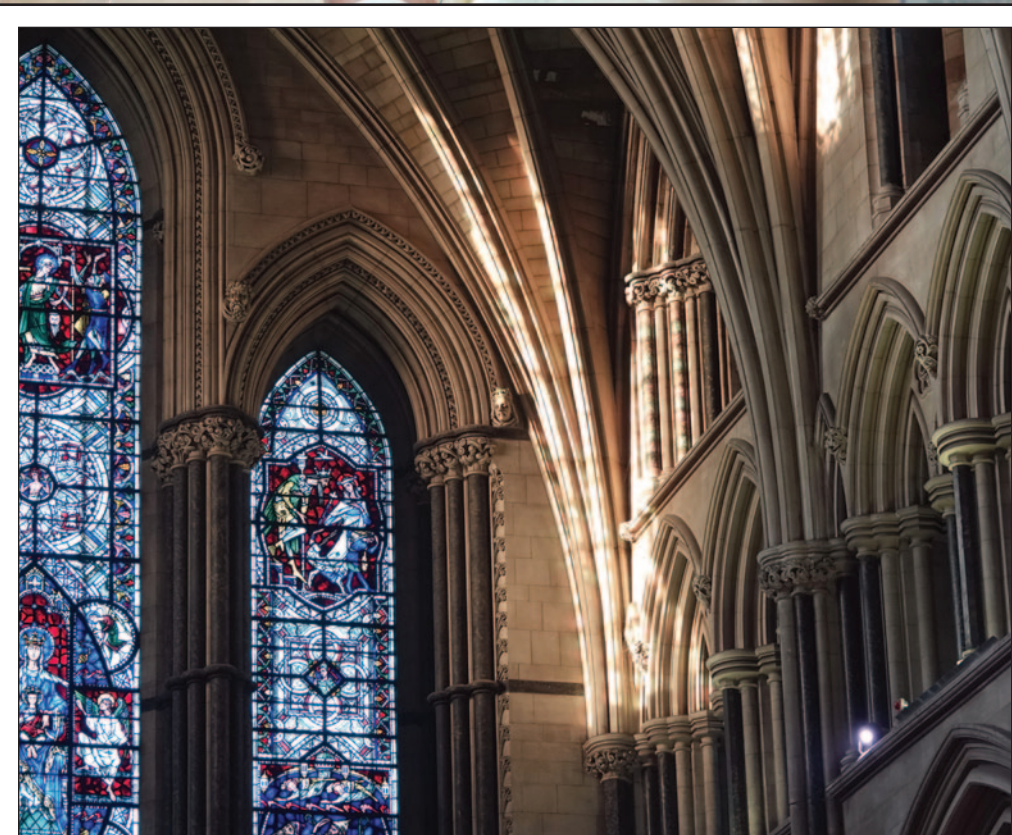
Bishop Peter spoke movingly of Pope Francis as a humble shepherd, a “servant of the servants of God” who, even in frailty, continued to pour himself out in service — most recently blessing the crowds from the balcony of St Peter’s Basilica on Easter Sunday. Reflecting on the Pope’s final days, Bishop Peter remarked that we may well wonder what insight Francis held as he took his last journey across the cobbles of St Peter’s Square — faithfully, lovingly tending his flock to the very end.

The homily also recalled Pope Francis’





Pope Francis



passionate advocacy for justice, care for creation, and solidarity with the poor, often drawing on the imagery of St Francis of Assisi and the Psalms to express humanity's dignity and its responsibility as stewards of God's earth. Quoting *Laudato Si'*, Bishop Peter reiterated the Pope's urgent plea to listen to the cry of the earth and to change our ways.

The Mass, celebrated within the joy of the Easter Octave, was imbued with both sorrow

and resurrection hope. It was a fitting liturgical tribute to a Pontiff who constantly called the Church to missionary discipleship, to embrace the marginalised, and to walk forward as "pilgrims of hope."

As the faithful joined in final prayers for Pope Francis, Bishop Peter entrusted the Holy Father to the mercy of God, praying that he may take his place at the eternal banquet of heaven.



Bishop Peter celebrates Mass with the Charismatic family. Picture by Andrea Cope.

