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The group from the Diocese of East Anglia at the National Eucharistic Congress, Adoremus, held at St Mary's College, Oscott. Picture by Marcin Mazur/CBCEW.



Will writing free service offer is made

■ Last year the Diocese of East Anglia joined Your Catholic Legacy and the Free Wills Network and it is, once again, offering a free will writing service to the first 20 parishioners to come forward. Stewardship and Fundraising Coordinator Sandra Portas explains.

Last year the diocese joined Your Catholic Legacy and the Free Wills Network shining a spotlight on legacy giving, an area of giving we often ignore. We were very pleased with those who came forward to have their wills written, a very sincere thank you for the gifts to the work of the Diocese.

While people are naturally older when they die, people of all ages can and do make charitable wills. By the age of 40, most people will have experienced a life change that puts them in a position to contemplate making a will and therefore a charitable gift.

The National Free Wills Network is a scheme which allows parishioners to have a simple will written free of charge. There is also the facility for couples to have mirror wills too. It's a really easy-to-use service which has resulted in thousands of wills being written over the years, benefiting a huge range of charities. Any number of charities can be listed in a will.

The diocese is again offering 20 free wills to the first parishioners who come forward. Those parishioners who decide to use this service will have the opportunity to have their wills written / existing wills updated free of charge.

To take advantage of this easy-to-use service, please contact finance@rcdea.org.uk or call on 01508 492540 or write to: The White House, 21 Uppgate, Poringland, Norwich, NR14 7SH and mark your letter for the attention of the Finance Team.

Following your enquiry to the Finance Team, you will receive a pack in the post from the Network with all the details you need to go ahead and make a solicitor's appointment to write/update your will.

You can choose one of the local solicitors to you listed in the directory and book your appointment at a time that suits you. The will writing service normally involves an initial consultation and then a follow-up to cover any finer details.

More slots may be made available so, if you miss out this time, look out for the next announcement.

East Anglia group joins in Adoremus

A 40-strong group from the Diocese of East Anglia participated in the National Eucharistic Congress, Adoremus, held at St Mary's College, Oscott, on Saturday, September 14.

■ The attendees were warmly welcomed by the seminarians of the College in Birmingham, including Anthony Reilly and Peter Ho from our own Diocese who are being trained for the priesthood at Oscott.

The coach from East Anglia was filled with faithful from across the diocese, including members from the Cathedral Parish, parishes in Peterborough and a group of young people who had been to World Youth Day in Lisbon. Religious communities were represented by sisters of the Community of Our Lady of Wal-

singham and the Grace and Compassion Benedictine Sisters, who are well-known for their work at the Montana Care Home in Great Barton.

The one-day event included Mass, celebrated by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, and a Eucharistic procession around the beautiful grounds of the seminary.

Over 1,000 people attended, with representation from bishops, priests, religious, and lay faithful from across England and Wales.

The Cardinal gathered together the spirit of the day in the conclusion of his homily: "We are summoned, by the loving plan of the Father, to render all praise to God and to sing constantly of the beauty of his creation. In our pilgrimage, we are constantly guided by the Holy Spirit, in discernment and decision, in the company of the Church. And, at every step of the way Jesus accompanies us, never leaving us alone, always within our reach, always there before us, most

especially in the Eucharist, in this most Blessed Sacrament.

"Behold the Lamb of God! 'Take hold of the Lamb of God! 'Hold onto the Lamb of God', cling to him with all your might!

"This is our honour and joy. This is our Eucharistic heart. This is the faith of the Church and we are proud to profess it."

Fr Peter Wagnanski, who attended, said: "It was a day full of joy to participate, accompanied by such a rich representation of our diocesan faithful, in this moment of coming together as a national Church celebrating our devotion to the Eucharist. It was a very particular grace to be brought together with people from across the country, including long-not-seen friends from far-away places, united by a desire to be close to the Lord in his sacramental presence."

