



Diocese youth team's pilgrimage to Northern France – page 4



Mass in celebration of Religious life in East Anglia – page 6



Fr Simon Davies new Priest at Our Lady and St Joseph's – page 10



Bishop Peter Collins, John Latham Jr and Fr Philip John holding the blessed foundation stone. Picture by Charlie Bohan-Hurst.

Bishop blesses St Philip Howard Church

The growing Catholic community of St Philip Howard Parish in Cambridge took another significant step forward in its ambitious £3 million redevelopment project, as Bishop Peter Collins blessed the foundation stone for the renewed church. Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ The blessing, a moment of both spiritual and historical significance, marked the formal beginning of construction on a building that will nearly double the capacity from 230 to 400, a remarkable feat that reflects the parish's ongoing expansion.

Before the blessing, Bishop Peter celebrated Mass in the parish's temporary place of worship – a resourcefully adapted presbytery garage supplemented by a waterproof marquee. While the setting may have been unconventional, the Bishop was keen to emphasise that the church is, above all, a

community of faith rather than a building. "This is my first time celebrating Mass in a garage," he remarked with warmth, "but the faith and unity of this parish are as strong here as they will be in the renewed church."

The redevelopment of St Philip Howard Church is entirely funded by donations from the parish, together with external grant support – an important factor in its realisation, especially at a time when the ability of the Diocese to provide significant grants is very limited. The dedication and generosity of parishioners have been the driving force behind the project, with many individuals making personal pledges and participating in numerous fundraising events. The collective effort of the parish is remarkable.

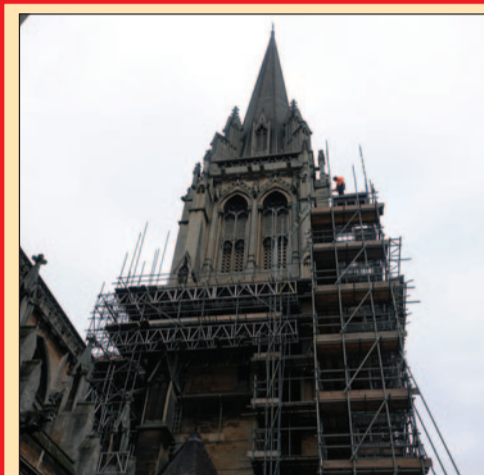
Currently, the St Philip Howard Parish community is home to around 850 members, representing an extraordinary diversity of 40 nationalities. The redevelopment is not just about accommodating the existing congregation but also preparing to serve the future, particularly the 12,000 new households expected to be built on the Cambridge Airport development site. With this in mind, the renewed church is set to be a central spiri-

tual hub for both long-standing parishioners and new families moving into the area.

Key to the success of this redevelopment has been the tireless work of two generations of the Latham family. John Latham Jr has played a leading role in coordinating the parish's input into the design and planning of the renewed building, building on the long-standing commitment of his father, John Latham Sr, to the parish's growth and development. Their dedication, alongside the steadfast leadership of parish priest Fr Philip John, has been instrumental in turning the vision for the church into a reality.

The architectural design for the new St Philip Howard Church has been entrusted to Tim Powter-Robinson, whose expertise has ensured that the plans will meet the needs of the expanding congregation while maintaining an aesthetic and spiritual integrity befitting a house of worship. The completed church is set to be a space that not only accommodates more parishioners but also enhances the liturgical and communal life of the faithful.

Speaking at the ceremony, Bishop Peter ■ **story continued on page two.**



Restoration works at OLEM

■ The Diocese of East Anglia has embarked on a significant programme of emergency and restoration works at the historic church of Our Lady and the English Martyrs (OLEM) in Cambridge, following the discovery of serious issues with the high-level stonework and pinnacles of the church tower.

In the summer of 2023, a report from a specialist contractor highlighted concerns over the stability of some of the stone elements of the tower. Recognising the potential risks, the Diocese acted swiftly to initiate emergency works, removing any dangerous stonework and putting plans in place for a longer-term programme of repairs and restoration. This work has been developed in close collaboration with the parish, the church architect, and Historic England to ensure that both the safety and historic integrity of the building are preserved.

The current phase of works marks the beginning of an ambitious restoration project, led by church architect Henry Freeland. At present, extensive scaffolding is being erected around the tower, a complex process that will take several weeks to complete. Once in place, specialist contractors and stonemasons will carry out essential repairs, including the restoration of multiple pinnacles, the replacement of severely degraded Victorian stonework, and the reinforcement of at-risk masonry. Selective stone cleaning will also be undertaken to remove over a century's worth of pollution and grime, allowing the tower to regain its original splendour.

The restoration works are expected to continue throughout the spring and summer of 2025, ensuring the church remains a beacon of faith and heritage for generations to come. The Diocese is grateful for the support of The Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation, whose generosity has helped make these crucial works possible.

OLEM have a fundraising target of £300,000 to support the repair works. For more information and to donate visit the OLEM website.



The St Philip Howard construction site.

Capacity to nearly double

■ **story continued from page one.**

expressed his gratitude to all those who have contributed to the project, emphasising the significance of such a development in today's climate. "This redevelopment is a powerful testament to the enduring strength of Catholic faith in this parish. It is a sign of hope and commitment to the future."

Local Councillor Robert Dryden (Cambridge – Cherry Hinton) conveyed his support for the redevelopment project: "This project not only responds to the growing demand from our ever-increasing population but also provides a vibrant space that will serve as a hub for community activities and foster a sense of belonging. It's a fantastic initiative that will benefit many."

Mark Godfrey of principal contractor Godfrey & Hicks expressed his enthusiasm for the rebuild: "Having undertaken a major project at the Catholic Church in Newmarket I am personally very excited to be working on another high profile project."

The renewed St Philip Howard Church is scheduled for completion in early 2026. Until then, weekday Masses and parish activities will continue in the temporary structure with weekend masses held in The Pilgrim Theatre in the nearby St Bede's school.

As construction begins, the parish looks forward with anticipation to the day when they will gather in their renewed church, not just as a congregation with greater capacity, but as a living testament to faith's enduring power in an ever-changing world.

Catholic EastAnglia

Newspaper of the Diocese of East Anglia

EDITOR:
Charlie Bohan-Hurst



communications@rcdea.org.uk

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Caritas festival for charity & community

■ **The Caritas in East Anglia Festival brought together individuals and organisations dedicated to social outreach on 8 February 2025 at Holy Family Church, King's Lynn.**

He greeted the baby Jesus and carried him in procession to the crib in St Joseph's Chapel in the cathedral.

The event commenced with a Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Collins, setting a spiritual tone for a morning dedicated to hope, service, and collaboration.

In his homily, Bishop Peter spoke of the transformative power of charity, stating that the stirrings of charity exist in every human heart and that God's love was woven through the work of every organisation present. He urged those gathered to recognise the human stories behind acts of service, concluding with a heartfelt plea: "There is a human face behind every story. Grant us a listening ear so that no one is left in despair. Let us work with each other, for each other."