First gathering of the Charismatic Family

On Saturday 12 April 2025, clergy and representatives from across the Diocese of East Anglia came together at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist for a significant moment in the life of the local Church. Pam Smith reports.

■ The occasion marked the first ever gathering of the Charismatic Family in the diocese and was centred around a Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Collins, followed by a time of sharing and reflection.

The gathering was organised to give Bishop Peter the opportunity to meet and encourage members of Charismatic ministry teams, prayer groups, and communities who serve in this diocese. It also served as a response to the growing communion between the Magisterium of the Catholic Church and the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

In his homily, Bishop Peter reflected on the day's readings and commended those present to embrace both prudence and courage — virtues essential to living out our mission in the Church today. Prudence, he reminded us, is not about hesitation, but about discerning wisely and acting with care. Courage, in the biblical sense, means responding to God's call even when we feel unequipped, trusting in His provision and stepping out in faith.

The establishment of CHARIS (Catholic Charismatic Renewal International Service) at Pentecost in 2019 marked a significant moment for the global Charismatic movement. CHARIS was created not to govern but to serve; not as a lay association, but as a body with public juridic personality, officially recognising the Charismatic Renewal as a "current of grace" for the Church. Locally, the Charismatic Diocesan Service of Communion (CDSC) operates as an association of the laity under the authority of the Bishop, called to mission and to unity.

Bishop Peter emphasised the importance of communion within the Church, stating, "Nothing happens within the diocese in isolation." He reiterated that my role as Coordinator of the CDSC is to be a point of reference for all Charismatic groups and ministries — especially in ensuring adherence to diocesan policies and safeguarding practices. "Walk with care," he said. "Souls are fragile."

The vision we serve through the CDSC

and CHARIS is threefold: to unify, to serve, and to share the grace of our baptism in the Holy Spirit. Charisms are to be exercised in obedience to the Church, in communion with the hierarchy, and in alignment with the pastoral authority of the Bishop. They are given for the building up of the Body of Christ.

The afternoon also offered the opportunity for ministries to introduce themselves. Representatives came from across the diocese, including Transform Ministries UK, Littleway Healing Ministries, Couples for Christ, and Unbound Mother of Good Counsel, among others — each sharing the richness of their call and mission.

Bishop Peter spoke candidly about the journey ahead for every parish in the diocese, as we seek to renew our missionary purpose. "The Charismatic Renewal is a significant part of our spiritual journey to allow us to engage with the challenges" and it "must reference the Diocesan family first before the wider Charismatic Renewal movement. Nothing is in isolation and the nourishment must be across the Church and the Diocese. Everything must serve the mission of the Church."

Looking forward, work is underway to redesign the diocesan website, with new pages dedicated to the Charismatic Renewal. These will provide information about CHARIS, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal (CCR), and Pope Francis' vision for this movement. A diocesan directory of Charismatic prayer groups and ministries will also be included, along with links to national and international resources.

Plans are already taking shape for future Charismatic Family Gatherings, and those who were unable to attend this year are warmly encouraged to send representatives next time. It is through this shared witness and unity that the diversity of our ministries becomes a strength for the whole Church.

Please keep me in your prayers as I seek to serve both the Diocese of East Anglia and the CHARIS vision with prudence, courage, and love.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to this special day: Jo Graham and DeSeptra for leading Praise and Worship, Fr Luke Goymour, Fr Gladson Dabre OSA, and the Narthex team for their support and service.

Fr Gladson Dabre and Transform Ministries will return to the Cathedral on Saturday 7 June at 7:30pm for the Pentecost Vigil "Outpouring". All are welcome to come and "be filled with the Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

For more information about the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, please contact me at: renewaleastanglia@gmail.com.

Lourdes is calling: Join the pilgrimage in August 2025

■ Each August, the Diocese of East Anglia joins with the Catholic Association (CA) on a deeply moving pilgrimage to Lourdes. In 2025, the pilgrimage will take place from 22 to 29 August, and bookings are now open.