Read more about Adoremus at: cbcew.org.uk/category/adoremus/

For a full picture gallery visit: [flickr.com/photos/catholicism/albums/72177720320324367](https://www.flickr.com/photos/catholicism/albums/72177720320324367)



Dull church corner gets bright makeover

■ A once neglected corner near St Michael the Archangel Church, Huntingdon, has been transformed into a vibrant, welcoming garden featuring a bright mural and a statue of Our Lady. Fr Philip Shryane reports.

This corner, near the entrance to St Michael the Archangel Church, used to be very dull — a space gathering litter and weeds, covered with old decking, and needing some TLC to revive it and make a welcoming entrance to the church grounds.

Work was done including: the decking was lifted and taken to pieces to be upcycled into a planter; membrane and gravel were laid to provide a clean space; pots and plants were brought in, as well as our statue of Our Lady. The whole scene was brought to life when the dull grey render on the wall behind the statue was painted with a bright, sunny picture.

The painting was done by Diane Kennedy from Bury St Edmunds, for many years an art teacher at St Louis Middle School in the town. I invited her to do some work for St Michael's, and the result is warm and lively, adding some much-needed colour to this corner. Many people sit on the bench and pray their rosary, while others bring flowers and pot plants to decorate the small garden. All appreciate the peace and beauty of a lovely welcome to the church.

Catholic East Anglia

Newspaper of the Diocese of East Anglia

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Articles and photographs for the next edition are very welcome and should be sent to the editor, ideally via email, by Monday October 7.

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New architect for St John's Cathedral appointed

■ The Diocese of East Anglia has appointed award-winning Conservation Architect Nicholas Warns (pictured right) as the new Architect (Surveyor of the Works) at St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich.

Nicholas will have overall responsibility for advising the Bishop and the Trustees of the Diocese on all aspects of the fabric of the cathedral, the second biggest Catholic cathedral in the country.

He will be responsible for Quinquennial (five-yearly) Inspections of the cathedral and subsequent reports. Reporting to the Bishop and Trustees on works carried out during the year, progress made with implementing recommendations, and any other matters relevant to the care and conservation of the Cathedral.

Bishop of East Anglia, the Rt Rev Peter



Collins, said: "We are delighted to have appointed someone with such wide experience and knowledge of historic churches to this key role with the cathedral, which is central to much of what happens in the diocese."

Nicholas has been a Guardian of the Soci-

ety for the Protection Ancient Buildings, and before that a 'Commissioned Architect' for English Heritage advising on, and overseeing grant aided projects. More recently he has worked on the Grants Committee of the National Churches Trust and has been an Architect Accredited in Building Conservation (AABC) for 10 years

Nicholas said: "I have studied and worked on historic buildings, including cathedrals, over many years, so I appreciate the craftsmanship and materials, and also the religious and social significance of buildings like St John's Cathedral. I work and live in Norwich, as well as growing up here, so I have a close association for the city and its buildings and institutions. To be appointed architect to St John's Cathedral is a great honour."

East Anglian families conquer mountain

Two Catholic families with young children, from St Benet's Minster in Beccles, battled heavy rain and wind during their ascent to the top of the highest mountain in the British Isles, in order to raise £1,800 for a charity helping suffering Christians.

■ Eight members of the Do Rozario and Pampackal families – including a seven-year-old – have raised more than £1,800 from 60 supporters by climbing to the 4,413ft summit of Ben Nevis in Scotland in temperatures just above freezing.

The daring ascent was part of Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)'s #TeamRed matched £500k challenge which, if reached, would then raise the total to £3,600.

The family group was inspired to do the challenge by a recent Mass appeal for ACN from fellow St Benet's parishioner Neville Kyrke Smith, former National Director of ACN.