The festival, which aligned with the Jubilee theme of Pilgrims of Hope, was a

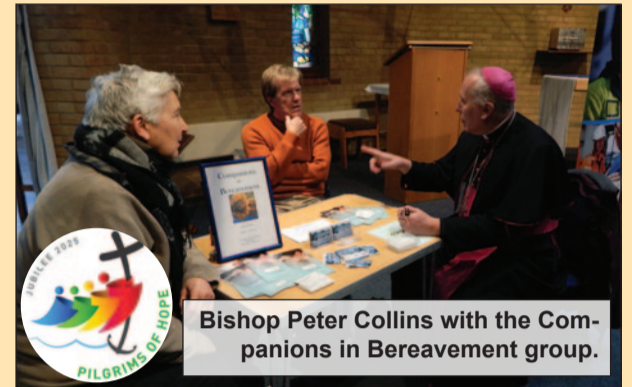
beacon of ecumenical welcome, fostering connections among a wide array of faith-based and charitable organisations. Held on the feast of St Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of victims of modern slavery and human trafficking, the event also provided a platform for the East Anglia group against modern slavery, reinforcing the Church's commitment to justice and dignity for all.

A highlight of the day was the presence of young people, including the Mini Vinnies from St Martha's Primary School, who embodied the spirit of Christian service and brought a youthful energy to the gathering.

Each group showcased the impact of their work, from providing food and shelter to supporting the bereaved and tackling modern slavery. Over refreshments in the church hall, attendees had the opportunity to engage with these organisations, fostering dialogue and

inspiring new avenues for involvement in charitable work.

The Caritas Festival in East Anglia served as a powerful reminder of the strength found in community and the shared mission of bringing hope to those in need. By gathering under one roof in faith and service, those present reaffirmed their commitment to working together for the common good, ensuring that no one in society is left without support or hope.



Bishop Peter Collins with the Companions in Bereavement group.

Cambridge hosts Archbishop Savio Hon Tai-Fai

On Saturday, 25 January, the Cantonese Catholic community in Cambridge warmly welcomed Archbishop Savio Hon Tai-Fai S.D.B. during his pastoral visit, marking a significant occasion for local worshippers.

■ The Archbishop, who has served as a papal nuncio since 2017, celebrated Mass in Cantonese at Our Lady and the English Martyrs (OLEM) before later joining the wider parish community for Mass in English.

Despite the inclement weather, around 120 people gathered for the special occasion, with most coming from Cambridge itself.

Others travelled from Ely, Northstowe, Norwich, St Albans, North London, Milton Keynes, and Bedford, reflecting the broad reach of the Cantonese-speaking Catholic community. Three voluntary escorts accompanied the Archbishop, having travelled from Manchester.

As his visit coincided with Lunar New Year, Archbishop Savio chose to wear a striking red chasuble, a colour significant in Chinese culture for its auspicious meaning and association with Catholic martyrdom. The intricate fastening on the front of his vestments paid homage to his Chinese heritage, while his presence and ministry served as a testament to the universality of the Catholic



Archbishop Savio Hon Tai-Fai with the Cantonese community at OLEM, Cambridge.

Church – an ethnic Chinese bishop, formed in the Italian Salesian tradition, consecrated by Pope Benedict XVI, and serving as a Vatican diplomat, now leading worship in Cantonese and English.

His homily reflected on the feast of the Conversion of St Paul, drawing from St Paul's letter to the Corinthians, which speaks of the unity of the Body of Christ, and from St Luke's Gospel, where he explored the idea of "Today" as a continuum rather than a mere chronological point in time. He also acknowledged the Week of Christian Unity, encouraging the faithful to embrace the spirit of unity and hope in their faith journey. His Excellency also emphasised that the Holy

Father was aware of his pastoral visit and had asked to impart His greetings and blessing to the Cantonese Community and OLEM parishioners alike, through himself as the personal representative of the Pope.

Throughout his time with the community, Archbishop Savio displayed his characteristic graciousness and prayerful presence, engaging with warmth and attentiveness. His experience in the diplomatic service was evident in his subtlety and care, making all feel welcomed and valued.

This pastoral visit was a moment of deep spiritual significance, strengthening the Cantonese Catholic community and highlighting the rich diversity and unity of the Church.



Historic England's grant to Cathedral

The Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich has been awarded a grant of £57,000 from Historic England to support vital conservation work, ensuring the long-term protection of this architectural and spiritual landmark.

■ The funding will enable essential investigations into the cathedral's roof and drainage system, which have suffered from increased leaks and water damage. These assessments mark the crucial first stage in a wider programme of repairs designed to preserve the Grade I listed building, which was added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk register in 2024.

Built in the late 19th century by the renowned architect George Gilbert Scott Junior and completed by his brother John Oldrid Scott, St John the Baptist Cathedral is the second largest Catholic cathedral in England. It stands as one of the finest examples of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture in the country, drawing visitors from across the world who marvel at its striking design, soaring spire, and magnificent stained-glass windows. The intricate craftsmanship and

detailed stonework serve as a testament to the dedication of those who sought to create a truly awe-inspiring house of worship.

However, the cathedral is more than just an architectural gem; it is a living place of faith, worship, and service. As the Mother Church of the Diocese of East Anglia, it plays a central role in the spiritual lives of countless Catholics, providing a place for regular Mass, sacraments, and solemn celebrations that bring people together in prayer and reflection. The cathedral's sacred atmosphere offers solace and inspiration to visitors, pilgrims, and worshippers alike, reinforcing its role as a beacon of faith in the region.

Beyond its religious significance, St John the Baptist Cathedral is deeply woven into the fabric of the local community. It has long been a centre of outreach, welcoming and supporting those in need. The cathedral has partnered with Norwich City Council to host a winter night shelter programme for rough sleepers and has provided space for a range of community support initiatives, including the St Vincent de Paul Society, social gatherings, and educational events. Its halls are frequently used for a variety of activities, from fitness classes to mother-and-baby groups, illustrating its commitment to fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

Cathedral Manager at St John the Baptist, Charley Purves, welcomed the grant, saying:

"This funding from Historic England is an important first step in the journey, enabling us to better understand the issues the building is facing so that the work required is suitably planned and allows us to look to the future too. We are grateful to Historic England for supporting the Cathedral in this way."

The cathedral remains open daily, welcoming all who wish to attend Mass, pray in quiet reflection, marvel at its architectural splendour, or visit the shop and café. St John the Baptist stands as a powerful symbol of Catholic communion, where the faithful gather to celebrate and live out their faith. The presence of the Bishop's chair, or cathedra, in the sanctuary underscores its importance as the central church of the diocese.

With this essential funding, work can begin to safeguard the cathedral's structure, ensuring that its historic beauty, architectural grandeur, and vital community role continue to inspire and serve generations to come. This grant is a crucial step in preserving not only a physical landmark but also a living spiritual and cultural heritage that continues to shape and enrich the lives of many.

The funding from Historic England represents a vital step in safeguarding the future of St John the Baptist Cathedral, ensuring that its architectural splendour and spiritual significance endure for generations to come.

news in brief

St Francis of Assisi pupils raise funds for good cause

■ Pupils, parents and staff at St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School in Norwich has been enthusiastically fundraising to support those in need, reflecting the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Building on last year's impressive achievement of raising £2,139.10 for CAFOD, the school's CAFOD Club and wider community have already raised £334 since September. Their efforts this year focus on walking as "Pilgrims of Hope" in celebration of the Jubilee Year. As part of this initiative, the entire school will undertake a 1,000km sponsored walk during Lent, aiming to surpass last year's total.