Whether you are a returning pilgrim or considering Lourdes for the first time, this is a remarkable opportunity to draw closer to God, support others, and share in the joy of a vibrant spiritual experience. Pilgrims from East Anglia are encouraged to stay at the Hotel Eliseo, a comfortable and well-situated base for the week. The pilgrimage package includes return flights, seven nights' accommodation, hotel transfers, full access to the pilgrimage programme, travel insurance, and luggage allowance. Final travel details will be confirmed two weeks before departure. Bookings can be made through Tangney Tours, either online at www.catholicassociation.co.uk/join or by calling 01732 88 66 66.

At the heart of the Lourdes pilgrimage are the assisted pilgrims, who are welcomed with care and compassion. Whether you need medical support, mobility assistance, or simply someone to accompany you, there is a place for you on this journey. Accommodation options include hotels supported by volunteer helpers or the Accueil Marie St Frai, which offers full medical and personal care. Financial assistance may be available for those who need it, and enquiries can be directed to Deacon Huw Williams, the Diocesan Director for East Anglia, at huw.williams@rcdea.org.uk or by phone on 07399 163 718.

Since 1987, the Glanfield Children's Group has been bringing children with learning disabilities, chronic illnesses, and terminal conditions to Lourdes, offering them and their families a joyful and hope-filled experience. Their presence is a testament to the spirit of love and welcome that defines the pilgrimage.

The Catholic Association also relies on a team of dedicated volunteers to care for and support pilgrims throughout the week. Whether you are a nurse, doctor, chaplain, or someone with a heart for service, there is a vital role for you. Volunteers include medical professionals, chaplains, and non-medical helpers – women serving as handmaids, men as brancardiers or 'brancs', and young people aged 17 to 25 as part of a

supervised group. There is no upper age limit, and all volunteers are invited to live the pilgrimage fully, experiencing it not just as carers but as fellow pilgrims answering Christ's call to love and serve.

For those concerned about the cost of the pilgrimage, financial help is available through the Catholic Association Grants Committee and local diocesan funds. Details of the 2025 funding scheme will be shared in due course, but early enquiries are welcome via Deacon Huw Williams.

To go on pilgrimage to Lourdes is to enter a place of deep spiritual renewal. It is one of the most revered Marian shrines in the world, where many go in search of peace, healing, or a closer relationship with God. While physical miracles are rare, countless pilgrims return uplifted, renewed in spirit, and touched by grace. Lourdes is also a place of extraordinary community – a gathering of people from all walks of life and every corner of the world, united in prayer, compassion, and solidarity. It is a place to serve others and to reflect on life in silence and stillness. It is a place of profound encounter – with oneself, with others, and with God.

The natural beauty of Lourdes, nestled in the foothills of the Pyrenees, adds to its contemplative charm. And next year's pilgrimage holds special significance, as 2025 is a Jubilee Year of Hope, declared by Pope Francis as a time of grace and spiritual renewal. Pilgrims to Lourdes will have the opportunity to walk the Jubilee Way and gain the Jubilee Year Plenary Indulgence, as the Rosary Basilica has been designated a Jubilee Church.

If you feel called to take part in the 2025 pilgrimage, let it be a moment to pause, pray, and consider this invitation from the Lord. Lourdes is a place where lives are touched, hearts are healed, and faith is rekindled.

Pray. Reflect. Prepare.

And if you are ready to say "yes" – Lourdes is calling.

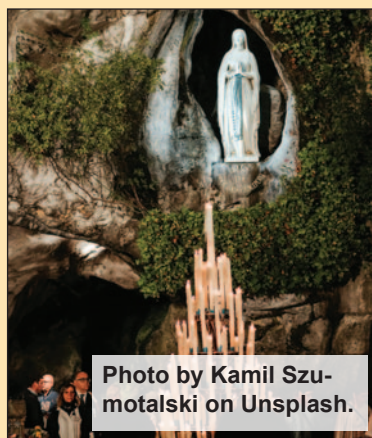


Photo by Kamil Szumotalski on Unsplash.



Young people give support to homeless

Georgia & Eleonora from St. Luke's Parish youth group talk about an eye-opening experience they had supporting the homeless in Peterborough.

