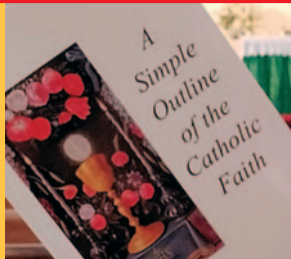




500 devotees mark 100th Peñafrañca celebration – page 3



Ipswich parish launches guide to the Catholic faith – page 5



Cambridge Professor John is ordained as a priest – page 6



Bishop Peter Collins with pupils and school banners at the Annual Schools Mass. Picture by Joshua Clovis.

700 attend Schools Mass celebration

Almost 700 pupils, representing each of the 28 diocesan schools, gathered together at St John's Cathedral in Norwich for the Annual Schools Mass on Friday September 27. Andy Stone and Joshua Clovis report.

■ It was a wonderful occasion and a delight to see so many young people celebrating their faith and enjoying the special sense of being part of God's family here in the Diocese of East Anglia during the celebration of Mass presided over by Bishop Peter Collins.

This year, the Mass was organised by the schools of the Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Multi-Academy Trust on behalf of all the schools across the diocese. Several of the primary schools in the Trust have been participating in the

Schools Singing Programme, a national venture to encourage and facilitate high quality singing in schools making use of professional singing tutors. Over 100 pupils from St Mary's and St Pancras schools in Ipswich, St Felix school in Haverhill and St Laurence Primary School in Cambridge formed the choir for the Mass and led the singing.

The Schools Singing Programme is going from strength to strength in our diocese and the sessions are delivered weekly by professional singing tutor Naomi McLeod Jones who travels to each of the four schools every week to teach the pupils.

Diocesan Director of Music, David Grealy, oversees the programme and is seeking to expand it to other schools across the diocese, including secondary schools, in the coming year. "It was wonderful to see and hear so many pupils in full voice at the cathedral" said David.

"Singing is not only good for musical development; it encourages literacy and

allows children to gain confidence by giving them the opportunity to perform in public. Naomi has been doing fantastic work in all four schools and we have seen the fruits of that in today's Mass."

The Mass this year fell on the feast day of St Vincent de Paul. Many parishioners will be aware of the work of the St Vincent de Paul Society in their parishes, helping those in need for many years. Most of our primary schools run 'mini-Vinnies' groups which carry out fundraising projects and put their understanding of Catholic Social Teaching into practice and our secondary age pupils are also very involved in practical initiatives to tackle poverty, disadvantage and injustice.

With the help of the national St Vincent de Paul Society we were able to produce a beautifully illustrated prayer card which each member of the congregation received and copies of which were produced for every pupil and every

■ story continued on page two.

Clergy moves are announced

■ A number of new clergy appointments by Bishop Peter Collins across the Diocese of East Anglia have just been announced, including four new Deans.

Fr John Warrington has been appointed as the new Dean of Bury St Edmunds (St Edmund), Rev Canon Eugene Harkness as Dean of Cambridge (St Andrew), Fr Luke Goymour as Dean of Ipswich (St Edward) and Rev Canon Mark Hackeson as Dean of King's Lynn (St Wilfrid). Fr Anthony Nwankwo has also been reappointed as Dean of Great Yarmouth (St Peter).

Fr Sean Connolly has been appointed as the Director of Ongoing Formation of Clergy. Bishop Peter said: "I am most grateful to Fr Sean for agreeing to take on this important task."

Fr Christopher Smith has been appointed as Vocations Director and Fr Peter Wynnanski has been appointed as Assistant Vocations Director, this being a natural extension of his other roles, said Bishop Peter.

Fr Andrew Eburne will take on the role of Director of the Permanent Diaconate, who, assisted by Deacons John Bell and Martin L'Estrange, will oversee the formation and nurturing of Permanent Deacons throughout the Diocese.

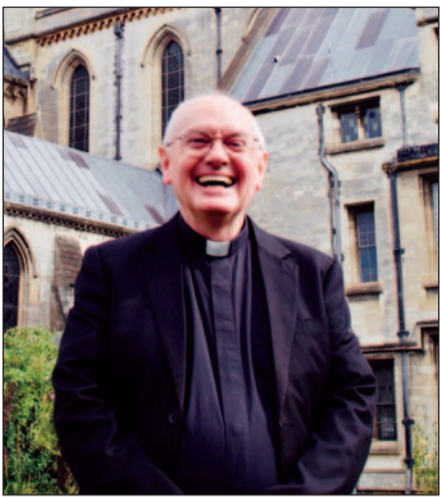
Fr Leonard Michael has accepted two appointments. As Chaplain to the Listening and Prayer Ministry Team, and as a member of the Diocesan Commission Marriage and Family life. "Fr Leo will no doubt offer greatly appreciated support to these two areas of diocesan life," said Bishop Peter.

Fr Simon Davies has been placed temporarily in St Laurence's, Cambridge, to provide pastoral care, until such time that longer-term appointments are made possible.

Fr Adam Sowa MS, Parish Priest of St Peter and All Soul's Peterborough, will depart the Diocese to take up an appointment in a La Salette Parish in the Diocese of Brentwood in early October, at the request of his provincial superior who is based in Poland. Fr Adam has served as Parish Priest in Peterborough for the last 10 years and has been the superior of the community there.

Bishop Peter said: "I take this opportunity to thank Fr Adam for his sterling service to parish and diocese. Particular mention should be made of Fr Adam's immense contribution to the fundraising effort that still continues for the large-scale structural repairs of the parish church that will soon commence. On behalf of the Diocese, I offer Fr Adam the assurance of our prayers as he engages with the next phase of his pastoral service."

Fr Karol Porczak MS will be appointed as Parish Priest of St Peter and All Soul's and also assumes responsibility as community superior.



Fr Michael's fond farewell to Cathedral

■ Fr Michael Smith (pictured above by Andrea Cope) has bade a fond farewell to St John Cathedral in Norwich and its staff and parishioners after three years as Assistant Priest.

Fr Michael is moving to Felixstowe as Parish Priest of St Felix.

Cathedral Dean, Fr Alan Hodgson, said: "Fr Michael has been at the cathedral for three years and has been very involved with hospital chaplaincy work and care for people who are nearing the end of life. He has also been involved in adult catechism (RCIA) and generally contributing to life in our community with his positive demeanour.

"He is a good artist and has sketched nature scenes of and around Norfolk as well as some very good scenes of our cathedral. At a recent parish function he sold some of his work and raised over £1000 for the cathedral building fund. His energy and enthusiasm will be missed."

Around 150 people attended his farewell party on Sunday September 25, which was catered for by the parish and managed by lead catechist Jo Graham alongside volunteers from the Narthex restaurant. It included a cake which incorporated one of his sketches in the icing decoration.

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Articles and photographs for the next edition are very welcome and should be sent to the editor, ideally via email, by Monday November 25.

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Caritas Festival is set for Costessey

■ St Walstan Church, Costessey will host the Norwich Deanery Caritas Festival for the Norwich Deanery on Saturday November 30, with a Mass led by Bishop Peter Collins.

Caritas Festivals celebrate the many ways in which the Catholic community puts its faith into action through social outreach, encouraging new volunteers to get involved with local organisations that help meet the needs of their communities. Accordingly, after Mass, there will be refreshments and opportunities to learn more about the organisations active in the local area, until the Festival closes with prayer and reflection at 12 noon.

Participants at previous Festivals have said:

"Good to have involvement of secular groups and those of other faiths – this must continue!"