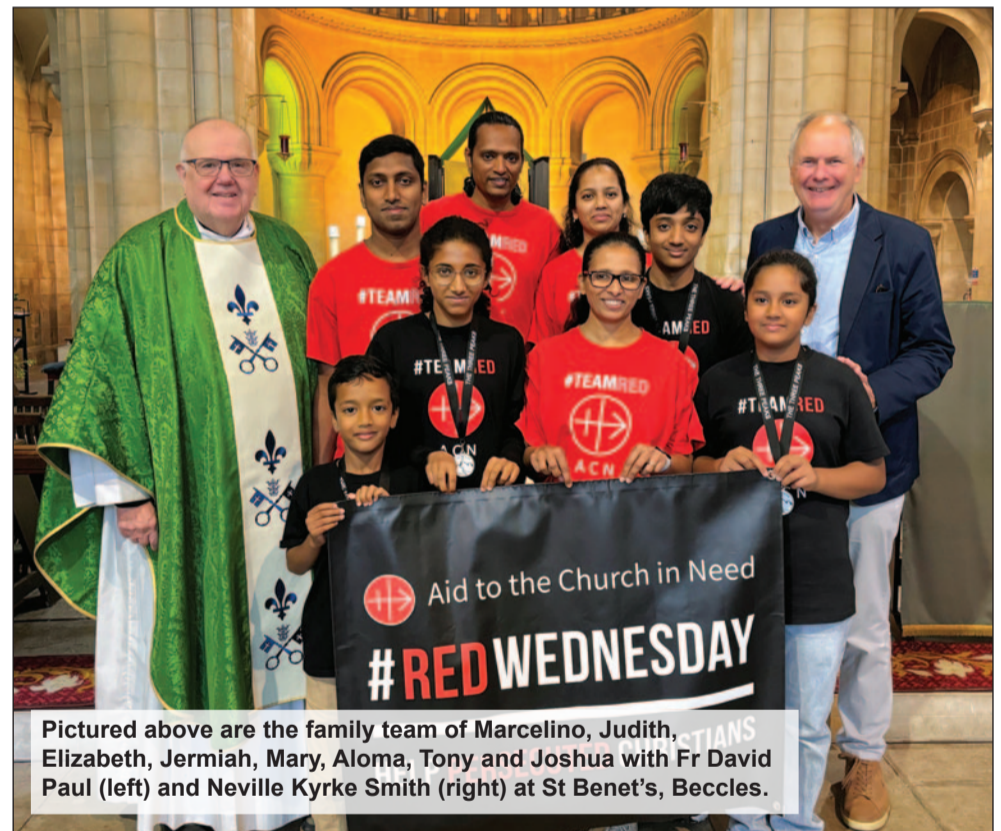
Fr David Paul, current priest-in-charge of St Benet's, said: "The two families are very committed members of the church and, after the ACN Appeal from Neville, they were inspired to make this sponsored climb.

"It was a terrific effort and the congregation of St Benet's are all very proud of them and were very generous in their support."

Aloma Pampackal, the organiser of the fundraising initiative, said that the group was "driven by a sense of purpose" despite the "harsh conditions".

Aloma said, on behalf of the team: "There were moments of laughter and camaraderie, but also times of doubt and frustration as the cold, rain, wind, and steep ascent tested our endurance.

"Knowing we were climbing for a cause greater than ourselves – supporting Christian communities in need – gave us the strength to carry on."



Pictured above are the family team of Marcelino, Judith, Elizabeth, Jermiah, Mary, Aloma, Tony and Joshua with Fr David Paul (left) and Neville Kyrke Smith (right) at St Benet's, Beccles.

Starting at 8:30am, Aloma said: "the initial part of the climb along the Mountain Track was manageable, and spirits were high as we encouraged one another. However, the weather quickly turned as we ascended."

She added: "A thick fog rolled in, reducing visibility to a few meters, the temperature dropped to 3°C, and fierce winds up to 56 miles per hour whipped through the air.

"To make matters more challenging, we were soon hit by rain, adding another layer of difficulty to the already tough conditions."

Aloma explained: "After several grueling hours, we reached the summit, feeling a mix of relief, pride, and awe, although the intense cold and fog meant we couldn't stay long."

She added that the descent was equally challenging, because of "the rocky terrain, rain, and biting winds... Yet, the

sense of accomplishment and shared purpose kept our spirits high."