■ An inspiring talk from Steven Pettican about the many services offered by Light Project Peterborough only strengthened our resolve to support the charity. Light Project Peterborough's mission is to support the homeless in rebuilding their lives through Christ-like values, and one of their key initiatives is the annual Big Sleepout.

But what exactly is the Big Sleepout? It's a yearly event hosted at the football stadium, giving people the opportunity to experience just a small part of what homeless individuals go through each day, while raising funds for the organisation. It's their biggest fundraising event, but perhaps even more important is how it fosters empathy. As Christians, we are called to be selfless and compassionate, and we were eager to take part. However, as all of us are under 18, we couldn't participate in the main event.

Instead, we decided to organise our own sleepout at St Luke's! In collaboration with the Order of Malta Cadets from the Polish Catholic Mission in Peterborough, we committed to spending the night of 4–5 April sleeping in the church, dedicating our time to living out the message of empathy. The evening began at 6:30pm,

our usual Youth Group meeting time. As more people arrived, we made our way into the church, where the Stations of the Cross began at 7pm. It was a thoughtful and prayerful start to the evening – a meaningful reminder of our purpose. Of course, we were there to create memories together, but above all, to reflect on a pressing issue through the lens of our faith.

Dinner followed shortly after. Thanks to the generosity of Pasta Shop, we had plenty of pizza dough to prepare our own homemade pizzas. Everyone got involved – kneading, topping, baking – and it became a beautiful moment of collaboration and bonding, with everyone helping one another and sharing slices.

Next up was a round of Kahoot, with eight teams of three testing their knowledge of Light Project Peterborough and the Bible. While the quiz was fun and competitive, it also served as a moment to reflect. We went through all the answers together, making sure we really understood the message of the night.

Later, we split into two large groups for some late-night games of "Werewolf" – a game that challenges communication, teamwork, and strategy. It brought plenty of laughs and was a great way for everyone to connect more naturally.

As midnight passed, it was time to wind down with prayer and reflection. We gathered in the church to pray two decades of the Rosary – with a twist. Each of us received a small sheet featuring a photo and a brief story of someone who had stayed at the Garden House or used the services of

Light Project Peterborough. This was a humbling and powerful experience, reminding us that our efforts are helping real people, and that prayer isn't only for ourselves, but also for those in greater need.

Then came bedtime. We laid out our pillows and blankets on the church floor. As expected, it wasn't easy – the floor was hard and cold, and the lights and sounds made it difficult to sleep. But we pushed through, aware that this discomfort was only a fraction of what rough sleeping truly involves.

At 7:00am, we were woken up to the sound of "I Like To Move It" (thank you, Sister Erika!). After a quick breakfast, we cleaned the church and wrapped up by 8:30am – tired, but grateful.

The sleepout was an incredible experience, and we were blessed to share it with our friends from the Youth Group and the Order of Malta Cadets. We're so thankful for their help in organising such a fun and meaningful evening. We're also deeply grateful to everyone who supported us – together, we raised an amazing £2,680 for Light Project Peterborough, smashing our target by 170%!

We hope to see everyone again at future events – the doors of the Youth Group are always open. Most importantly, this experience allowed us to reflect on how easy it is to take basic comforts for granted, and helped us better understand the challenges faced by those without a home.

It was an eye-opening night, filled with laughter, community, and compassion – and one we'll remember for a long time.

Tributes to late Pope Francis

Following the recent death of His Holiness Pope Francis, the Catholic community in Bury St Edmunds gathered in prayer and mourning at St Edmund's Church to honour his life and legacy.

■ In the days after the announcement, numerous parishioners and members of the wider community visited the church to light candles, offer prayers, and write messages of condolence in a special book placed near the altar.

A Requiem Mass was held on the Friday evening, drawing around 100 worshippers and six clergy members. The service was marked by a deep sense of reflection and reverence, beginning with a eulogy delivered by Fr Anthony Asomugha.

In his homily, Fr Sean Connolly reflected on the pastoral mission of Pope Francis, describing him as a shepherd deeply committed to the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalised. He emphasised the late Pope's example of humility, compassion and service, saying that he "leaves behind a legacy of love, mercy and hope".

The evening was a fitting tribute to a pontiff whose papacy had inspired many both within and beyond the Catholic Church.