In December, the school came together for their annual Christmas Carol Service, a cherished event held in collaboration with St John the Baptist Cathedral's Director of Music, David Greal. Each class performed individual carols, and the school sang together to raise money for The Priscilla Bacon Hospice. The charity was chosen in memory of Mrs Sue Spooner, a beloved and long-serving dinner lady, who passed away earlier in the year.

The Carol Service raised an impressive £615.45, and this week, Year 6 Junior Chaplains presented the funds to Priscilla Bacon Hospice during a visit to the site. The children were inspired by the peaceful setting and the hospice's dedication to creating a supportive environment for patients and families.

Reflecting on their visit, Junior Chaplains Fred and Milena said: "We loved the way people have privacy with their own little garden areas but are also part of a community in such a peaceful setting." They added: "Our money will go towards therapies and family craft activities to help people feel relaxed and comfortable."

Through their dedication and generosity, the pupils, staff, and wider community of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School have once again demonstrated the power of collective action in making a meaningful difference. They embody the values of compassion, hope, and service. As they continue their journey as "Pilgrims of Hope," their commitment not only honours those they cherish but also provides vital support to those in need.



Ignite team makes pilgrimage to Northern France

Fr Peter Wagnanski reports back after The Diocese's Ignite Team embarked on a short but spiritually enriching pilgrimage to Northern France, visiting historic cathedrals and sacred sites in Paris and Lisieux.

■ At first glance, there is nothing unusual about the Youth Mission Team for the Diocese braving seasonal cold to roam around flat landscapes, travelling together from church to church at distances and hours of the day which would agitate all but the hardest of travellers. Such journeys are a fact of life for the Ignite Team as it supports the young faithful across our diocese. In mid-January, however, and undeterred by the discomforts budget-conscious pilgrimage brings, the big skies of East Anglia were exchanged for the broad horizons of Northern France, a great veil of history resting upon those lands as gently but as densely as the thick winter fog which offered its constant and enchanting accompaniment.

The French theologian Henri de Lubac would himself have drawn on the hope inspired by the sight of great Gothic Cathedrals overcoming such mists, and he reminds us of the importance for the Catholic faith of feeling oneself rich with the treasures of the Church and to love her History. In this spirit, the members of the Ignite Team had opportunity across two challenging but engraced days to pray in great gems of the European High Middle Ages, to help them grow in this important aspect of a mature faith which they long to share with others.

Having driven the day before to basic accommodation on the outskirts of the

French capital, what a blessing it was to begin in earnest with the early morning celebration of Mass in the newly re-opened *Notre Dame* in Paris. Restored from fires that destroy, it now shines as a beacon of hope for a Christian revival in Europe. After that liturgy, the team spent the day walking to other Parisian sites significant for our faith; the heavenly *Sainte-Chapelle*, built by St Louis IX to house the relics of Christ's Crown of Thorns, the place of the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Sister Catherine Labouré made famous by the Miraculous Medal they revealed, the magnificent Church of *Saint-Sulpice*, and ending the day with an extended period of adoration at *Sacré-Cœur* atop of *Montmartre*. In that Basilica, the team forged their own link in a 135-year chain of perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, begun in 1885, which the bombings of World Wars and the closures of Pandemics



The Ignite Team, accompanied by Hamish MacQueen (Director of Diocesan Youth Services) and Fr Peter Wagnanski, outside the restored Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris.

could not interrupt.

The next day begun with an early long drive from Paris to attend Mass at the *Carmel* of Lisieux, at the chapel where St Therese of the Child Jesus spent her life in prayer and now rests. As a doctor of the Church, St Therese teaches the simple but profound lesson that the life of Jesus takes shape in us when we do small things with great love. After Mass, the towering Cathe-

dral of Amiens was found *en route* to returning to Norwich *via* the Channel Tunnel after nearly 1000km of driving in one day.

We give thanks to God for the many graces received in these days and ask for your prayers for the Ignite Team members, the two Alexes, and Luc, as they continue to grow in their faith and generously discern God's call to service in His Church and her mission.

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Seeing God's Hand at Work in My Life

In the second part of his article Fr Alvan Ibeh reflects on recognising God's presence and guidance in every aspect of life, especially during challenges. He declares God's presence can be seen in all circumstances if we choose to look.



■ "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose." (Romans 8:28 (NIV))

Looking at the many things that have happened in your life so far, adding those that have already occurred in your life this year, do you believe what St Paul said in the above scripture? Remember, I asked this question in the previous article. Will you say you have a story or stories of times when you saw God's hand working in your life? After something happened, you sat down and reflected and concluded that "this is

indeed the handiwork of God".

A friend shared an experience with me, and with her blessing I will share her story with you all. After reading this article, I would also like you to share your own story with me. You never know; your story may go a long way to bless someone's heart. Here is my friend's story, whose identity I will keep anonymous.

"It was the first Christmas since Mum died, so we decided to go away. As a family, we had many conversations about possible destinations. Our two boys are on the autistic spectrum, and it was tough to find somewhere that everyone would enjoy.

I wanted to go somewhere peaceful and restful, but unfortunately, that wouldn't be suitable for the boys (who would just be sitting around bored). Also, it was difficult to go to some destinations at this time of year (leading up to Christmas). So, eventually, we decided upon Las Vegas! The boys were very excited to go, and I reconciled myself to the fact that I would just make the best of it.

I found two local churches, the Cathedral of the Guardian Angel and the Shrine of the Holy Redeemer, and I attended Mass every day – it was wonderful!

Both churches are pretty new and 'modern looking,' but they were wonderful. What struck me is that God is everywhere if we only care to look.

Las Vegas is not a place where you would think you would encounter God, yet he was very present and working most powerfully! Praise Him."

The part that said, "I think what struck me is that God is everywhere if we only care to look," got me nodding, and I immediately asked her permission to share her story.

I have also had many experiences that made me see God's hand at work. This helps me see whatever happens to me from a positive perspective. This is because no matter what happens or is happening, I know that God is aware of it; I know He is entirely in charge of it, and I know that if He allows it to happen, it is for a reason. I know He knows the best way to figure it out; all He wants from me is absolute trust and dependence. So, knowing all these things makes me feel relaxed in the face of challenging times.

Do you have a story to share? Feel free to do so at alvan.ibeh@rcdea.org.uk. Hearing how God has moved in other people's lives can help you recognise His work in your own life. I pray that 2025 you will see God's hand in every situation. Amen.

You can stay connected with my messages of hope on social media: Facebook, TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram (@voiceofhopefamily). My book "A Fountain of Hope" is also available to purchase.

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Ipswich hosts historic vespers

At the start of Christian Unity Week (18 – 25 January), a significant event unfolded in Ipswich as Fr Luke Goymour, the Catholic Dean of Ipswich, came together with Revd Tom Mumford, the Anglican Vicar, for Ecumenical Vespers. Ian Tearle reports.