"We were surprised at how many people had not heard of our organisation, so this was a good opportunity to address that."

"The good point about the Festival is that



the attendees were mostly from the local parishes and people who pray and understand that prayers are an important part of our Christian faith. We believe that God answers prayers."

"It was also good to share with other charities, learn about their work and how we all work together for the less privileged."

The local activities covered by the organisations present on November 30 at Costessey will range across befriending the lonely, bereavement support, homelessness, mentorship for prisoners, raising awareness about modern slavery, settling migrants and refugees into their new lives, support for seafarers, and work experience

for the unemployed. Organisations, such as CAFOD, which address the needs of those in other countries, will also be well represented, including St Walstan's twin parish of St Joseph's, Taken in Cambodia.

It is also hoped that local young people concerned about social issues will advocate at the Festival for a particular social action project. Their participation could serve as preparation for their entry in the Columbans Schools Competition – Jubilee: Pilgrims of Hope, where young people are invited to highlight one community or group bringing hope in the world today. This might be a group they are part of or one that inspires them. The community or group chosen should act in some way for the common good, responding to the Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor (Laudato Si' #49).

Event details: St Walstan Church, Townhouse Road, Costessey will host the Norwich Deanery Caritas Festival on Saturday November 30, starting at 9:30am with Mass.

700 at Schools Mass

■ story continued from front page.

member of staff in our diocesan schools. In addition, the Schools Service presented each school with the gift of a wooden icon of St Vincent de Paul to take back to their school with them.

During his homily, Bishop Peter spoke to the students in attendance about St Vincent de Paul and the St Vincent de Paul Society, the great work they do and how the society came to be. After this, he addressed the students directly, saying: "Now, I'm going to ask you to commit to something. I am speaking to you as representatives of your schools. We couldn't gather all of you together, so you are here to represent your school.

"When you go back to your schools, will you take back a message from me to your fellow pupils? I want you to ask them, as I am asking you now: Will you play your part in being servants of the Lord, wherever you are, by following the example of St Vincent and doing all that you can to attend to the needs of the poor? First of all, will you do

Bishop Peter Collins speaking to pupils at the Annual Schools Mass. Pictures by Joshua Clovis. See a full picture gallery at: flickr.com/photos/diocesefeastanglia/



that yourselves? Then afterwards, when you return to your school, will you ask your fellow pupils on my behalf: Will they become servants of the poor? Will you do that?" The students responded in

unison with a loud "Yes."

Bishop Peter finished, saying: "Don't forget your homework: learn as much as you can about the life and ministry of St Vincent de Paul."

It was a truly wonderful celebration and our thanks to the Our Lady of Walsingham Trust schools for their support. Trust CEO, Flavio Vettese, said: "The singing programme delivered by David and Naomi has allowed children from across our Trust schools to gain valuable skills and experiences. The quality of the singing and the joy that the programme has delivered is immeasurable. We are also delighted that Our Lady of Walsingham Catholic Trust has played a significant part in organising this year's Schools Mass".



Pictured are the Peñafrancia celebrations in Hoveton and on the Norfolk Broads. Pictures by Tribu Bicolandia.

Devotees mark 100th Peñafrancia celebration

A record 500 devotees attended the 14th annual pilgrimage and fluvial procession for the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, based at St Helen's Church in Hoveton, Norfolk, on Sunday September 22. Arlaine Amoyo-Brion reports.

Originally a devotion from Bicol, Philippines, this celebration has taken root in the Diocese of East Anglia, drawing devotees from across the UK. Participants travel from Norwich, Lincoln, Louth, Boston, Bury St Edmunds, King's Lynn, Cambridge, Colchester, and even as far as London, Hexham, and Newport in South Wales.

This event has evolved into an inclusive gathering, uniting people from diverse backgrounds in their deep devotion to Mother Mary, affectionately known as "Ina."

This year's grand celebration marked the largest attendance yet, with around 500 pilgrims, making it especially significant as it coincided with the 100th

anniversary of the Canonical Coronation of Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Bicol. The theme "Se Siempre La Reina" (Always Be a Queen)—"Pamanang Banal" (Divine Inheritance), "Padanayon" (Nurture), "Palakupon" (Preserve), and "Atamanon" (Share)—emphasised the enduring devotion to Our Lady.

Echoing the traditions of Bicol, the festivities began with a nine-week novena held by various communities and culminated in a vibrant day of celebration featuring a fluvial procession to Wroxham Broad, accompanied by the recitation of the rosary.

This was followed by a land procession and a Holy Eucharist celebration officiated by Fr Jaylord Magpuyo from Sacred Heart Parish, Dereham, and Fr Peter Raj, the parish priest at St Helen's Church, assisted by Dcn Bong Nidea from Hexham in Northumberland.

A highlight of this historic event was the unveiling and enshrinement of Our Lady of Peñafrancia and the establishment of St Michael's Chapel within St Helen's Church. The beloved image, brought from Bicol specifically for this occasion, was paraded inside the church before being placed in the shrine.

Fr Jaylord, alongside Dcn Bong, blessed

the satellite shrine prior to its unveiling, while flowers were presented by representatives from the nine communities that participated in the novena. Devotees gathered to witness this momentous occasion, making it truly unforgettable.

A century ago, the Bicolanos in the Philippines were blessed with the canonical coronation of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. This year, the Diocese of East Anglia was blessed with a new satellite shrine dedicated to our loving Mother. This significant event not only honours Our Lady but also strengthens our spiritual connection through the Holy Spirit, deepening our relationship with Mother Mary and her Son, Jesus Christ, and creating a lasting legacy of faith.

This legacy is a divine inheritance (pamanang banal)—one that will continually be nurtured (padanayon), preserved (palakupon), and shared (atamanon) with all our brothers and sisters in Christ. It is a treasure to be cherished by every pilgrim who visits Our Lady of Peñafrancia at St Helen's Church, both now and for generations to come.

Mary, our Mother, our Ina, forever our Queen. Se Siempre La Reina!

Viva la Virgen!

Viva El Divino Rostro!

news in brief

Invite to a Day of Renewal

St Edmund's Church in Bury St Edmunds will host a "Day of Renewal" on November 9, with guest speaker Fr Paschal Uche, offering a chance to pause, reflect, and deepen your relationship with God. All are welcome to attend.

Fr Paschal was ordained in 2020 in Brentwood Cathedral. Born in Stratford, East London. His faith journey took him via the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service, to World Youth Day 2008 in Sydney and on to welcome Pope Benedict on the steps of Westminster Cathedral where he shared that he was discerning a vocation to priesthood. He has an excitement for the priesthood, the intimacy with God in the celebration of Mass and the joy that flows into all things from that intimacy. We hope you will join us to share in Fr Paschal's enthusiasm and passion for God.

Fr Paschal will be speaking on the theme of "Claiming Your Inheritance":

The day will start in the crypt at 10am with tea and coffee. There will be praise and worship, inspiring talks, Mass (celebrated at midday), adoration and the opportunity to receive reconciliation and prayer ministry.

Please bring a packed lunch. Tea and Coffee will be available.

Details: November 9, from 10am to 4.30pm, at St Edmund's Church, 21 Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1QG

For more details, ring Pam Smith: 07869 652115 or email: renewaleastanglia@gmail.com

Roses are blessed and handed out

St Pancras parish followed the Dominican custom of blessing roses and distributing them to parishioners at the end of Mass on October 7, the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, reports Fr Joseph Welch.