As the community slowly comes to terms with the loss, the gatherings at St Edmund's have served not only as a moment of shared grief but also as a reaffirmation of the values



The book of condolences at St Edmund's.

Pope Francis championed throughout his papacy. His profound impact continues to resonate in the prayers, memories, and acts of

kindness inspired by his example. In mourning his passing, the faithful also renew their commitment to the path he walked — one of

inclusion, justice, and unwavering faith in God.



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Christians Together in Southwold unite

■ **Christians Together in Southwold, a vibrant ecumenical group uniting the Southwold Catholic parish, the Anglican Sole Bay Team of churches, and the United Reformed Church, came together this Lent to share the Gospel through a series of community initiatives.**

Throughout Lent, the group organised weekly study sessions, offering parishioners the opportunity to deepen their faith and reflect together during this important season. In addition, each church hosted a weekly soup lunch, with proceeds generously

donated to the ShelterBox charity appeal, supporting emergency aid efforts around the world.

The Lenten activities culminated on Good Friday with a moving Ecumenical Service followed by the annual Walk of Witness through the town. During the walk, children from the group distributed Hot Cross buns and Christian messages to both tourists and locals, offering a tangible reminder of the hope and love at the heart of the Easter story.

Christians Together in Southwold continues to be a shining example of unity and shared faith within the community.



Christians Together process through Southwold.

Catholic families urged to share their voices

Catholic families across East Anglia and beyond are being encouraged to share their experiences of the two-child benefit cap and the broader challenges posed by the current economic climate, as part of a national effort to advocate for change.

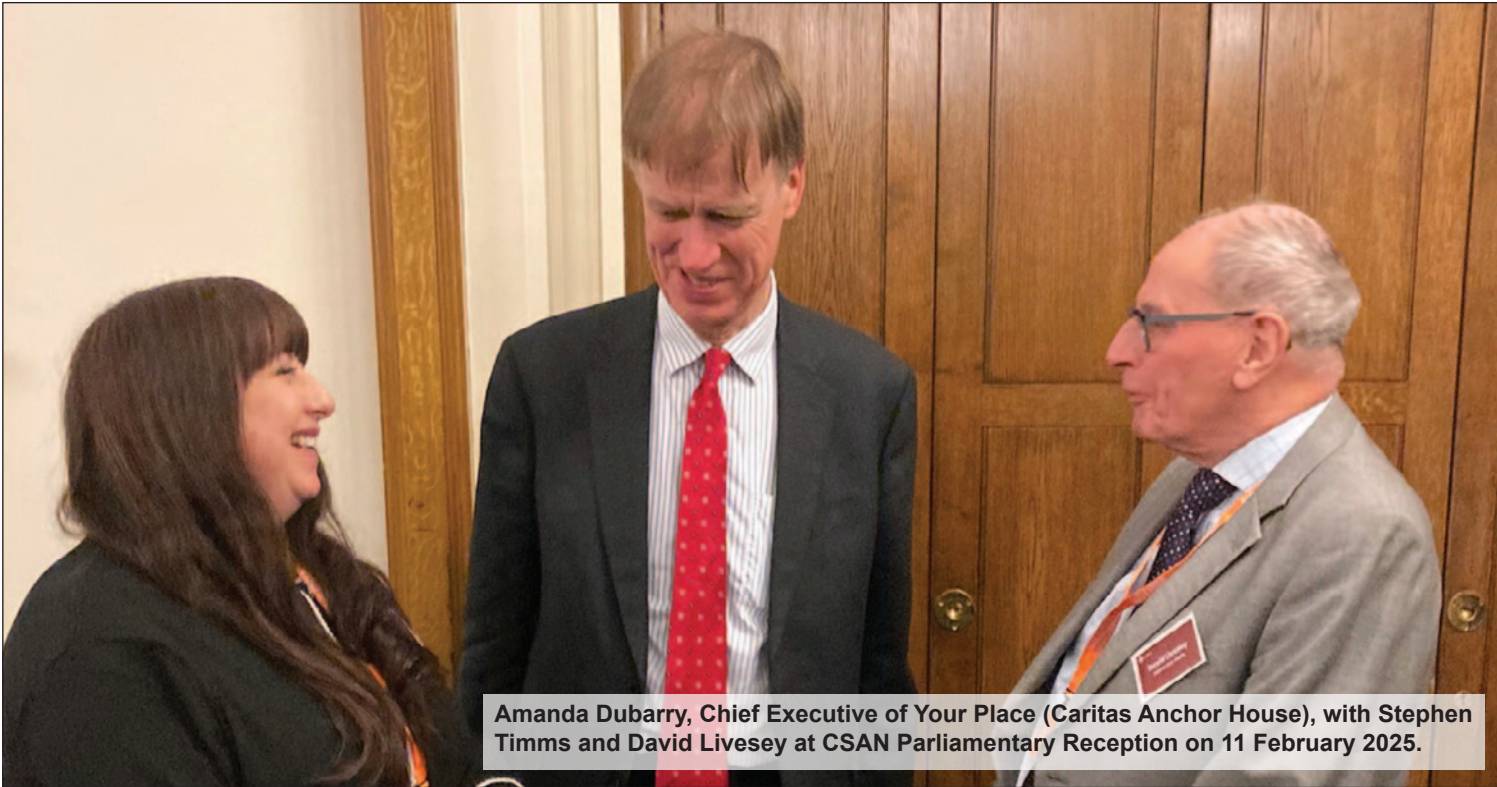
■ Speaking at a recent reception in Parliament, organised by the Catholic Social Action Network (CSAN), David Livesey, Administrator of Caritas East Anglia, addressed Stephen Timms MP, Minister of State for Social Security and Disability. Mr Livesey highlighted that removing the two-child benefit cap remains a key priority for Caritas East Anglia, echoing the position of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