She said: "After nine hours, we reached the base, exhausted but filled with pride, knowing we had not only conquered Ben Nevis but had done so with a meaningful mission.

"This climb tested our endurance and faith, and we are deeply grateful for the prayers and support that carried us through."

Aloma said: "Learning about the situations in Nigeria and India deeply touched us. This inspired us to pick ACN for our cause."

She concluded: "We all look forward to continuing our mission to help those in need through ACN."

As part of ACN's #TeamRed matched £500k challenge, all funds raised up to a minimum of £200k will be doubled leading up to #RedWednesday (November 20). acnuk.org

The Dowry of Mary pilgrimage at Walsingham was led by Archbishop of Liverpool Malcolm McMahon, accompanied by Bishop Emeritus Alan Hopes. Picture by Joshua Clovis. For a full picture gallery visit: www.flickr.com/photos/dioceseofeastanglia/



Thousands from many nations at Walsingham

On Sunday September 1, the Catholic National Shrine in Walsingham hosted the Dowry of Mary Pilgrimage. Led by Archbishop of Liverpool Malcolm McMahon, accompanied by Bishop Emeritus Alan Hopes, the event drew a crowd of around 3,500 people, from over 30 nationalities.

■ The day began with the presentation of flags, where representatives from various nationalities and chaplaincies around the country offered their flags to Archbishop Malcolm. Immediately after, he celebrated Mass and delivered a moving homily.

In his homily, Archbishop Malcolm shared personal reflections on how Mary, the mother of Jesus, had been part of his life from a young age. He recalled, "I suppose, like many of you, I can say quite honestly that Mary, the mother of Jesus, has been very much part of my life ever since I was a little child.

"If I go back to my earliest memories, I can remember my mother teaching me the Hail Mary and then when I was a little bit older, the Hail Holy Queen." He continued, reflecting on his childhood experiences, including receiving his first rosary: "I remember getting a rosary when I was very young. I wasn't sure what to do with it, of course, but it was very pretty and our next door neighbour, who had given up practising her Catholic faith, had given it to me. And I've still got it."

Archbishop Malcolm spoke about how his understanding of Mary had grown and deepened over the years. He explained, "As I progressed through my life... I thought I was successful. I thought I could do amazing things when I was studying... And then all of that seemed to change in my life. And I felt pretty alone. And then I found that rosary from my childhood. And that rosary stayed with me." This profound moment of rediscovery of his faith through Mary led him to realise that, "The person who was there for me was... the young girl of Nazareth in Galilee who was ready to receive that great gift of God."

The homily concluded with a reflection on the gathering of people from various cultures and backgrounds. Archbishop

Malcolm noted, "Today we're celebrating a great gathering of people from different cultures and different countries, from Europe and all over Asia and Eastern Europe and all over England as well. And Mary's special care for England has taken on a new dimension." He encouraged the congregation to learn from Mary's example: "Let us learn from her what discipleship really means. Let us too be open to the love and the grace of God's Holy Spirit so that we too may be disciples of Jesus, just like his mother."

Following Mass and lunch, attendees processed down the Holy Mile to the Abbey grounds, the original site of the Holy House. There, Archbishop Malcolm performed Benediction in front of the Lonely Arch.

Pilgrimage to Rome in 2025 to celebrate the Jubilee of Youth

■ As part of the Jubilee 2025, the Diocese of East Anglia will be leading a pilgrimage to Rome, joining with thousands of young people from all over the world.

If you will be age 16 – 30 next summer 2025, come and join us! Find out more at our Launch Meeting on October 20 at Newmarket Parish Centre, 14 Exeter Road, CB8 8LT, starting at 12:30pm (please bring a packed lunch) and will end by 3pm.

See www.rcdea.org.uk/youth for more details.



news in brief

Inspiring night of worship

■ An inspiring evening of Praise and Worship was held at St Peter's Church in Gorleston on September 7, drawing around 70 worshippers from the parish and across the diocese.

The event, led by Fr Alvan Ibeh SMMM, was a vibrant celebration of faith, featuring contemporary praise songs, engaging talks, and heartfelt adoration.