"As a beautiful vase full of white, red, and yellow roses – representing the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious mysteries of the rosary – was blessed, parishioners gave thanks to Our Lady for all the many blessings she has showered upon them through the rosary. During the sermon at Mass it was explained that the blessing of roses constitutes, like so many other rites and ceremonies in the Church, a sacramental.

"By blessing the objects of devotion, in this case roses, the objects are separated from the profane world and are dedicated to God and set apart for a holy purpose.

"Today's blessing asked Almighty God to bless the sick in those houses to which the roses were then taken, and that all 'powers of evil may flee in fear and terror' from all those homes to which a blessed rose was then taken.

"Following the Blessing of Roses, the congregation retired to the Lady Chapel to recite the daily rosary and sing the Salve Regina in honour of the feast, and the parish priest took blessed roses to give to each of the sick and housebound parishioners to whom he took Holy Communion later that day."



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Augustinians return to Shrine

■ The Catholic National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady, has announced the arrival in Walsingham of three young Augustinian Friars from the Province of Nigeria, for service at the Shrine.

The National Shrine of Our Lady, at Walsingham, has welcomed Fr Sunday Ikpe OSA [Prior], Fr Charles Chimaobi OSA, and Fr Eric Taru OSA, who will each be ministering at the Shrine and to pilgrims as members of the Shrine Team from October.

After their arrival in mid-September the Friars experienced a short period of orientation, and then began an extended programme of induction into the life, mission, and dynamics of the National Shrine of Our Lady. The Friars will minister under the supervision of the Shrine's Rector, Rev Dr Robert Billing.

In advance of the forthcoming Jubilee year, this project is a significant moment in the life and history of the National Shrine of Our Lady, at Walsingham. The famous Priory [often known today as 'the Abbey'], and famed Marian Shrine, which housed the original replica Holy House of Nazareth, was administered by Augustinian Canons from 1153 all the way up to the medieval Shrine's dismantling, and the Priory's subsequent destruction in 1538, at the hands of Henry VIII's commissioners.

Fr Billing commented upon the arrival of the Friars to the Shrine: "After much hard work behind the scenes and the support of



Pictured, from the left, are: Fr Eric Taru OSA, Fr Sunday Ikpe OSA (prior) and Fr Charles Chimaobi OSA.

the local Bishop, I am delighted that the Nigerian Province of the Augustinian Order has responded so generously to my request and that three young Friars will soon be among us for service at the Shrine in Walsingham.

"Their arrival, the establishment of a new Priory in service of the Shrine, and their ministry here not only promises so much for the future mission of the Shrine but also pays rich tribute to the Augustinian tradition of Canons that faithfully served the Shrine

from the 12th century, until the Shrine was tragically dismantled, and the priory destroyed, at the time of the English Reformation.

Fr Billing concluded: "We give thanks to Almighty God, Our Lady of Walsingham, and Saint Augustine of Hippo that we can rejoice in the restoration of the spirituality and service of the Augustinian Order to our restored and vibrant holy Shrine and place of pilgrimage today."

Overcome challenges through faith

Life often presents challenges that expose our weaknesses and limitations. Whether physical, emotional, or mental. We all have shortcoming that can seem insurmountable says Fr Alvan Ibeh, in his regular Voice of Hope column.



■ Dear friends as we gradually come to the end of this year, we give thanks to God for bringing us thus far. In the next couple of weeks, the 2024 flight will be landing. I pray that we all will land safely and that none of us will be missing when we will be boarding the next flight - flight 2025. Amen.

Life often presents challenges that expose our weaknesses and limitations. Whether physical, emotional, or mental, we all have shortcoming that can seem

insurmountable.

However, scripture teaches that our limitations should never prevent us from fulfilling God's purpose for our lives. God has a perfect plan and purpose for each of us, "I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". (Jer 29:11).

So, we shouldn't allow any shortcomings or limitations of ours to stop us from fulfilling our God-given dreams and aspirations. Even in the remaining part of this year, you still have the opportunity to achieve that which you set out to achieve at the beginning of this year, relying not on your strength and not looking at your shortcomings and limitations, but looking up to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Heb 12:2), in whose strength you can do all things (Philippians 4:13)

The Bible is full of examples of individuals who overcame their shortcomings, not through their own strength, but by relying on God's grace, power, and wisdom. We will look at our brother St Paul in this article and I will be writing more on this topic in my next book- "A fountain of hope, book 2", which should be out by God's grace in January 2025.

One of the most profound scriptures

that highlights the power of God's grace in our weakness is found in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

Here, the Apostle Paul, after pleading with God to remove a "thorn in the flesh," is told: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Paul responds by declaring: "Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then I am strong."

In this passage, we learn that our weaknesses are not a barrier to God's word but an opportunity for His power to be revealed. Rather than allowing our limitations to paralyze us, we can lean on God's grace, knowing that His strength is made perfect in our inadequacies. St Paul's thorn, though a limitation, became a means for God's power to be displayed.

Is there anything stopping you? No matter what you think it might be, we are called to trust God, to rely on His strength, and to step out in faith, knowing that He can do immeasurably more through us than we can imagine, even in the midst of our weaknesses.

So, I say to you: "Don't let anything stop you. Keep going, and by God's grace and strength, you will reach your expected end, Amen. God bless you."



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Ipswich parish launches faith guide

■ A booklet introducing converts to the Catholic faith, produced by St Pancras Parish in Ipswich, has quickly gained popularity and is now in its second printing, with interest growing beyond the parish community.

Originally written as a programme of instruction for converts, *A Simple Outline of the Catholic Faith* has proved popular beyond expectations. Following its first printing in September 2023, 500 copies have been distributed to interested readers in Ipswich and further afield. Available free of charge to parishioners at St Pancras (although contributions towards the cost of printing have been invited), the slim booklet has been taken up eagerly by Mass-goers, visitors, and even by some members of the clergy.

This local, parish-based initiative had no plan beyond providing copies for parishioners. Yet enquiries have since come from outside the parish, with requests for mailed copies—these, however, incur a charge. The team behind the booklet has been “taken aback” by the interest it has garnered, even beyond the parish community.



Parishioners have described the booklet as “instructive” and “packed with detail”, with many noting that they “learnt a lot”. These insights have contributed to its growing demand. Made up of twenty short chapters covering such topics as ‘Creation and the Angels’, ‘Grace and the Sacraments’, ‘The Life of Virtue’, and ‘The Four Last Things’, the booklet introduces readers to the basics of our religion through catechetical instruction as well as quotations from the Scriptures, the Fathers of the Church, and the saints.

Each two-page chapter includes a ‘Did you know?’ fact. The booklet also contains a collection of basic and familiar prayers for Catholics to learn by heart, such as the Apostles’ Creed, the Hail, Holy Queen, an Act of Contrition, and Prayers for the Souls in Purgatory. The final two pages gather a glossary of Catholic words and terms that help introduce newcomers to various Catholic ideas and practices. Many readers have found that it helps them “learn more about the faith” and understand “what it means to be cate-

chised”.

A Simple Outline of the Catholic Faith has been so successful that it is now enjoying a second print run just twelve months after its launch.

If you’re interested in receiving a mailed copy of the booklet, send your enquiries to: parishpriest@stpancraschurch.org.uk

Pictured above: Parish catechist, Lisa de Pasquale, inspects the latest edition of *A Simple Outline of the Catholic Faith*. Picture credit: Rose Pattern

news in brief

Sandra’s service is honoured

■ On Sunday September 22, during the morning Mass at St Anthony of Padua in Fakenham, Sandra Drinkwater was honoured with the Diocesan Medal for her remarkable 24 years of dedicated service to the parish by outgoing parish priest Fr Andrew Neate. This recognition was awarded to her in the presence of the parish community, celebrating her invaluable contributions.