■ The service, held at the Civic Church of St Mary-le-Tower, showcased a spirit of unity and friendship between the two clergy members. The occasion gained further significance the following day, with the rededication of St Mary-le-Tower as Ipswich Minster, marking a unique and historic milestone for the town.

A weekend of diverse activities in Ipswich culminated in a landmark service, setting a hopeful tone for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Festivities began on Friday evening with entertainment that traced Ipswich's cultural and historical journey from the medieval period to the present day. Saturday featured an open day that included singing and bell-ringing workshops, culminating in what is thought to be the first service of Vespers in around 500 years.

A choir of 23, composed of male and female singers of all ages, delivered beautiful renditions of the Psalms, Gloria, and Magnificat, creating a rich and moving musical

backdrop. The reading, from Colossians 1:2-6, was delivered by the choir of Together for Ipswich (TFI), a member of one of the town's nonconformist churches.

Fr Luke delivered the sermon. Reflecting on the historic occasion, he spoke of the privilege and honour of participating. His message focused on the themes of faith, hope, and love, quoting Pope Francis's reminder that Christians are "pilgrims of hope." Fr Luke concluded with a call to work together to share God's love.

Prayers were led jointly by Fr Luke and Revd Tom Mumford, each incorporating quotations from early Church Fathers spanning the 2nd to 7th centuries, including St Irenaeus of Lyon, St Basil of Caesarea, and St Gregory the Great. The service concluded with a moving joint blessing by Fr Luke and Revd Tom Mumford – a profound expression of unity and collaboration.

This historic service provided a beautiful and inspiring beginning to the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, bringing together diverse traditions to celebrate faith and hope in Ipswich.



Fr Luke Goymour & Revd Tom Mumford. Picture by Ian Tearle.

St Pancras marks Holy Year with blessed sign

■ Parishioners at St Pancras Church in Ipswich have inaugurated the Holy Year with the blessing of a specially commissioned sign installed above the church's main entrance.

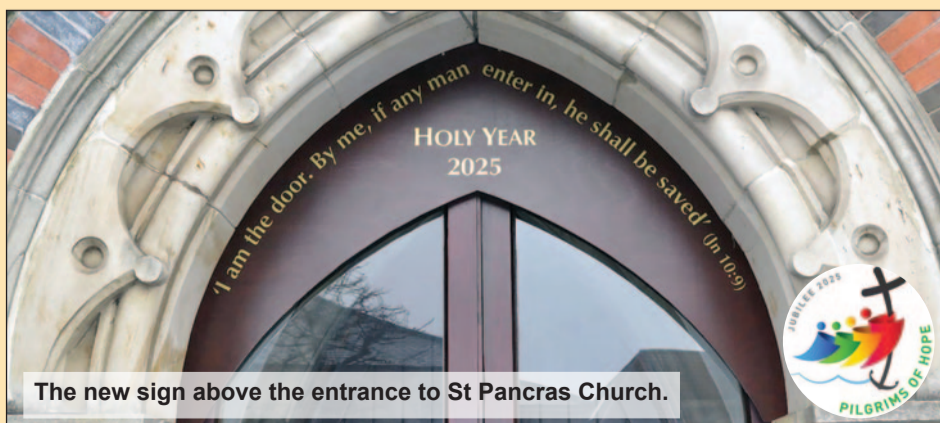
The sign, created by a professional sign-maker who is also a member of the parish, will remain in place throughout the Jubilee Year as a symbolic reminder of Our Lord's words: 'I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved' (John 10:9).

The blessing ceremony, led by Fr Joseph, invoked God's mercy on all who pass beneath the sign. The prayer of blessing asked that God look with mercy on those who pass beneath this lintel that those who seek 'forgiveness of sins, the sanctification of their souls, and such

peace as the world cannot give, may find within this church the means of salvation and the gateway to heaven.'

In keeping with the Holy Father's appointed theme for the Holy Year, the prayer also asked that, 'for those who seek refuge here,' the doorway may open up 'the promise and fulfilment of hope that their souls may be anchored in the goodness and mercy' of God.

The parishioner behind the creation and installation of the sign brought their professional skills to bear on this meaningful project, ensuring its craftsmanship would be a fitting testament to the significance of the Holy Year. The design serves not only as a decorative addition to the church but also as a spiritual invitation, encouraging all who see it to reflect on Christ as the ultimate gateway to salvation.



The new sign above the entrance to St Pancras Church.

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Bishop Peter's engagements

March

- **Mar 2, Sun:** Bishop to celebrate a Pontifical Mass at OLEM for the East Timorese Communities of Cambridge and Peterborough at 15:00.
- **Mar 5, Wed:** 17:30 Bishop to celebrate a Solemn Pontifical Mass for Ash Wednesday at the Cathedral.
- **Mar 9, Sun:** Bishop to preside over Rite of Election at the Cathedral at 15:00.
- **Mar 13, Thurs:** Bishop to celebrate Lenten Station Mass at St Peter and All Souls, Peterborough.
- **Mar 18, Tues:** Bishop to celebrate Lenten Station Mass at Our Lady of the Assumption & the English Martyrs, Cambridge.
- **Mar 19, Wed:** Bishop to say Mass at Quidenham (08:00) before the start of the Election of the new Prioress.
- **Mar 20, Thurs:** Bishop to celebrate Lenten Station Mass at the Church of the Holy Family, Field Lane, Gaywood.
- **Mar 21, Fri:** Bishop to celebrate Mass at 11:00 and to bless the new St Louis Wellbeing Hub.
- **Mar 22, Sat:** Bishop to celebrate a special Mass at St Edmund King and Martyr, Bury St Edmunds for Fr Gerry Quigley who is celebrating his Golden Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood.
- **Mar 25, Tues:** Bishop to celebrate Lenten Station Mass at the St Mary's, Ipswich.
- **Mar 29, Sat:** Bishop to celebrate Mass for the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem in Cambridge.

April

- **Apr 5, Sat:** Bishop to celebrate Jubilee Mass of the Sick and Health Care Workers with the anointing of the sick at the Cathedral at 11:30.
- **Apr 12, Sat:** Bishop to celebrate Mass at the Day of Renewal for CHARIS at The Cathedral, Norwich at 11:30.
- **Apr 13, Sun:** Bishop to celebrate Solemn Procession and Pontifical Mass (11:00) at The Cathedral, Norwich for Palm Sunday.

■ All future dates at:
www.rcdea.org.uk/bishop-peter-collins/bishops-diary/

Celebration of Re



Bishop Peter Collins with the Religious community of East Anglia at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist. Picture by Charlie Bohan-Hurst.