Fr Alvan, delivered a thought-provoking talk on the theme "In His Presence, Great Things Happen," emphasizing the transformative power of divine presence. The evening was supported by members of the Diocese Youth Ministry, with Alex Thanickal serving as the MC. The music was provided by "Singles for Christ," adding a lively and modern touch to the worship experience. Teams from the parish and the Charismatic Diocesan Service of Communion (CDSC) provided individuals with prayer ministry.

Alex said: "The event centred around Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, provided attendees with an opportunity for personal encounter. Many participants expressed their gratitude, noting the positive impact of the evening. Some remarked on the rarity of such events in their recent experiences and expressed eagerness for future gatherings. One attendee, new to the area, was particularly pleased to participate in the spiritual vibrancy of this community event."

For information on similar events within the diocese, follow the Facebook page 'Catholic Charismatic Renewal – East Anglia' or visit: renewaleastanglia.org



Secular Franciscans

■ The Norwich Secular Franciscans held an inaugural meeting of the Friends of St Francis on June 23, in the garden of St John's Cathedral reports Anne Murrin.

Those involved enjoyed a bring-your-own-picnic with discussion (pictured above) and it was followed by a voluntary walk down to the Julian Chapel for prayer and meditation.

The group seemed very keen to learn more about St Francis without necessarily wishing to join as Seculars. This is the intention for forming the group. A further meeting was held on Sunday, September 1 at St George's Hall in Norwich, with tea and cakes followed by a general discussion and a quiz based on St Francis and his life. Anyone who would like to learn more about this amazing Saint, so appropriate for our times, may stay on for our regular monthly meeting that begins at 4pm.

The meetings are open to all and we have activities for children and no booking is necessary.

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Suffolk Sisters are honoured

■ A special presentation took place at Montana Care Home, Great Barton, on Tuesday September 3. Bishop Peter Collins, awarded the community of Benedictine Sisters of Grace and Compassion the Diocesan Medal of Honour in recognition of their caring service at Montana Care Home.

The Bishop presented the Diocesan Medal of Honour and the accompanying certificate to Sr Thaya Moses OSB, Registered Manager of Montana Care Home, during Holy Mass in Montana Convent

Chapel.

The certificate certifies that the Benedictine Sisters of Grace and Compassion have been awarded the Diocesan Medal in grateful recognition of their generous service to the Church in the Diocese of East Anglia.

Awards and commendations are nothing new for the care home. In recent years, Montana Care Home has been ranked among the top 20 care homes in the East of England.

The two most recent inspections of the

care home by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), in September 2023 and May 2018, resulted in the award of an 'Outstanding' grade on each occasion. During the Covid-19 pandemic in December 2020, H M Lord Lieutenant for Suffolk awarded a special Certificate of Merit to the Registered Manager, Sr Thaya Moses, for her contribution during the extraordinary and difficult circumstances caused by the Covid-19 crisis.

Pictured above is Bishop Peter Collins, with clergy and sisters at the care home.

Our Lady of Fidelity

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Discover the power in God's Word

There is great power in the Word of God says Fr Alvan Ibeh in his regular Voice of Hope column.



■ Are you aware that there is great power in the Word of God? Have you ever encountered the power that is in His Word?

Do you know that even the devil is very much aware of this power and what it can do in our lives? This is the reason why he comes with different distractions whenever the Word of God is being proclaimed.

Maybe you become completely lost in thought, that by the time you are back, you must have missed out on the reading of God's Word and the explanation given by the priest.

The distraction may come from the person sitting close to you, who may decide to start chatting you at this point. The distraction may come from a child who starts screaming non-stop and whoever is with them wouldn't want to take them outside. The normal thing should be once

a child starts crying, he or she should be taking outside, so that they won't distract the rest of the church, even the priest.

When all these are happening, the enemy is always happy, because he knows that when we listen attentively to God's Word and receive it with an open heart, it can bring great changes to our lives.