Over the course of nearly two and a half decades, Sandra has served under five different Parish Priests, consistently showing dedication in her role as Sacristan. Her efforts in looking after the sacristy, ensuring the ordering of essential church supplies, and preparing the church daily for Mass and other services throughout the year have been greatly appreciated. She has also been an invaluable support for visiting priests whenever the Parish Priest was away.

In addition to her role as Sacristan, Sandra has taken on various administrative responsibilities within the parish. She has prepared the weekly newsletter, maintained the noticeboards, and coordinated essential church rotas for Readers, counters, flower arrangers, and other key roles.

Sandra’s deep knowledge of the parish and its members has also made her a trusted point of contact, assisting the Parish Priest in addressing important pastoral concerns in a parish that spans over 250 square miles.

The awarding of the Diocesan Medal is a fitting tribute to Sandra’s years of faithful service, reflecting her commitment, dedication, and deep care for the St Anthony of Padua parish community.



Book published

■ A member of the St John the Baptist Cathedral community and a volunteer, Dr Virginia Minogue, has recently published a book about involving patients and the community in health and medical research. The book is called ‘Meaningful and Safe: The ethics and ethical implications of Patient and Public Involvement in health and medical research’. ethicspress.com/products/meaningful-and-safe

Including patients and the community in setting priorities for research and in the design and implementation of research has been shown to make a huge difference in positive outcomes and patient experience.



Ministries for deacons

A quartet of permanent deacons in formation for the Diocese of East Anglia received key ministries from Bishop Peter Collins at a Mass at St John’s Cathedral in Norwich on Saturday October 12.

■ The Mass marked an important stage in the progress of the four men towards being ordained as permanent deacons for the Diocese.

Paul Gilbert from Thetford (third from the left) and Richard Rahim (second from the left) from St Luke’s in Peterborough were instituted as Readers by Bishop Peter.

Bishop Peter also conferred the ministry of Acolyte on Jonathan Callejo (third from the right) from the Cathedral parish and Jonathan Wright (second from the

right) from Our Lady and the English Martyrs in Cambridge.

All four are studying at St Mary’s University Twickenham as part of their formation to become permanent deacons.

Deacons John Bell and Martin L’Estrange are pictured and are part of the formation team.

The celebration of the conferral of these ministries took place as part of the annual diocesan gathering of permanent deacons and their wives at St John’s Cathedral.

Bishop Peter's engagements

■ **Nov 1, Fri:** Bishop to celebrate All Saints Mass – Solemn Pontifical Mass at the Cathedral at 19:00.

■ **Nov 2, Sat:** Bishop to celebrate Mass in Commemoration of the Faithful Departed (All Souls) – Solemn Pontifical Requiem Mass at the Cathedral at 11:00.

■ **Nov 3 – 8, Sun – Fri:** Bishop to the Venerable English College, Rome, Celebration of Priesthood Retreat & Pilgrimage Centre of Palazzola.

■ **Nov 9, Sat:** Bishop to attend Marriage & Family Life Commission Meeting held in Poringland at 11:00.

■ **Nov 9, Sat:** Bishop to attend the Day of Renewal for CHARIS in Bury St Edmunds from 14:00 and then to celebrate Mass at 15:00.

■ **Nov 10, Sun:** Bishop to attend the Norwich Civic Service of Remembrance with the Dean of the Cathedral from 10:15 – 12:45.

■ **Nov 10 – 14, Sun-Thurs:** Bishop to Autumn Plenary Assembly of Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.

■ **Nov 15, Fri:** Bishop to attend the Headteachers Autumn Conference and to celebrate Mass at 12:00 in Poringland.

■ **Nov 16, Sat:** Bishop to attend the Council of Laity Meeting held in Newmarket from 11:00.

■ **Nov 16, Sat:** Bishop to attend the Youth Event at the Cathedral to do a Question and Answer Session from 16:00.

■ **Nov 19, Tues:** Bishop to attend Bishop's Council Meeting in Poringland from 11:00.

■ **Nov 21, Thurs:** Bishop to attend the Schools Commission Meeting from 10:45 in Poringland.

■ **Nov 22, Fri:** Bishop to attend the Deputy Headteachers Autumn Conference and to celebrate Mass at 12:00 in Poringland.

■ **Nov 23, Sat:** Bishop to International Cookout Fund Raising Day for St Peter & All Souls from 09:30 in Peterborough.

■ **Nov 24, Sun:** Bishop to celebrate Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe – Solemn Pontifical Mass at 11:00 at the Cathedral.

■ **Nov 24, Sun:** Bishop to attend Norfolk & Waveney Church Leaders Meeting hosted by Bishop Graham Usher. This will be followed by a Christ the King Evensong at the Norwich Cathedral hosted by the Dean and will include the Ecumenical Covenant Signing.

■ **Nov 26, Tues:** Bishop to attend St Bede's and All Saints Inter-Church Trustees Meeting to be held at St Bede's, Cambridge.

■ **Nov 27, Wed:** Bishop to attend Chapter of Canons Meeting at the Cathedral at 12:00.

■ **Nov 28, Thurs:** Bishop to attend the final Safeguarding Commission Meeting for the year at the Cathedral from 10:00.

■ **Nov 29, Fri:** Bishop to attend the Walsingham Trustees Meeting held in Walsingham.

■ **Nov 30 – Dec 2, Fri – Mon:** Parish Visitation at Our Lady & St Walstan, Costessey.

■ **Dec 1, Sun:** Bishop to attend Mass at 12 noon at Westminster as part of the Investiture Weekend for the 70th Anniversary with Cardinal Pizzaballa, Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Prof John ordaine



World-renowned historian, Cambridge professor and Newmarket Deacon, Rev John Morrill, was ordained to the Catholic priesthood at St John's Cathedral in Norwich on Saturday September 21.

■ A 250-strong congregation of clergy, family, friends, former students and university colleagues saw Dcn John ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Peter Collins, at the age of 78.

In his homily, Bishop Peter said: "This man has heard the voice of God calling to him on so many occasions, a man who has willingly and generously responded to the call of Jesus in so many ways across a lifetime.

"John has a global academic reputation and has earned accolades and fellowships too many to mention. He has written a tottering tower of books and produced a cascade of learned papers and more projects approach completion even now.

"I cannot fail to mention how poignant it is that the world's most renowned Cromwellian scholar is about to be ordained as a Catholic priest.

"This man has loved much and is loved much. It was your wife Frances who was your true tutor in the Catholic faith," said Bishop Peter. "She looks on and is holding you steady this day. Your beloved children are here today – Rachel, Ruth, Naomi and Clare.

"We all stand with you today in the solidarity of love and respect, supporting you in

your embrace of the sacred priesthood.

"They all rejoice in bearing witness to the integrity of your life as a husband, as a father, as a friend and to the integrity of your ministerial service as a deacon. We all delight to behold your future sacrificial ministry as a priest.

"As your Bishop I implore you to lead a life worthy of your vocation – continue to do all you can to preserve the unity of the spirit by the peace that binds us together.

"The voice of the Lord, as addressed to St Matthew, now addresses you: 'follow me, follow me now and for ever, amen'."

Addressing the congregation, after his ordination, Fr John said: "Most of my debt for being here today, apart from God Himself and the Holy Spirit, goes to the people of the church, and I should say the churches, because my ecumenical life is so rich and important to me.

