

Tuesday 11 June 2013

Pope Francis has today appointed Bishop Alan Hopes, currently Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster, to become the fourth Bishop of East Anglia.

Bishop Hopes was ordained priest in the Church of England in 1968 and served until he was received into the Catholic Church in 1994. He was ordained priest in the Catholic Church in December 1995. He was ordained bishop in Westminster's Metropolitan Cathedral of the Most Precious Blood on 24 January 2003. He is Chairman of The Committee for Liturgy and is a member of the Bishops' Conference Department of Life and Worship.

Bishop Hopes succeeds the late Bishop Michael Evans who died peacefully on 11 July 2011 after a long illness. Following Bishop Evans' death Fr David Bagstaff has acted as Diocesan Administrator. Bishop Hopes will be installed as the Bishop of East Anglia on Tuesday 16 July at St. John the Baptist Cathedral, Norwich.

Learning of the appointment, Bishop Hopes said: "It is with a profound sense of trust in God's loving care for us, that I will undertake this new ministry as Bishop of East Anglia, entrusted to me by our Holy Father, Pope Francis. In this year of faith, and at the beginning of the pontificate of Pope Francis, it is an immense privilege to be called to follow in the footsteps of the late Bishop Michael Evans in serving and leading God's holy people in this diocese. I look forward with joy to working with the priests, deacons, religious and all the faithful who minister in the parishes, schools, chaplaincies and other pastoral and charitable ministries of the diocese in our common task of evangelisation. I am grateful indeed to Fr David Bagstaff who has been Diocesan Administrator for the past two years and all who have had supported him in this responsibility.

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Diocese of Westminster where I have been a priest and bishop, in particular to Archbishop Vincent Nichols and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor for their unfailing support, guidance and encouragement. I shall miss its vibrancy and the spirited clergy with whom I have been privileged to work.

"I look forward to working closely with our many ecumenical partners in seeking to respond to the call of our Lord Jesus Christ to love God and serve our neighbours. I also hope to engage with the members of the other faith communities and all people of good will.

As I take up this new apostolate, I ask for your prayers and support. I invoke the prayers of the patrons of the diocese, St Felix, St Edmund, St Etheldreda. In particular I entrust myself to the maternal intercession of Mary, our Lady of Walsingham, whose faith, trust and loving obedience is always the guiding light on our pilgrimage as disciples of Christ."

The Most Rev Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, said: "I am delighted that Bishop Alan has been appointed as Bishop of East Anglia. I would also like to thank him for his considerable service as parish priest, vicar general and auxiliary Bishop in Westminster for the past 10 years. He is in our prayers as he prepares to continue his ministry in the service of all in East Anglia."

East Anglia Diocesan Administrator Fr David Bagstaff welcomed the appointment: "I am delighted to hear of the appointment of Bishop Alan Hopes. I am sure that he will be warmly welcomed in our Diocese, which has worked so hard to continue our mission of proclaiming the Gospel over the two years since Bishop Michael's death. I am most grateful to the priests and people of the Diocese for their support, and am glad to hand over the responsibility for the Diocese to an experienced and trusted colleague who already has some knowledge of our Diocese and has expressed such joy in his appointment."

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