The Word of God is often described as transformative and life-changing for those who engage with it. It holds a unique power because it is seen as divinely inspired (2 Timothy 3:16-17), carrying wisdom, guidance, comfort and instruction for every area of life.

Let us look at some key ways the power of God's Word can be understood.

The Word of God is regarded as the ultimate truth, which provides clarity in times of confusion and answers life's big questions, like the purpose of life, the nature of God, and the path to salvation. In Psalm 119:105, the Word of God says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path".

The Word of God has a transformative power. It has the ability to transform hearts and minds. It convicts, corrects and encourages us, shaping us into the likeness of Christ. Every other book we read informs us, but only God's Word has the power to transform us. When we read and listen to it, our lives continue to be transformed, and we are no longer con-

formed to the things of this world. Romans 12:2 says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind"

The Bible provides wisdom for daily living, helping individuals to make decisions that align with God's will. Through it, we gain insights into how to live righteously. Proverbs 3:5-6, says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding, in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight"

The Word of God strengthens us in times of trials and tribulations. It offers promises of God's faithfulness and love, encouraging perseverance. Isaiah 40:31 says, "But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength".

God's Word can bring healing, both emotionally and spiritually. It provides hope, forgiveness, and restoration. In Psalm 107:20, the Word of God says, "He sent out his word and healed them; He rescued them from the grave".

The Power of God's Word lies not only in the words themselves but in the living Spirit of God that breathes life into those who read and apply it in faith. Through scripture, God reveals Himself, His will, and His ways, offering a path to a more abundant life. As you read, listen and meditate on God's Word, I pray that you will experience the manifestation of its power in your life. Amen.

Historic procession in Norfolk town

■ The annual Red Mount Procession took place in King's Lynn on Sunday August 18 in a ceremony carried out since 1897 when the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham was restored in the Holy House by Pope Leo XIII, reports Fr Peter Rollings.

Over 100 parishioners took part in the procession from Our Lady's Church to the 15th Century Chapel of Our Lady of the Red Mount in the town's historic Walks park. Taking part in the event were also local Anglican clergy including the retired Bishop of Richborough, Norman Banks.

Also taking part were the King's Lynn Morris who danced to honour Our Lady. On the return to church Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given followed by an enjoyable tea in the rectory garden (and more Morris dancing!)

Picture of the Red Mount procession by Edward Chomicz.



news in brief



Refugees get warm welcome from church

■ Our Lady of Refuge and St Joseph Sheringham was delighted to welcome John and Shirzad (pictured above) – refugees from South Sudan and Afghanistan – to mark the beginning of the 2024 Refugee Week, reports Mary Mustoe.

It was also the second night of Eid Al-Adha, one of the most important Muslim festivals, remembering Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac at God's command.

The evening was organised by Angela Sandell and Michele Otway in conjunction with Andy Goff of Solace Partnership.

Andy and his team work with unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people and run a number of houses to support independent living for looked-after young people, enabling them to learn valuable life skills, get an education, find safety and security, and have an opportunity to heal from their traumatic experiences. There are also fun activities such as sailing, drumming, camping trips, and trips to London.

John and Shirzad, told their own stories, including facing violence and attacks on the journey, hardship and hunger, becoming slaves, enduring the loss of family members, and having limited or no contact with their families at home. Their histories made for difficult listening, which educated us all. In some countries, religious persecution was also an issue. Faith is a crucial part of the identity of the young people, and they are supported in this by the local church and mosque. Andy was also able to explain the complexities of the asylum system and answer questions.

These young men hope to pursue their education and follow careers in the army and journalism.

Over £500 was raised for School of Joy, a charity working in Jerusalem with both Christian and Muslim children.

Hong Kong Bishop visits

■ On July 23 and 24, Bishop Joseph's visit to Cambridge was particularly meaningful for the community, which had begun forming a collaborative network in March 2022, supported by Mgr Eugene Harkness and Canon John Minh.

"There was some affinity between the community and Bishop Joseph even before he appeared in the flesh," Dominic Chung reports, as the Bishop had first connected with them through a video message during their inaugural Cantonese Mass in April 2022.