"God is a God of surprises and the challenge of ordination was for too long only a matter of the head not the heart, until the last three years. God has sharp elbows and you can resist but you know that he is digging you in the ribs.

"Thank you to Bishop Peter for his wonderful support from the moment I wrote to him two years ago. His wonderful listening, discerning and helping to find this sense of calling. Fr Alban McCoy has been a wonderful mentor these last 18 months."

Speaking before the ordination, John said: "I was born into a deeply loving Anglican family." He grew up in a parish in Hale, Cheshire, where he was confirmed and received his first communion at the age of 16.

However, his faith journey was not always smooth. After starting at Oxford University in 1964, he admits, "my faith wavered". By the time he married his late wife, Frances, in

1968, he was practising his faith, but soon after, he entered a period of "anguished agnosticism", describing himself as "paradoxically being angry with God for not existing."

Frances, his wife, remained a quietly faithful Catholic throughout this period. Dcn John often sought solace by speaking with Fr Geoffrey Preston, a Dominican priest who had officiated at their wedding. "I always felt better after our conversations, but I still could not experience the presence of God," he reflects.

In 1977, Fr Geoffrey died young, and Dcn John attended his Requiem Mass in Leicester during Holy Week. It was here that everything changed. "I found the whole church full of the peace I had experienced when I was with him, and in an instant, I realised that when I was with Fr Geoffrey, I was with God. I had been thinking too much and opening my heart too little."

From that moment, Dcn John felt God enter his heart, and his faith was restored. Six months later, on December 8, 1977, he was received into full communion with the Catholic Church at St Edmund's College, Cambridge.

Over the next 15 years, Dcn John became more involved in parish life in Newmarket, while also working as a history lecturer and later as a professor at Cambridge University. His role as a pastoral guide to students, combined with his growing involvement in taking Holy Communion to the housebound, deepened his faith further.

"Nothing did more to deepen my faith than this," he says of his time visiting a care home for those with advanced dementia. It was during this time that he sensed a new calling. "In prayer, it became clear that God was calling me to link these two things – pas-

d as priest



Report by Keith Morris and Joshua Clovis. Pictures by Keith Morris. See a full picture gallery at: [flickr.com/photos/dioceseofeastanglia/](https://www.flickr.com/photos/dioceseofeastanglia/)



Fr John Morrill with his four daughters and Bishop Peter.

toral care of the young and the old.”

In 1992, a conversation with Mgr Tony Rogers solidified this call. Dcn John recalled: “I found myself involuntarily telling him I thought I was called to be a deacon. I was horrified and ashamed of my presumption, but he just said, ‘that is the other reason I came round this evening.’”

After three years of formation, Dcn John was ordained a deacon in 1996. Reflecting on his 28 years of service, he said: “I had no idea what being a deacon would entail, nor how I could find the time for that service as well as being a good husband, father to our four daughters, and a hands-on academic.” Yet, he humbly acknowledges, “It turns out God can do with time what he does with loaves and fishes!”

Over the years, Dcn John has been privileged to be part of significant moments in people’s lives, from baptisms and funerals to marriages, and has provided pastoral care for the housebound, dying, and bereaved. His experience as a teacher also found a place within the Church, as he taught future deacons for 15 years at the seminary.

In 2007, Dcn John faced personal loss when his wife Frances died of cancer. On her gravestone, he placed the words his mother had chosen: “you have shown us the way.” Reflecting on Frances’ life and death, Dcn John said: “Her confidence in God’s love and mercy was a new source of inspiration.”

While Bishop Michael Evans encouraged him to consider the priesthood after Frances’ death, Dcn John felt no call at that time. He remained deeply committed to his vocation as a deacon, stating: “I believed and believe it to be a very different and important vocation.”

As he celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination as a deacon, just after his 75th birthday, Dcn John began to reflect on retirement. “I was just beginning, for the first time, to feel a little stale,” he admits. However, three significant pastoral events occurred in quick succession, all relating to sacraments he could not administer as a deacon. He describes these moments as “three mighty shoves in the ribs”, recognising them as direct calls from God, just like those he had received in 1977 and 1991.

After much prayer, retreats, and study, and with the support of his spiritual director and Bishop Peter, Dcn John embraced this new call to priesthood. “Calling me after the mandatory retirement age of 75 (I am 78) suggests both that God has a sense of humour and that He thinks outside the box,” he said.

Dcn John has held several senior positions in the Diocese, such as Lourdes Pilgrimage Diocesan Director, Chair of the Commission for Evangelisation and Assistant Director for Diaconal Formation, and he taught Church and pastoral history between 2005 and 2020 at St John’s Seminary, Womersh.

Run Norwich medal surprise for Stephen

■ Stephen Belderbos, Chair of the Finance Committee at St John’s Cathedral, got a surprise at the end of completing the popular Run Norwich 10k race recently, when he was handed a medal which carried an image of the cathedral on it.

This year’s sold-out race on Sunday September 8, not only saw the highest number of finishers in event history – 6941 – but also two new course records set at the front.

Stephen is a keen runner and has done lots of events from 5k to 10k, to half marathons and to full marathons, including the London Marathon four times – the last in 2014.

“This is the second year that I have done the Norwich 10k,” he said. “It is a great event and shows the city at its best, with loads of people out to support. A number of us at work (Norwich University of the Arts) decided to run it together. My time was 46:38 this year, which I was pleased with. I did a 10k the weekend before and got dead on 50 minutes, so was hoping for anything in the 40s, so was pleased to get that time.

“I have decided that for 10ks, if I can run ‘under my age’ from now on, then I am doing



well (I am now 48 years old).

“When I finished the race someone put the medal on me and I didn’t look at it properly – all I was bothered about was re-fuelling myself. And then when I got home I hung it up and still didn’t look at it properly.

“It was only when Fr Alan Hodgson told me that it had St John’s Cathedral on it, that I went back and looked at it. I was pleased they decided to use the Cathedral’s image, and wish I had clocked it on the day.”

As to future races, Stephen said: “I will be doing the London Landmarks half-marathon next April and raising money for Dementia UK (close to my heart).”

Pictured above is Stephen Belderbos with his Run Norwich medal – bearing the image of St John’s Cathedral.

WOMEN & DIAKONIA 2

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East Anglia retreat offer for those affected by abortion

■ On September 7 a record number of people attended the March for Life in central London to promote the pro-life message that each person is valued and that abortion is not healthcare. With an estimated 8,000 – 10,000 people attending, this was the largest gathering to date, with five Catholic Bishops present, including our own Bishop Peter Collins.

There are now over 200,000 abortions carried out in England and Wales each year, which over the course of one's life means that the impact and effect of abortion will touch nearly every family and certainly every parish community.

Rachel's Vineyard offers retreats to support individuals struggling with the emotional and psychological effects of post-abortive trauma, including in East Anglia where it has a team.

The next retreat will be Friday 21 – Sunday 23 March, 2025. With booking now open and a limit of 8 people per retreat, it is advisable to book early.

Rachel's Vineyard retreats are a safe place to renew and rebuild lives. They offer a supportive, confidential and non-judgmental environment where women and men can deal with painful post-abortive emotions. Acknowledging its far-reaching impact, the retreats are open to anyone who has been affected by abortion, including other family members (not directly involved in the abortion but who have felt the effects) and medical practitioners who have been involved in abortion procedures.