In response, the Minister noted that this issue is currently part of a wider government consultation on benefits system reform, which is open until 30 June.

Mr Livesey stressed the importance of seizing this opportunity:

"It is very important that we all use the opportunity to make our views known – not only by responding to the consultation but also by writing to our MPs using the Bishops' e-Action online."

He also called on Catholic families to par-



Amanda Dubarry, Chief Executive of Your Place (Caritas Anchor House), with Stephen Timms and David Livesey at CSAN Parliamentary Reception on 11 February 2025.

ticipate in a CSAN-led survey, which is collecting testimonies about how the two-child benefit cap and the economic climate are affecting Catholic households in England and Wales.

"I particularly urge Catholic families to

share their experiences with CSAN," Mr Livesey said. "The insights gathered from this survey will play a crucial role in CSAN's advocacy efforts to address child poverty and influence policy change."

To take part in the consultation or the

CSAN survey, and to write to your MP, visit the Bishops' Conference website for links and further information.

By raising their voices, Catholic families can help shape a more compassionate and just benefits system for all.



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Sawston community comes together for Walk of Witness

On Good Friday 2025, the Christian community of Sawston once again came together in a beautiful display of faith and fellowship for the annual Walk of Witness. Andrew Xuereb-George reports.

■ This cherished tradition is one of several ecumenical events held in the village, uniting the three local churches – Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, St Mary's Church, and the Free Church – in a public act of devotion and solidarity.

We began the walk at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, gathering quietly in reflection as we prepared to mark this most solemn day in the Christian calendar. Reverend Phil from the Free Church thoughtfully assigned roles to various participants, including carrying the Cross and reading scripture at each stop. My brother Michael and I, along with several other children from our parish, were delighted to be chosen as distributors of crème eggs and leaflets explaining the significance of Holy Week.

With everyone's roles in place, we set off on our journey. Our first stop was St Mary's Church, where we paused to sing a hymn and listen to a reading from the Bible. Afterwards, we had the joyful task of offering crème eggs and pamphlets to passers-by who showed an interest in the procession. Their reactions were heart-warming – many smiled with surprise and appreciation as they received the treats. It was a moving moment to see how such a simple gesture

could bring light to someone's day and open a doorway to share the Easter message.