Bishop Joseph's itinerary in Cambridge included hearing confessions in Cantonese at Our Lady of the Assumption and the English Martyrs (OLEM) on Hills Road. This was a significant moment for many migrants, as confession in English had often been a barrier. "Confession in English is often cited as a hurdle by many

Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing of Hong Kong paid a 10-day pastoral visit to the UK from July 19-29. A significant part of his visit took place in Cambridge, within the Diocese of East Anglia, where the local Catholic Hong Kong migrant community had eagerly anticipated his arrival.

new settlers. So, to be able to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation in Cantonese was a grace-filled boost for many," said Dominic.

The Bishop celebrated a sung Mass at

OLEM, using the liturgy of St Bridget, the Patroness of Europe. The service, attended by around 120 people, was a highlight of his visit. Following the Mass, the community gathered for a bring-and-share meal, where Dominic said, "food, soft drinks, and conversations flowed with joy and reminiscence amongst old friends and new acquaintances."

The following day, Bishop Joseph delivered an inspiring talk on discipleship, emphasizing the importance of spreading the Gospel. Dominic reports that, "It was interactive for all of us. One central message etched in our minds: we must not keep God's unconditional love for us to ourselves."

Bishop Joseph's visit to Cambridge left a lasting impact on the community, encouraging them to continue their faith journey with renewed commitment.



Bishop Peter's engagements

- **Oct 1, Tues:** Bishop to attend Churches Together in Cambridgeshire Meeting in Ely at 18:00.
- **Oct 2, Wed:** Bishop to celebrate Mass for the Consecrated in the Diocese, 12:00.
- **Oct 3, Thurs:** Bishop to attend Diocesan Liturgy Commission Meeting held in Poringland at 11:00.
- **Oct 3, Thurs:** Bishop to attend Commission for Catechesis & Formation Meeting in Poringland at 18:30.
- **Oct 4 – 7, Fri – Mon:** Bishop to host the President of the Fédération Internationale Peuri Cantores (FIPC).
- **Oct 10, Thurs:** Bishop to attend the Meeting of the Deans in Poringland at 11:00.
- **Oct 11, Fri:** Bishop to attend the Diocesan Commission for Evangelisation held in Poringland at 11:00.
- **Oct 11, Fri:** Bishop to attend Alive In Faith meeting to be held in Poringland at 14:00.
- **Oct 12, Sat:** Annual Gathering of Deacons, Wives and Students in formation for the Diaconate with Mass at 11:30 and Conferral of Ministries.
- **Oct 14, Mon:** Bishop to attend Vocations Committee Meeting in Poringland at 11:00.
- **Oct 15, Tues:** Bishop to attend the St Mary's College Oscott, Feast Day and Bishops' and Staff Meeting.
- **Oct 17, Thurs:** Bishop to attend The Charles Plater Trust Away Day in London.
- **Oct 19, Sat:** Bishop to attend Safeguarding Event in Newmarket from 10:30 – 16:00
- **Oct 22, Tues:** Bishop to attend a Retreat Day with Churches Together Shire & Soke in Leicester.
- **Oct 26, Sat:** Bishop to Northampton for the EOHSJ Mass of Our Lady Queen of Palestine.
- **Oct 27, Sun:** Bishop to celebrate The Friends of the Cathedral Mass at 11:00 followed by the AGM.
- **Oct 31, Thurs:** Bishop to attend Council of Priests Meeting in Poringland at 11:00.
- **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 Head-teachers Autumn Conference and to celebrate Mass at 12:00 in Poringland.

Lourdes pilgrims



Main picture is the Diocese of East Anglia pilgrim group (by Durand) and, below right, the nurses thank-you dinner hosted by Bishop Peter Collins.

More than 50 pilgrims from across East Anglia joined with 400 others for the Catholic Association annual pilgrimage to Lourdes from August 23 to 30. Pilgrimage director Dcn Huw Williams reports.