On 1 February, the Diocese of East Anglia gathered for a deeply significant moment of spiritual renewal and fellowship. The Mass for Religious, held at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich, brought together priests, brothers, and sisters from across the Diocese in a unique and poignant celebration of consecrated life. Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ This special event, part of the wider Jubilee Year of 2025, was an opportunity for the Religious of East Anglia to meet with their Bishop, Rt. Revd. Peter Collins, and reaffirm their commitment to their vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Although the universal Church will officially celebrate religious life during the Jubilee Year in October, Bishop Peter Collins chose to maintain the Diocese's tradition of marking the occasion near the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. In his homily, he expressed the importance of this gathering, acknowledging how infrequent it is for all Religious within the Diocese to come together. "The international celebration of consecrated life will within this Holy Year take place in October, but we thought it right to keep to our established norm in the Diocese to celebrate our day for our Religious communities close to the Feast of

the Presentation," he said.

The Diocese of East Anglia, like many others, faces challenges regarding the future of religious life. The number of Religious within the region has been steadily declining, with four Congregations withdrawing from the Diocese in the past five years. Many communities that once had three or four members are now reduced to two. This reality was acknowledged by both Bishop Peter and Fr Karol Porczak MS, the Episcopal Vicar for the Religious, who reported on the event. Despite this decline, hope remains steadfast. Bishop Peter spoke of ongoing discussions with three Religious Congregations in the hope that they might provide members to serve in East Anglia, demonstrating a commitment to sustaining religious life in the Diocese.

Fr Karol highlighted the significance of the occasion, noting that 11 priests and 22 sisters attended the Mass, representing nearly half of the Religious still present in East Anglia. "We need to face this situation with faith and cou-

rageous thought that God will provide solutions regardless of the conditions we face," he reflected. This sentiment resonated throughout the gathering, as the Religious present took the opportunity to encourage one another in their shared mission.

The Mass itself, presided over by Bishop Peter, was a solemn yet joyous occasion. The renewal of religious vows was particularly moving, as those present once again professed their dedication to the Gospel. The Bishop, in a moment of evident satisfaction, received their vows and expressed his gratitude for their lives of service. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for. The conviction of things not yet seen," he reminded them, emphasising the strength and perseverance required in consecrated life.

The celebration served as a spiritual reinforcement for those who have dedicated their lives to God's service. In a world where religious vocations are increasingly rare, the commitment of these men and women stands as a beacon of faith and dedication. Their presence in the Diocese is not only a testament to their own vocations but also a sign of hope for the wider Church in East Anglia.

While this Mass was a special moment for the Diocese, Bishop Peter also looked ahead to the international celebration of consecrated life in October. Unlike this gathering, which focused on the Religious themselves, the October celebrations will be



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Religious life



parish-centred, allowing the faithful across the Diocese to express their gratitude and appreciation for the Religious in their communities.

“In October, you will be encouraged to cel-

narthen, the Religious of East Anglia left with renewed strength, reminded of their integral role within the Church and the support they have from their Bishop and one another.

Fr Karol summed up the feeling of the day



brate within the context of local parishes so that the local Church in every place across the Diocese can play its part in rejoicing in your presence, your lives, and your example,” Bishop Peter explained. This approach highlights the importance of Religious life not only within the communities themselves but within the wider Church.

As the Mass concluded, there was a deep sense of gratitude among those gathered. Following a shared meal in the Cathedral

in his report: “We are grateful to Bishop Peter for this opportunity.” This simple yet profound statement encapsulates the significance of the event – a moment of unity, renewal, and faith amid the challenges of contemporary religious life.

As East Anglia’s Religious look to the future, they do so with a firm trust in God’s providence, confident in the hope that their presence and mission will continue to bear fruit in the years to come.



Simon Burrell and Anita Dowsing with Oblate Master Fr Gervase at Douai Abbey.

New Norwich Benedictine members

■ Simon Burrell and Anita Dowsing, long-time members of the Julian Chapter of Benedictine Oblates in Norwich, recently took a significant step in their spiritual journeys by becoming Oblate Novices of Douai Abbey during a retreat.

The Julian Chapter, affiliated with Douai Abbey, comprises members from various Christian traditions who strive to follow the Rule of St Benedict in their daily lives. Oblates are lay or clerical individuals who commit to living Benedictine values while remaining in the world, often visiting their affiliated monastery once or twice a year for retreats.

The Norwich group gathers monthly to reflect on Scripture, explore the Benedictine Rule, and pray together using the Divine

Office. Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month from 11:00 am to 2:30 pm at the Garden Room, Church of Our Lady and St Walstan, Costessey.

Simon and Anita had already been active participants in the Norwich group for some time. After attending retreats at Douai Abbey, they felt called to deepen their connection to the monastery through this formal commitment.

At Douai, Simon and Anita found a warm welcome and a sense of belonging in the broader Benedictine community. They appreciated the opportunity to pray, reflect, and share experiences with other oblates and the monks, including Fr Gervase, the oblate master.

Members are always welcome to join the Julian Chapter. For more information, contact p.brander@hotmail.co.uk.

Charismatic event with Bishop Peter Collins

■ The Catholic Charismatic family across the Diocese of East Anglia is warmly invited to a special gathering with Bishop Peter on Saturday, 12 April, at The Cathedral of St John the Baptist, Norwich.

This event, organised by Bishop Peter and the Charismatic Diocesan Service of Communion (CDSC) team, marks an important opportunity for renewal, prayer, and communion. Attendees will also have the opportunity to fulfil their Jubilee pilgrimage obligations by participating in the Creed and prayers for the intentions of the Holy Father.

Event Schedule

- 10:30 am – Adoration and Confession
- 11:30 am – Holy Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter, followed by Praise and Worship led by Filipino worship band ‘Singles for Christ’
- 12:45 pm – Lunch (please bring a packed lunch; tea and coffee will be available)
- 1:45 pm – Bishop Peter’s Address to all gathered
- 3:00 pm – Closing Prayer

This is a wonderful chance to come together in faith, receive spiritual nourishment, and deepen our connection as a charismatic community.

For further information or any enquiries, please contact:
 Email: renewaleastanglia@gmail.com
 Phone: Pam Smith – 07869 652115



We look forward to welcoming you on this special day of faith and fellowship.

Listening and Prayer Ministry meet with new Chaplain

■ **The Diocese of East Anglia Listening and Prayer Ministry offers compassionate, faith-based support to adults in need, providing trained Helpers and ongoing support. Marriage and Family Life Coordinator, Dr Antonia Braithwaite reports.**

The Diocese of East Anglia's Listening and Prayer Ministry was launched in the summer of 2022 and has since been providing free of charge support to people in need across the Diocese. Bishop Peter Collins recently appointed Fr Leo Marianu, parish priest at Our Lady Immaculate & St Etheldreda in Newmarket, as the ministry's chaplain. In January 2025, the team held a Retreat Day led by Fr Leo, focusing on team building and spiritual enrichment, which was attended by most members of the ministry.

The Listening and Prayer Ministry offers adults within the Diocese a confidential space to talk about their concerns with a trained Catholic Helper who shares their faith. The Helpers are highly skilled in listening and prayer, aiming to bring comfort, healing, and a deeper connection to Christ. Sessions also help individuals to clarify their difficulties and decide on any next steps they may wish to take. If appropriate, Helpers can signpost individuals to external services or resources within the Church.

Meetings are available either via Zoom or, where possible, in person, held in parish or religious house meeting rooms. Each session lasts up to an hour, and

individuals may attend up to six sessions, either weekly or with breaks in between, as agreed with their Helpers. Sessions always involve two Helpers – one focusing on listening and the other on prayer. Individuals are welcome to return for further support in the future.