Our second stop was outside the village hardware shop. There, we sang another hymn and heard a further reading from scripture before stepping inside to offer eggs and leaflets to the shopkeepers and customers. People were touched by the gesture, and we had several lovely conversations. One elderly lady told me, with a broad smile, "That's the first time this has ever happened to me." Others, politely refusing the chocolate due to dietary reasons, were nonetheless happy to receive the leaflet – with my brother cheerfully reminding them, "No calories in this!"

Throughout the walk, we stopped at several more locations around the village. Each stop featured a Bible reading and a moment of

prayerful reflection, helping us trace Christ's journey from Palm Sunday to the Resurrection. These reflections reminded us of Easter's profound meaning and the call to reach out to others with compassion.

We ended our journey at the Free Church, where

we sang a final hymn and offered prayers for those carrying burdens of grief, worry, or loneliness. Father John of Our Lady of Lourdes delivered a touching message, encouraging us to carry the light of hope into our community, especially to those suffering in silence.

The walk concluded with a warm welcome in the church hall, where volunteers served freshly baked hot cross buns and much-appreciated refreshments. It was a fitting end to a day filled with faith, kindness, and community spirit.

I was deeply moved by how the churches of Sawston came together to make this event so meaningful. In walking side by side, sharing prayers and smiles, we bore witness to something truly powerful: the light of Christ, alive and shining through each one of us.



Sawston Walk of Witness.

Faith in the Home

The Sacred Heart of Jesus

■ The month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and on June 27 2025 the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart. In this column, Marriage and Family Life Coordinator Antonia Braithwaite describes the traditional Catholic practice of consecrating our family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus has its origins in the early centuries of Christianity but became more widely recognized in the 17th century through the visions of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French nun, and from then the devotion to the Sacred Heart was firmly established in Catholic spirituality. The practice of consecrating one's family to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a cherished Catholic tradition that expresses deep trust in Christ's love and protection and expresses the family's desire that Christ dwell intimately with each member.

Typically, the family gathers in front of an image or statue of the Sacred Heart (even if 'the family' consists of only husband and wife). A formal prayer of consecration is recited (these can be found online), offering the family's joys, sorrows, hopes, and struggles to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Some families choose to enthrone the image in a prominent place in the home as a daily reminder of Christ's presence and love; say on the mantle, or a prominent shelf, or hanging the image in the entrance way or the living room.

As June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus it is an especially good month to do this, but it can of course be done at any time. Many families renew their consecration annually, deepening their relationship with Christ year after year.

In an age where families face numerous challenges, consecrating your family to the Sacred Heart is a way of asking Christ to bless, guide and protect every member of your family; many graces flow from this Consecration.



Photo by Bill Gullo on Unsplash.

Celebrate the gift of marriage at the annual Mass

■ Bishop Peter Collins warmly invites all married couples across the Diocese of East Anglia to attend the annual Marriage Celebration Mass, which will take place on Saturday 14th June at 11.30am at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich.

This joyful event is a special opportunity to give thanks for the gift of marriage and to celebrate the love and commitment of couples throughout our Diocese. Everyone is welcome to attend — whether newly married, together for many years, or simply wishing to support friends and family.

As part of the celebration, couples marking significant anniversaries will be recognised with a certificate presented by Bishop Peter. These include one year, five years, and every multiple of five years thereafter, with annual recognition for those celebrating 60 years of marriage or more.

If you are celebrating a milestone anniversary and would like to receive a certificate, please register your details online via the Diocesan website: www.rcdea.org.uk/marriage-mass-registration

For further information or any enquiries,



Marriage Celebration Mass, June 2024.
The Cathedral of St John the Baptist.

please contact Antonia Braithwaite, Marriage and Family Life Coordinator at: mflcoordinator@rcdea.org.uk

Join us as we honour the vocation of mar-

riage and celebrate the enduring love that continues to strengthen our Church community.



Fr Alvan Ibeh: Becoming Apostles of Mercy



In his monthly column Fr Alvan Ibeh says we are called to become apostles

of mercy by receiving God's boundless compassion and sharing it with a hurting world through lives of forgiveness, humility, and love.