Retreats are open to people of all faiths and none, but as Rachel's Vineyard is founded in the Catholic tradition, participants will require an openness to a retreat that will be within a group setting based on Scripture and personal reflection. There is an opportunity for silent prayer, Mass, reconciliation and Adoration as well as the opportunity to speak with members of the team.

The team is made up of volunteers and each team includes a qualified and experienced psychotherapist and a post-abortive woman. A priest is also present throughout the weekend to not only provide the sacraments but to be the face of Christ during the weekend.

Fr Stefan Park, OSA, a priest on the team, says of his experience working with Rachel's Vineyard, "I was amazed at the transformation and healing that occurred during the Rachel's Vineyard gathering. Years of trauma were significantly dealt with in one short weekend. Much healing was experienced. It was such a privilege to be a part of this Holy Spirit process."

If you would like to enquire about booking onto the retreat in March 2025 or would like to speak to someone confidentially, please contact Charlotte on 07958 235 270 or email: sona@rachelsvineyard.org.uk.

For further information about Rachel's Vineyard or to find out about other retreat dates and locations in the UK, please visit: www.rachelsvineyard.org.uk

New leader for East Anglia Catholic Renewal

A special Thanksgiving Mass was held on September 15 at St George's Church in Norwich to honour Philip Walters' contributions. The Mass, celebrated by Fr Luke Goymour from St Mark's Parish in Ipswich, brought together members of the Renewal team, past and present, to express their gratitude to Philip and welcome Pam Smith, the newly elected Coordinator.

■ After 14 years of dedicated leadership in the Catholic Charismatic Renewal in East Anglia, Philip Walters has stepped down from his role, with Pam Smith from the Cathedral Parish now taking on the position.

Philip's service began as Chairman of the Diocesan Service Team (DST), and from 2019, he served as Coordinator of the Charismatic Diocesan Service of Communion (CDSC).

During the celebration, Fr Luke praised Philip's humble leadership and tireless efforts in organising events such as



The Catholic Charismatic Renewal in East Anglia team at St George's in Norwich.

Days of Renewal, Life in the Spirit Seminars, Celebrate East Anglia and online conferences during the pandemic. Philip's wife, Rosemary, was also acknowledged for her key role in supporting these initiatives.

In his speech, Philip expressed his deep gratitude

to Rosemary, Fr Luke, and his fellow team members for their support and partnership. He emphasised his reliance on God throughout his leadership journey, saying he was blessed to work with a talented and enthusiastic team. He encouraged everyone to trust in God as they embark on new endeavours under Pam's leadership.

As a gesture of appreciation from the team, Pam presented Philip and Rosemary with gifts, including two new Sunday Missals.

Philip says he looks forward to continuing to support the Renewal team and Pam in their future work.

Fr Andrew retires from Fakenham

■ On Sunday September 29, during the 10:45am Mass, at which donations were also received for the local foodbank, the Fakenham congregation presented Fr Andrew Neate with gifts and cards to mark his retirement.

Parishioners celebrated both harvest and Fr Andrew's retirement in a service that filled the church. Many members of the congregation brought tins of food for the local food bank, along with meaningful gifts for Fr Andrew. The occasion was marked by warmth and gratitude, there was a lovely cake, and Fr Andrew received a heartfelt farewell.

Fr Andrew, who was appointed Priest in Charge in September 2020, reflected on the unique challenges he faced, particularly due to the pandemic. Until Christmas 2020, when Covid-19 restrictions were eased, he had not physically met parishioners, celebrating Mass alone in the church. During this period, he introduced himself to every person on the electoral roll via phone, resulting in many subsequent conversations about a wide range of matters, including requests for Masses and prayer intentions. As Fr Andrew remarked, it was far from a typical introduction to a new parish, but it nonetheless laid a strong

foundation for his extensive pastoral work that followed.

During his four years in Fakenham, Fr Andrew played a key role in the development and growth of the parish. He supported the homeless in Norwich, administered home communions and visits across a parish spanning some 250 square miles, and was an active member of Churches Together in Fakenham, hosting numerous events, including a highly successful Lent course in 2023. He also guided many children through their first Reconciliation and First Communion, and most recently, conferred the Sacrament of Confirmation on two members of the congregation.

Among his personal milestones, Fr Andrew fulfilled a number of bucket list activities, including a recent walk from the Fakenham church to the Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady in Walsingham.

Fr Andrew now looks forward to settling into his new home in Cromer, where he plans to enjoy reading, gardening, and resuming his passion for open water swimming.



New-look Ignite Youth Team

The Diocese of East Anglia has a new-look Ignite Youth Team with two new members joining existing member Alex Thanickal, who has stepped up to become team leader. Here they introduce themselves.

Meet Alexander Curley-Warren

■ I am from Our Lady and St. Charles Borromeo parish in Wisbech. I had a secular upbringing but always felt like there was a greater presence.

As I entered my teenage years this feeling grew more and more, I found myself beginning to ask questions about my faith and after a few years of seeking, found my home in the Catholic Church after a visit to Walsingham where I feel I was personally called by Our Lady.

I first came across the Ignite team a few years ago when they did a talk in my parish. It was after going on the World Youth Day pilgrimage in Lisbon, which is an international jamboree for young Catholics worldwide and then walking the Camino pilgrimage this summer that I realised my day job, commercial landscaping on construction sites, was not fulfilling my desire to serve the Lord and develop my faith. I began to get a very strong feeling that I was called to more and



At the start of the Ignite Year, Bishop Peter Collins led a special commissioning service for the new team in his private chapel at the White House in Poringland. Bishop Peter prayed over each of them and blessed them, sending them out to share the good news of Jesus across our diocese said Youth Service Director Hamish MacQueen.

steadily started to think about ways I could be a good servant, and that's when I had a revelation that the Ignite Team could be a great idea.

I feel a year out to serve the young people in the diocese, whilst growing in my own relationship with the Lord and discerning my vocation, is just what God wants me to do at this time. I pray that more young people may come to know the love God has for each of them.

Meet Luc Wallace

■ I'm from Bury St Edmunds, and I have been part of the St Edmund's

parish my whole life, including altar serving for eleven years and playing in the parish music group for the past year. I have also attended Catholic schools.

As a young boy, I had faith and I enjoyed being involved in the Mass through altar serving. However, following a series of injuries I lost a lot of faith and the Lord was not my foundation in those difficult times.

Suddenly, halfway through sixth form, the prospect of going to World Youth Day

arose, and alongside four of my friends from church, I attended the event which, with hindsight, has proved pivotal to me being part of the Ignite Team today.

In the daily Masses at World Youth Day, Jesus reached out to me through the Eucharist. He wanted me to place him at the centre of my life, and I did so.

Whilst my injuries are still unresolved, God is my foundation and I have found a joy and a truth in Jesus that I know many people in this world search for. It is for this reason that, whilst on the diocesan Camino pilgrimage this summer, I decided to join the Ignite team.

I desire that everyone will find this joy and happiness that is only found in the love of Jesus, and I ask for your prayers that this year, through the Ignite Team, God will transform many lives.

Invite to Hope

■ Young people (Year 7+) especially those preparing for Confirmation, Catechists and Youth Leaders are invited to HOPE! - a special event organised by the Diocesan Ignite Team to prepare to celebrate World Youth Sunday later in November. It includes live music, inspiring talks, passionate prayer and good food! It will be held at St John's Cathedral Narthex from 2pm - 8pm (to include joining the parish vigil Mass) on Saturday November 9. Entry: £5 on the door. www.rcdea.org.uk/youth

Join the Ignite Team at shoebox appeal

Last year, the Ignite team spent a day at the National Ministry Centre of Samaritan's Purse, the organisation behind Operation Christmas Child's Shoebox Appeal and this year you are invited to join them.