Over the past two and a half years, the team has assisted people facing a wide range of spiritual, physical, social, emotional, and psychological challenges.

As part of their ongoing formation, team members have also received specialist training in bereavement care, delivered by Mr Simon Mustoe-Arthur, an expert in supporting those who have lost loved ones. Knowing how to respond sensitively to grief, what to say (and what not to say), and how to offer compassionate presence can be difficult. These additional training sessions have provided valuable insights and opportunities for team members to ask questions, further enhancing their ability to serve in this vital ministry.

If you would like to book a session with the Listening and Prayer Ministry fill in the booking form available at www.rcdea.org.uk/listening-and-prayer/

For all enquiries please contact Dr Antonia Braithwaite the Marriage and Family Life Coordinator on mflcoordinator@rcdea.org.uk.



The altar in Puerto Vallarta. Picture by Vicky Squirrell.

Community and Worship in Mexico

Vicky Squirrell, a parishioner from St Felix in Felixstowe, recently returned from a visit to Jalisco, Mexico, where she had the opportunity to experience the local Catholic community's approach to faith and worship.

■ During her time there, Vicky attended Mass in Puerto Vallarta and visited the Cathedral in Guadalajara. She was particularly struck by the strong and visible presence of the Jubilee 2025 celebrations, with clear reminders of this significant year throughout the churches. This sense of joy and dedication to the Jubilee was uplifting and inspiring to witness.

Despite Mexico being a predominantly Catholic country, Vicky noted that they, like parishes in England, face challenges in maintaining engagement and strengthening their faith communities. However, one striking difference was the way in which Mexican parishes actively respond to these challenges, particularly through their deep-rooted commitment to supporting local commu-

nities.

A significant example of this was seen during Sunday Mass, where part of the offertory included the presentation of food parcels. These parcels, containing basic essentials, were funded through donations made by parishioners as they arrived for Mass. It was moving to see as many as 30 parcels brought forward, reflecting a strong spirit of generosity and care for those in need. This practice not only provided practical support but also reinforced the communal aspect of faith, making charity and solidarity an integral part of the Mass itself.

Another remarkable aspect of parish life in Mexico was the way Communion and Confirmation preparation was incorporated into the Sunday Mass. This approach encouraged entire families to attend together, strengthening their shared faith experience. Although the young people sat together and were actively involved in the liturgy, the homily was specifically directed towards them in a way that also engaged and formed the wider congregation. This method of integrating faith formation within the Mass created a dynamic and inclusive atmosphere, fostering a strong sense of belonging and continuity in religious education.

Although Vicky's understanding of Spanish is still developing, she

was deeply moved to recognise the messages of Pope Francis being echoed through the prayers and homilies. This reinforced for her the universal nature of the Church - how, despite cultural and geographical differences, the core values and teachings remain the same across the world.

Reflecting on these experiences, Vicky expresses a hope that similar initiatives could be embraced in England. Strengthening local communities through acts of service, making religious education a more integrated and engaging part of parish life, and fostering a greater sense of unity with the global Church would be invaluable steps forward. By drawing inspiration from these practices, parishes in England could enhance their sense of mission, deepen their commitment to social outreach, and more visibly live out their faith in daily life.



Jubilee 2025 logo in Guadalajara Cathedral.



Members of the Listening and Prayer Ministry.

Holocaust memorial service

On Monday, 27 January, communities across the world came together to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, a solemn occasion dedicated to remembering the millions of lives lost during the Holocaust and other genocides.

■ This year's commemoration carried particular significance as it marked the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi concentration camp, and the 30th anniversary of the genocide in Bosnia.

In Norwich, a Civic Service was held at St Peter Mancroft Church, organised by the Lord Mayor. The event brought together representatives from Jewish and Christian communities, including Bishop Peter Collins. The service provided a time of reflection, prayer, and testimony, honouring the memory of those who suffered under the Nazi regime and other instances of genocide throughout history.

Students from Notre Dame High School in Norwich played a key role in the service, not only attending but also leading some of the prayers. Their participation highlighted the importance of educating younger generations about the past, ensuring that the lessons of history continue to be learned and that future generations remain vigilant against hatred and discrimination.

Following the service, the students were invited to take part in a discussion with a distinguished panel of speakers, including Naomi Gryn, the daughter of Rabbi Hugo Gryn, a survivor of Auschwitz concentration camp. The discussion provided an opportunity for the students to ask thought-provoking questions, including why Holocaust denial persists today. The speakers commended the students for their engagement and curiosity, emphasising the vital role young people play in preserving the truth and advocating for justice.

Reflecting on the event, Bishop Peter Collins spoke about the enduring significance of Holocaust Memorial Day.

"This year's Holocaust Memorial Day marked the eightieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the death camp where the Nazi regime murdered nearly one million Jews and at least another one hundred thousand others from various persecuted groups. Our gathering in Norwich was graced by the presentation of testimonies by survivors of Auschwitz. Such testimonies provide the most powerful reason for why the world must remember the horror that was perpetrated. Each of us has a solemn duty to ensure that there will be no repetition. Beyond the Holocaust, we were reminded that genocide has been perpetrated in many parts of



Students from Notre Dame High School in Norwich played a key role in the service.

the world across the decades since the end of the Second World War. With a clear and dedicated vigilance, we must be proactive in defence of human life and dignity in every state and circumstance."

The event in Norwich served as a poignant reminder of the atrocities of the past and the ongoing need for remembrance, education, and action. The participation of young people

offered a sense of hope and reassurance that future generations will continue to uphold the principles of truth, justice, and human dignity.

Holocaust Memorial Day is not only about remembering the past but also about shaping the future. As the world reflects on these tragic chapters in history, the call to challenge prejudice and promote unity remains as vital as ever.

St Alban's launches Jubilee Year of Hope

■ St Alban's Catholic High School in Ipswich marked the opening of the Jubilee Year of Hope on Friday, 24 January with a creative initiative called Words of Hope.

At St Alban's, over 900 entries from staff and students expressed their hopes and aspirations for the Jubilee Year. These contributions were displayed on large letters spelling out "HOPE", creating a striking visual representation of the school's collective vision. The event was coordinated by Head of Religious Education, Mr Jon Hicks, with support from the school chaplain and the Art Department.

Reflecting on the success of the event, Mr Hicks said, "It was a fantastic way to get the students involved with the opening of the

Jubilee in schools. It worked very well as this was the first time we have tried something like this. It was great seeing the students' reactions to events affecting the world and reflections on what they see as being important both on a local, national, and international level."

The day encouraged the school community to contemplate how hope can be brought to life through thoughts, words, and actions. This cross-community initiative served as a reminder of how the face of Christ can inspire individuals to work towards a brighter future, both within the school and beyond.

St Alban's has set a powerful example of engaging students and staff in a meaningful way to embrace the Jubilee Year, fostering a sense of unity and purpose through the shared message of hope.



Students at St Alban's with their sign of hope.