■ "Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy." — Matthew 5:7 (NIV)

I have chosen to write on this topic in memory of the late Pope Francis, who did not merely preach about mercy but, through his life and actions, truly became an apostle of mercy. It was only after his passing that I took the time to reflect deeply on some of his teachings about the boundless mercy of God. I have come to appreciate how powerful those teachings were — even if, at times, they were misunderstood.

In a world often marked by division, anger and judgement, the call to mercy shines like a lighthouse guiding weary ships home. Mercy is not just a noble idea or an occasional act of kindness; it is a way of life for everyone who professes to follow Christ. It is a life to which we are all called: "Be mer-

ciful, just as your Father is merciful." — Luke 6:36

To become apostles of mercy is to live each day as living signs of God's limitless love and forgiveness.

Our journey begins with a personal encounter with God's own mercy. We are able to show mercy only because mercy has first been shown to us by the Father of all mercies — whose compassion endures forever. Each of us has fallen short of His glory (Romans 3:23), yet God meets us not with condemnation, but with grace. When the prodigal son returned, he was not greeted with punishment, but with open arms and joyful celebration (Luke 15:11–32). So it is with us — God's mercy is greater than our failures, stronger than our fears, and more enduring than our shame.

When we recognise just how much mercy we have received from God — that it is by His mercy we are even alive — we are humbled. It reminds us that we are not self-made, but grace-saved. It breaks the chains of pride and opens our hearts to compassion. A question to reflect on: *When was the last time you truly allowed yourself to feel the depth of God's mercy towards you?*

Mercy is not meant to end with us; it is meant to flow through us. Just as a river does not hoard the water it receives, so we are called to pass on the mercy given to us. Mercy transforms us from within. It softens our hearts towards those we once judged, opens our eyes to those we once ignored, and grants us patience with those we once found difficult.

Saint John Paul II wrote: "The Church lives an authentic life when she professes and proclaims mercy — the most stupendous attribute of the Creator and of the Redeemer — and when she brings people close to the sources of the Saviour's mercy." (Dives in Misericordia, 13)

To be transformed by mercy is to cultivate a heart that sees beyond offence, a mind that seeks to understand rather than to accuse, and a spirit that reflects the heart of Jesus.

An apostle is not merely a follower — an apostle is one who is sent. Being apostles of mercy means being sent into the world as bearers of hope, forgiveness, and healing. It means extending mercy not only to those who deserve it, but especially to those who do not — just as Christ has done for us.

We must remember that mercy is not weakness; it is strength. It is the bold declaration that love is stronger than hatred, and that forgiveness is more powerful than revenge. Pope Francis reminded us: "Mercy is the very foundation of the Church's life. The Church's very credibility is seen in how she shows merciful and compassionate love." (Misericordiae Vultus, 10)

When we live as apostles of mercy, we bring Christ into every conversation, every act of kindness, and every gesture of compassion. We become part of God's great story of redemption, unfolding here and now.

Transform me, O Lord, by your love, so that I may see others through your eyes. Send me into the world as an apostle of your mercy. Amen.

Picture gallery from parishes around the Diocese

■ On Good Friday morning, around 50 parishioners from the Christian churches in Costessey came together to take part in a Walk of Witness through the town.

Fr David Ward, parish priest of Our Lady & St Walstan, warmly welcomed everyone to the Costessey Centre, where he opened the gathering with a short reading and prayer.

Following this, the group processed through the heart of Old Costessey towards the Baptist Church on The Street, handing out palm crosses to members of the public along the way.

A half-hour service was then held, with representatives from all four local churches – Catholic, Baptist, Methodist and Anglican – sharing in the leadership. Afterwards, those attending enjoyed a time of fellowship over tea and coffee in the church hall.

The Walk of Witness was a moving demonstration of Christian unity and a public expression of faith during the most solemn time of the Church's year.



■ The Rosary Group from St Joseph's Parish, St Neots, gathered on Wednesday May 7 for their traditional Crowning of Our Lady in the parish garden. Fr Tibor Borovský, parish priest, led the group in honouring our Blessed Mother.

■ Parish banners from across the diocese displayed at the National Catholic Shrine at Walsingham. Hundreds of pilgrims made the journey to Walsingham and walked from the village to the Shrine to celebrate the annual diocesan pilgrimage.