■ Hamish MacQueen Director of Youth Services, said: "Many people are familiar with packing a shoebox with gifts around Christmas time, for a child in need, but I had no idea that is only a small part of what Samaritan's Purse do.

"These days many people 'pack' their shoe box online, and during our visit last year, our job was to physically pick out the items and put them in a shoebox. The shoeboxes were being sent to local churches in places like Gaza and Ukraine who distribute them. There are many wonderful stories of children being so moved by receiving a shoebox that they start coming to church.

We met one such person who now an adult living in the UK volunteers to pack shoeboxes herself.

"After some packing, we learnt about some of the logistics in getting the shoeboxes from Coventry all around the world, and other projects of Samaritan's Purse like Crisis Response Field Hospitals that can be erected in a matter of hours in places where there is desperate need.

"It really was an amazing day, and a privilege to be a part of it, so much so that we're planning to go back this December! Why not come and join us? We'll be taking a car or minibus from Norwich via Cambridge and can pick people up on the way. Alternatively, you may like to organise a group from your own church or school."

To join the Ignite Team on their trip to pack shoeboxes, email igniteteam@rcdea.org.uk

For general information see www.samaritans-purse.org.uk

To set up your own shoebox collection or learn more, contact Mark and Debra Watkins, (Regional Team Members for Samaritan's Purse) markdebrawatkins@yahoocom

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RELIGIOUS LIFE

Walsingham and Felixstowe Sisters

The Religious of Jesus and Mary (RJM)

■ The Congregation was founded in 1818 by Saint Claudine Thévenet 30 March (1774-1837), in Lyon, France. Claudine was deeply affected by the French Revolution during which she witnessed two of her brothers violently killed by the revolutionary fighters during the failed defence of the city.

The misery which followed in Lyon and elsewhere convinced her that this could not be the meaning of human life and that her own experience of the goodness of God was the key to transforming lives. She was sure that people, especially children and youth, could be helped to a better life by being introduced to this active goodness of God, and so she began to do just that with a group of companions who became the first Religious of Jesus and Mary.

Shortly after Claudine's death in 1837, the Sisters responded to a call from India, and set off for Agra. By 1860, when they arrived in England, they had already begun communities and schools in Canada and Spain. It is from these early foundations that they are present today, through their mission of education and work with young people, in Asia, Europe, Africa and North and Latin America.

When they originally came to Ipswich, it was a very anti-Cath-



In his series about the Religious Congregations living and working in the Diocese of East Anglia, Fr Karol Porczak MS, Vicar for the Religious, introduces the Religious of Jesus and Mary, based in Felixstowe and the Little Sisters of Jesus, based in Walsingham.

olic town, and the opening of a school was beset with resistance and problems. However, the congregation's presence developed there and elsewhere in England, with the opening of a school in Felixstowe in 1907. Both of these schools, in Ipswich and Felixstowe, are no longer in existence, but during Covid the need for Catholic education in Felixstowe became apparent, and so they opened "Little JeMs Nursery" in their community

house there.

Today, in the Diocese of East Anglia, their house in Felixstowe is one of welcome and openness. The Sisters are elderly, but are all imbued with the great missionary spirit that has marked them from their origins. Many of them have spent years in the Middle East, or in Pakistan, as well as in France, Italy and Romania. While they are no longer able to venture too far afield, they welcome groups

from the town, the parish and young people who wish to spend time with them to reflect on the meaning of life.

Like Claudine, whose last words were "How good God is", the Sisters, her followers, feel the same too.

By Sr Helen Mary Haigh RJM

Pictured are the Sisters in Felixstowe: Standing left to right: Daniella Concessio (lay member), Carol Charles (lay member), Sr Sheila Gosney RJM, Sr Joan Hunter RJM (Superior), Sr Penelope Hanley RJM, Sr Sitting Foukx RJM and Wiktorja Wodz (lay member); Sitting left to right: Sr Catherine Ross RJM, Sr Margaret Pole RJM, Sr Judith Cuff RJM, Sr Nuala Kelly RJM, Sr Mary Hunter RJM, Sr Mary James Donohoe RJM, Sr Mavis Langmead RJM, Sr Sheila Mary Handley RJM and Sr Benedict Jouning. Missing from the photograph: Sr Lucy Skaf RJM.

The Little Sisters of Jesus (LSJ)

■ The name, "Little Sisters of Jesus" is not a title but a gift and a call. The gift is to be "of Jesus" and the call is to become little and a sister. It is a life lived out in the Nazareths of today's world, in imitation of the choice made by the Holy Family, who did not live out their contemplative life in the shelter of a monastery but in the world of the working poor.

Saint Fr Charles de Foucauld (1858-1916), their founder, was struck by the fact that Jesus "went down to Nazareth." In Nazareth God made himself little. They were years when he did not teach or heal and yet so much of what he would later preach flowed from what he had contemplated there... shepherds and farmers at work, young boys dreaming of life in the big city. Jesus would always be the man from Nazareth.

Charles de Foucauld died alone among the Tuareg people of the Saharan desert in 1916. Inspired by him, Madeleine Hutin (1898 - 1989), taking the name of Little Sister Magdeleine of Jesus, began the first community of Little Sisters of



Pictured are, left to right: Little Sr Kasia, Little Sr Elsamma, Little Sr Kathleen and Little Sr Patricia.

Jesus in 1939, but gave that littleness a further, more tender, dimension by speaking of Bethlehem where God made himself a baby. That is why the infant of

the crib is present in the Sisters' chapels all year round. It is that image of God which we contemplate and which we want to pass on to others. How? Charles

de Foucauld spoke of "crying the Gospel with your life". Therefore, as a part of their charism, the Sisters do not hold onto their last names precisely in order to remain "little" - they are simply Little Sister(s) of Jesus.

The Little Sisters live in family size communities and there are around 900 around the world in 45 countries, with their Generalate (Mother House) in Tre Fontane, Rome. They have been present in Walsingham since 1969. Presently, Little Sister Elsamma works at the Shrine welcoming pilgrims, Little Sister Patricia is retired and has more time for the neighbours. Little Sister Kathleen and Little Sister Kasia both work in Wells-next-the-Sea: one as a hotel housekeeper and the other in a supermarket.

The people they meet at work or in the neighbourhood all come with the question, "What do these Little Sisters have to tell us about their God?" The co-workers often don't know much about what it is to be a nun or to be a Christian. But it is always a surprise to them that they are here, part of the Church that goes into the peripheries and awakens the happy discovery that "Truly God was in this place and I never knew it."

An Advent Calendar of Kindness

In this month's Faith in the Home column, Helvi Moore, member of the Marriage and Family Life Commission, proposes an Advent Calendar of Kindness.

■ This year the joyous season of Advent begins on Sunday, December 1 and concludes on Tuesday, December 24. Let us take advantage of Advent not just to prepare food and gifts, as important as they are, but more importantly to remember the preparation of our heart, making it a more beautiful place for Jesus.

One lovely idea for the family is to create a family Advent Calendar of Kindness. All that this entails is creating a chart, detailing the days of Advent, with a gentle suggestion for a task, spiritual or otherwise, for each day.

Every family will have its own challenges, taking into account personality, family traditions and customs, struggles with certain virtues and other variables. A focus on the virtues is a good place to start: patience, generosity of spirit, laziness, complaining, humility... any virtue or vice that your family is clearly struggling to achieve or overcome. It is important that the calendar be specific to your own family's needs. This has to be YOUR family's calendar.