Creating a home altar for prayer & reflection

■ **Marriage and Family Life Coordinator, Dr Antonia Braithwaite, with thanks to Monica Underwood, highlights the benefits of creating a family home altar as a dedicated space for prayer, using liturgically coloured cloths, religious icons, candles, and flowers to deepen faith and engagement.**

Help us, O Loving Father, to make our family another Nazareth where love, peace and joy reign. Help us to stay together in joy and sorrow through family prayer.

Thus, Saint Teresa of Calcutta encourages us to deepen our prayer life, not just as individuals but as a family. But how do we create the space for family prayer, in the home as well as at mass?

Of course, we could pray anywhere, but one particularly helpful practice can be to create a family home altar – a beautifully arranged shelf or low table decorated to point us heavenward during family prayers.

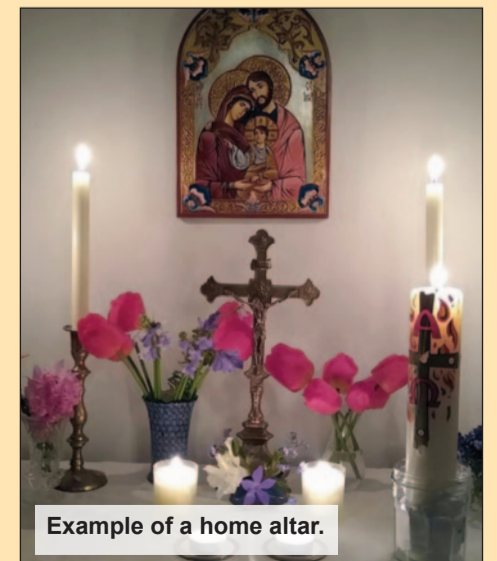
There are many creative ways to arrange your home altar or prayer table, but one way is to start by laying a cloth of the liturgically appropriate colour – purple for Advent or Lent, white for feasts, green for Ordinary Time, and red for Pentecost and martyrs' feast days. Doing so can help develop awareness of the Church year, and if you teach your children to notice these colours, they can proudly rearrange the altar themselves to match the changing seasons.

Next, a candle or two, a crucifix, a relig-

ious icon, statue, or picture, and perhaps a prayer card can be placed on the table. A small collection of devotional items can be kept in a basket under the table. These images can be rotated, with just a few on display at any one time, so that the mind is uplifted rather than cluttered during family prayer. A vase of fresh flowers completes the scene.

Children in particular love being part of making a family home altar, but adults too can benefit from the rootedness of a physical prayer spot in the home.

Help us, O Holy Father, to make our families one heart, full of love, in the Heart of Jesus through Mary.



Example of a home altar.

Secular Franciscans look ahead to a busy year

The Secular Franciscans in Norwich have enjoyed a season of activity and celebration, marked by significant events and a spirit of generosity.

■ A notable highlight was the acceptance of two new Candidates, Audrey Keedwell and Felix Chevite, who have completed their period of Enquiry. During a small ceremony on 1 December 2024, held in the side chapel of St George's Church, Sprowston Road, the fraternity welcomed them to continue their journey of formation. Family members joined in this special occasion, which concluded with a joyful gathering featuring tea and cakes.

On 5 January 2025, the fraternity celebrated the Feast of the Epiphany at their regular meeting. The event began with refreshments and a Secret Santa gift exchange among members. True to the Franciscan ethos, gifts were also collected for those experiencing homelessness, reflecting the fraternity's commitment to supporting the less fortunate. The meeting featured a lively discussion on the

Church and parish life in contemporary times, fostering a spirit of dialogue and reflection.

Looking to the year ahead, the fraternity is encouraged by growing interest in its mission. Two new attendees have expressed their desire to become official Enquirers, with at least two others showing serious interest in joining. This growth underscores the continued relevance of St Francis's vision, inspiring care for the planet, one another, and those in need.

The Friends of St Francis, a group for those intrigued by the Franciscan way of life but not ready to commit to the profession, host monthly meetings for anyone interested.

For more information about the fraternity or upcoming events contact:

Paula - 07864 929573

Anne - 07867 533168

The Secular Franciscans in Norwich remain committed to embodying the spirit of St Francis, fostering community, and extending care to those in need.



Norwich Pax Et Bonum Secular Franciscans.



DIOCESE OF EAST ANGLIA



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Only £3.50

Father Simon Davies new Priest at Our Lady and St Joseph's

The parish community of Our Lady and St Joseph's in Sheringham & Cromer warmly welcomed Bishop Peter Collins on 3 February for the formal induction of their new Parish Priest, Father Simon Davies.

■ The event marked a significant moment in the life of the parish, coinciding with the Catholic Church's Jubilee Year, which carries the theme "Pilgrims of Hope." Parishioners are looking forward to this new chapter with great enthusiasm.

Father Simon assumed his new role on 18th January and has been settling in following a period of time in Ottawa, Canada, where he was studying Canon Law. His background within the Diocese of East Anglia is extensive; since his ordination in 2019, he has served as Assistant Priest at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, worked as a school chaplain in Norwich, and provided end-of-life pastoral care at the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital during the pandemic. He also plays a vital role in the Diocese's judicial office.

With a keen interest in local history, architecture, and travel, Father Simon is already planning a series of talks for parishioners as well as retreats for liturgical ministers, initiatives that have been warmly welcomed by the community.

Speaking about his appointment, Father Simon expressed both hope and commitment to the parish, saying:

"Our parish has had a hard time with priests moving so regularly around our dio-

cese, but we all hope now for some stability and progress in both developing and nourishing the parish as a Christian family, as well as maintaining our beautiful church buildings, and making sure that the wider local community knows and feels that the Catholic parish is an active part of local life. Our parish is large – from Holt to Trimmingham! – and I am looking forward to parish ministry for people with different personal circumstances from different places."

The service was enriched by a special musical contribution from Daniel Justin, the former Director of Music for the Catholic Diocese of East Anglia, who composed a glorious antiphon for the occasion. The choir, under the direction of Paul Henriksen, sang beautifully. Daniel, now Director of Music at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, Australia, added an international dimension to the celebration.

Behind the scenes, many parishioners dedicated their time and effort to ensure the smooth running of the event, with those involved in church ministry working diligently to support the occasion. The parish's social committee also upheld tradition by providing a generous spread for

those in attendance.

Friends, family, and clergy who have supported Father Simon throughout his ministry joined the parishioners in celebrating this important milestone. The service was both solemn and joyous, and the parish community eagerly looks forward to the future under Father Simon's guidance.

During the service, Bishop Peter also took the opportunity to express gratitude to Father Trindade Monteiro for his dedicated service to the parish before moving to Sacred Heart Parish in St Ives earlier in January.

With this new beginning, Our Lady and St Joseph's embarks on a journey of faith, hope, and community, united in the spirit of the Jubilee Year.



Fr Simon Davies at Our Lady and St Joseph's.



news in brief

On Friday, 7 February, as part of his Parish Visitation to King's Lynn Parish, Bishop Peter visited Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

■ The Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) is one of seven RAAC concrete hospitals facing serious structural safety concerns. It is believed to be the most "propped" hospital in the country, with thousands of supports in place to prevent structural collapse. Opened in 1980, the 500+ bed facility is long overdue for replacement, with the latest projections estimating a new hospital will be completed by 2032.

During his visit, Bishop Peter toured the newly opened "Peddar's Way" unit, which provides five specially designed hospice-style beds for end-of-life care. This facility allows patients to receive care in a more private and peaceful setting, away from the busy hospital environment, enabling families to spend valuable time together. Bishop Peter took a keen interest in how staff are supported in this emotionally and mentally demanding work.

He also met with Chief Executive Alice Webster and spoke with the Chaplaincy team about their vital work in the hospital.

Bishop Peter was accompanied on his visit by Fr Gordon Adam (King's Lynn Assistant Parish Priest and Catholic Chaplain to the QEH), Rev Lee Gilbert (Head of Spiritual Care at the QEH), and Andrew Wordsworth, a Catholic lay volunteer with the Chaplaincy.



The beauty of Gregorian Chant

■ The Diocese of East Anglia is pleased to invite all those with an interest in sacred music to two enlightening talks on Gregorian Chant and its Place in the Liturgy Today, led by Diocesan Director of Music, David Grealy.

These talks will take place at 7pm on Tuesday 25 March and Tuesday 1 April in the Narthex Hall at St John's Cathedral, Norwich, and will each last approximately one hour.

Gregorian Chant, often described as the *soul of the Church's musical tradition*, has been an integral part of Catholic worship for over a millennium. Rooted in scripture and imbued with a profound sense of prayerfulness, it continues to inspire musicians and composers around the world. However, its role in contemporary liturgy varies widely, and for many Catholics, this rich heritage remains unfamiliar.

"The Church's treasury of Gregorian Chant has inspired composers and musicians for centuries," says David Grealy. "Gregorian Chant has

always featured prominently in the liturgy at St John's Cathedral, but I am conscious that this is not the case in every parish, and that many Catholics are less familiar with this music. I hope this will be an opportunity for those interested in liturgy and music to learn about chant and its influence on the vernacular church music of today."

In keeping with the Second Vatican Council's call for the 'full and active participation' of the faithful in the liturgy, attendees will be encouraged to join in singing some of the beautiful chants that have shaped Catholic worship through the ages. However, those who simply wish to listen and reflect are equally welcome.

There is no admission charge for these sessions, but donations to support the music ministry at St John's Cathedral will be gratefully received.

Whether you are a musician, a member of a parish choir, or simply someone who wishes to deepen their understanding of the Church's musical heritage, these talks promise to be both informative and spiritually enriching.

Gregorian Chant

An introduction



with David Grealy
Director of Music
St John's Cathedral
Norwich

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Join the Diocesan Choir for Two Special Liturgical Celebrations

The Diocesan Choir is once again extending an invitation to singers from across the Diocese to take part in two significant liturgical celebrations this spring.

■ These events offer a wonderful opportunity for individuals and parish choirs to come together in joyful song, enriching the solemnity and beauty of these special Masses.

The first occasion is the Chrism Mass, which will take place at 11:30am on Tuesday, 15 April, at St John's Cathedral, Norwich. This deeply moving liturgy, presided over by the Bishop, is a highlight of the diocesan calendar, bringing together clergy, religious, and laity from across East Anglia. The Mass includes the blessing of the Holy Oils used in the sacraments throughout the year and the renewal of priestly promises, making it a truly special occasion for all who attend.

The second opportunity to sing with the Diocesan Choir will be at the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Walsingham on Monday, 5 May. Pilgrims will gather at England's National Shrine to Our Lady for a day of prayer, reflection, and worship in one of the most cherished traditions of our Diocese. Singing with the Diocesan Choir at this pilgrimage allows participants to help lead the congregation in praising God in this historic place of devotion.

The music for both events will be largely in keeping with last year's repertoire, ensuring that many singers will find the selections familiar. Rehearsals will take place on the day of each celebration, and music can

be sent out in advance to those who wish to prepare beforehand.

Singers, whether individuals or part of a parish choir, are warmly encouraged to take part. Those interested in joining for either or both occasions should contact the Diocesan Director of Music, David Grealy, at david.grealy@rcdea.org.uk for further details.

Looking further ahead, as part of the Diocese's participation in the 2025 Holy Year celebrations, a special Jubilee for Choirs event will be held at St John's Cathedral on Saturday, 22 November. This joyful gathering will mark the feasts of St Cecilia, patron saint of musicians, and Christ the King, both of which fall within the same week-

end.

Parish choirs from across the Diocese will be invited to take part in this unique celebration, which will be a wonderful opportunity for musicians to come together in a spirit of unity and thanksgiving. Full details of the event, including how choirs can register, will be announced in the summer.

Music plays a vital role in the worship of the Church, lifting hearts and minds to God, and these occasions offer a wonderful way to share in the musical life of the Diocese. Whether you are a seasoned chorister or new to choral singing, your voice is welcome - come and be part of something truly uplifting!



David Grealy, Diocesan Director of Music.

Picture gallery from parishes around the Diocese

■ On 4 February 2025, St John Fisher Catholic High School had the honour of welcoming Bishop Peter Collins, for a special visit. The day was marked by a beautiful Mass celebrated in the school chapel by Bishop Peter alongside Fr Karol Porczak. During the service, Bishop Peter commissioned the newly trained Caritas Ambassadors from St John Fisher and St Thomas More Primary School, blessing each ambassador individually and presenting them with official diocesan Caritas certificates. David Livesey, the Diocesan Coordinator for Caritas East Anglia, and Dr Andy Stone, Diocesan Director of Schools' Service, were also present for this momentous occasion.

The Bishop blessed the school's new Stations of the Cross, a stunning installation crafted by Mrs Goodfellow and Mr Griffin and approved by the Chaplaincy Ambassadors. These Stations will now serve as a focal point for prayer and reflection, especially as the school community prepares for Lent.

Bishop Peter Collins' visit was a deeply spiritual and memorable occasion, strengthening the school community's faith and commitment to Catholic social teaching.



■ Bishop Peter conducted his official Visitation of the parish of King's Lynn from Friday 7 to Sunday 9 February.

In the picture he is with some of the altar-servers after Mass at Holy Family Church, Gaywood on Sunday 9.

On the Friday morning he celebrated Mass with St. Martha's Primary School and then met the children, staff and governors. Friday afternoon he visited Queen Elizabeth Hospital and met the CEO and chaplaincy team and was shown the new palliative care unit.

On Saturday he celebrated Mass at Holy Family Church and hosted the Caritas East Anglia Deanery Festival.

He celebrated and preached at all of the weekend Masses and concluded by attending Vespers and Benediction in Our Lady's Church where he had the opportunity of meeting the candidates for Confirmation.

■ The Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich was the setting for a special Jubilee Mass for all deacons, including retired deacons and their families, on 22 February 2025. The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Peter Collins, who led the congregation in giving thanks for the vital ministry of the permanent diaconate.

The occasion brought together deacons from across the diocese, along with their wives and families, in a celebration of service and dedication. In his homily, Bishop Peter expressed deep gratitude to all deacons, both active and retired, acknowledging their invaluable role in the life of the Church.