Have a "family conference" and allow all the family members to contribute their suggestions. It is important to allow all family members, old and young, to contribute their tuppence ha'penny worth. The little ones will feel included and motivated if their suggestions are adopted. The important thing is that each of these tasks is a sacrifice between the person and Our Lord. This, therefore, should include prayer, each day, for the grace to accomplish the task. There is no need to speak about the accomplishment of the task. The only conversation that needs to happen is between each soul and Our Lord.

And, on Christmas morning, a charming conversation can take place from soul to Christ that goes something like this: "Dear Jesus, I have tried to prepare for Your coming. There have been some days in Advent when, perhaps, I have not been so successful. However, I have tried to welcome Your coming and I am so glad that You were born for me!"



Record crowd at Ipswich pilgrimage

■ The Ecumenical Guild of Our Lady of Grace of Ipswich led its annual pilgrimage on Sunday, September 8 — Our Lady's birthday. The event drew its largest crowd in years and welcomed Bishop Peter Collins for the first time. The walk focused on Christian unity and devotion to Our Lady of Grace. Organiser Jean Johnson reports.

Despite a Met Office 'Yellow Warning of Heavy Rain,' our large group of pilgrims remained undeterred during the annual Pilgrimage Walk. The day was marked by several rare moments. Not only did it fall on a Sunday, but it also coincided with Our Lady's birthday. The atmosphere was made even more special by the presence of Bishop Peter, attending for the first time.

Cardinal Wolsey, born in Ipswich, designed this pilgrimage route in 1528, which led to the Shrine of Our Lady of Grace, once the second most important shrine in England after Walsingham. As we followed this historic path, the anticipated rain began at our second stop, the statue of Cardinal Wolsey, just as we recited the second Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. However, by the time we reached the Town Hall, the rain had ceased, and when we arrived at Lady Lane, umbrellas were no longer needed.

At Lady Lane, where the medieval shrine once stood, the large crowd gathered closely to hear members reaffirm their commitment to working toward Christian unity through the intercession of Our Lady of Grace of Ipswich. Although the original shrine was located

here, the modern ecumenical shrine has been in St Mary Elms Anglican Church for the past 20 years. We concluded our walk at St Mary Elms, we enjoyed a brief service, well-earned refreshments, and the pleasure of speaking with Bishop Peter, whose presence we truly appreciated.

At the Ecumenical Guild of Our Lady of Grace of Ipswich, we are dedicated to praying for Christian unity through the intercession of Our Lady. Our programme reflects this commitment, with meetings held on the second Tuesday of each month at 10:30am. In September, we welcomed a Russian Orthodox priest who spoke about devotion to Our Lady in his tradition. In October, we welcomed Fr Luke Goymour, who shared insights on this topic.

Operation Christmas Child shows the love of God

Mark and Debra Watkins, team members of Operation Christmas Child, recently visited St Peter's in Gorleston and St George's Parish in Norwich, inspiring children and congregations to support their shoebox ministry, which brings gifts to children in need worldwide.

■ At St Peter's the visit included the Friday night youth group, with plans to attend the Sunday Mass. Mark said: "The children engaged so well and had over 90 boxes made in record time. An invite to pray for the shoeboxes and the work of Operation Christmas Child was taken up by a child, and wow, how God works in children."

On Sunday, Mark, supported by his son Joel, spoke at the end of Mass about OCC and how this simple gift impacts children's lives, making them feel loved, not forgotten, and signposting them to faith in Jesus Christ. Joel and Mark said, "There was such a warm welcome from the church, and the response to take shoeboxes equalled the children's commitment to making them up."

Mark and Debra attended three Masses—Our Lady, St Boniface, and St George in Norwich. At the end of each, Mark shared testimonies of children who had been hurt, broken, or lost hope, and how the shoebox gift moved them. Many found faith in a God who loves them, moving from hurting to healed,

and eventually to serving. Mark and Debra were very pleased with the response from the three churches and hope this ministry will continue annually.

Fr Macbean Bamusi was covering for Fr Walter who was away visiting family in Zimbabwe.

Fr Macbean said: "Mark and Debra explained their mission is to distribute the tangible love of God through shoeboxes, and they invite children to take a book about Jesus and the Word of God. The testimonies from around the globe are heartwarming. The knowledge that someone who doesn't know them has sent a gift is life-changing."

"Samaritan's Purse could not achieve this without community and church support, which are key to collecting the parcels. I have seen Mark and Debra distributing shoeboxes in the churches I was serving in, and many people were eager to take them."

"The boxes will be collected in November, processed, and sent to churches worldwide. This is amazing work that needs our participation. If we spread love, the world will be a better place."

Mark said, "It was a blessing to spend time with Fr Macbean, who understood well the impact a shoebox can have, recalling the absence of even a simple item like a toothbrush."

For more information on Operation Christmas Child for your church, school, group, or business, please contact Mark and Debra Watkins at markdebrawatkinsocc@yahoo.com or visit: www.samaritans-purse.org.uk.



Pictured at St George's are Debra, Fr Macbean and Mark Watkins.

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Picture gallery from parishes around the Diocese

■ St John's Cathedral parishioners hosted their Annual Mac-Millan Coffee Morning, pictured right, on Friday October 4, so a big thanks to all who help make the morning enjoyable and successful – raising £772 for this very worthy cause reports Cecilia McKenna.



■ Hunstanton parishioners held a Strawberry Fair at St Cecilia's Catholic Church in Dersingham recently and raised an amazing £700 for the Alzheimer's Society. Every pound raised will directly fund Alzheimer's Society's vital support services so it can offer help and hope to everyone affected by dementia. There are currently around one million people living with dementia in the UK, including more than 17,500 people in Norfolk. Pictured left, Maureen Vernon and Chris Davey present a cheque for £700 to Jacky Phipps, Community Fundraising Ambassador for the Alzheimer's Society.



■ The Norwich 'Pax et Bonum' Secular Franciscan group celebrated the 800th anniversary of St Francis receiving the Stigmata on Tuesday September 17 reports Anne Murrin. This was held at St George's church on Sprowston Road, Norwich. There's was a programme of the service displayed in the satellite churches so participants were able to choose which parts they preferred to attend. Members from surrounding parishes were also invited.

A cloak made of sacking, representing Francis's usual garment as he went about his life preaching and teaching, was laid in front of the altar. Five candles marking the five piercings were lit and placed appropriately on the garment as the narratives progressed. A time of contemplation followed.

We then had a time of praise and intercessions led by Philip Walters from the Tuesday Prayer Group, with his guitar. The Crown Rosary was recited during the last hour and the evening concluded with Compline.

The four-hour evening began with refreshments followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the Robert Southwell Chapel. This was followed at 7pm by readings of various extracts from sources on St Francis explaining the details of what St Francis endured through his great love of Jesus. There were also some beautiful prayers by St Clare of Assisi on the stigmata of St Francis.



■ The parish of The Sacred Heart and St Oswald, Peterborough enjoyed an event organised by the Indian community as part of Onam harvest festivities on September 15, at St Oswald's church, reports Iris Montecalvo.

Onam is an annual harvest and cultural festival celebrated in Kerala, South India. At St Oswald's church the Onam event started by creating beautiful rangolis made using flower petals arranged in intricate patterns.

Dressed in traditional white saris, the dancers performed around a lamp and a rangoli. The parishioners shared payasam, a dish of vermicelli, milk, raisins and cardamom.