■ “Come in procession” is the pastoral invitation this year in Lourdes. It is said that in Bernadette’s dialect, the word for “procession” and the word for “pilgrimage” are the same.

The first pilgrims flight met at Stansted Airport for an early start at 5am and despite plan and ‘wasp’ delays we arrived safely, to be joined later by the flight from Birmingham Airport.

We were able to spend the afternoon in Lourdes before the events programme began. We attended Mass at the Accueil Marie St Frai where some of our Assisted Pilgrims were staying, supported by the Catholic Association’s excellent health care team.

The next morning we all attended the Gathering Mass for the Pilgrimage celebrated by Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark – our first full gathering. This is a beautiful setting in St Bernadette’s Church over the river from the Grotto where Our Lady appeared to St Bernadette.

In the evening Sr Jane Livesey CJ gave a talk to a packed room entitled ‘Our Lady Invites us...’ and reminded us of what Mary said to the steward at the wedding in Cana: ‘Do whatever He tells you.’ We were reminded that we too are called to do what

tever He tells us.

The International Mass on Sunday 25 in the underground Basilica of St Pius X was filled with 25,000 pilgrims providing a spectacular display of the Universal Church. The Mass was celebrated by Archbishop John Wilson. Pilgrims from the Catholic Association Pilgrimage were invited to read and present intercessions at the Mass. The International Mass is a great celebration of the many cultures and pilgrimages that come to Lourdes each year.

For those who were unable to attend the larger Mass, a smaller one was celebrated by the Chaplain of the CA Hospitalité and to the Assisted Pilgrims, Fr Nicholas King, SJ.

On Sunday afternoon we had opportunity to go on the MacGill Mystery Tour showing places of significance to St Bernadette around Lourdes. Later that day we participated in the Blessed Sacrament Procession which took place entirely in the underground basilica due to a weather warning.

In the evening The Catholic Association Hospitalité welcomed new prayer members – an integral part of the Hospitalité who have an important role to play for all members and the success of the Pilgrimage’s mission to spread the message of Our Lady of Lourdes.

Monday was a busy day. The Pilgrimage Photograph in the morning on the steps of the Rosary Basilica, as is customary, was followed by Mass at St Bernadette’s Church before lunch at our hotels. A penitential service followed after lunch providing the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation from the priests and Bishops present while the musicians provided a background of reflective hymns.

A talk was given by Archbishop John Wil-

son reflecting on the Synod of Bishops – which he thought should be called the Synod of the People of God. That evening our pilgrimage group was leading in the torchlight procession – always an inspiration.

Tuesday had a different format from previous years. We headed for the beautiful Cathedral of the Trees, in the Cité St Pierre just above the town of Lourdes, for Mass as a whole pilgrimage group. The main celebrant at the Mass was our own Bishop Peter Collins.

The afternoon was left free to allow people to explore Lourdes or to go on a visit to Gavarnie known for the Cirque de Gavarnie and the Gavarnie Falls, part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

On Tuesday evening, the Youth Service took place, led by Fr James Cassidy (Diocese of Northampton). The theme of the service was ‘God works through hands of our young people’. Many thanks to the Music Group for being part of this service.

The Pilgrimage has always relied on our youth – many volunteers have started as youth – do you know someone that might be interested in joining us in 2025?

Mass at the Grotto where Our Lady appeared to St Bernadette was on Wednesday morning, after which we had a photograph of the East Anglian Pilgrims. Bishop Peter then blessed a candle for the East Anglian Pilgrimage which was taken to the Chapelles de Lumière for prayers

Bishop Peter hosted a Lunch to thank the nurses from East Anglia who had volunteered to help support the Assisted Pilgrims on pilgrimage. They give their time generously in the service of those in need.

Stations of the Cross took place in the afternoon with the High Stations available



and an alternative service at St Bernadette's Church for those not attending the High Stations.

The third of the series of talks was a panel discussion rather than a talk, with the opportunity for members of the audience to participate. Panellists gave the stories of their journeys in faith and of how they maintain their faith in a challenging world, after which the audience were invited to make comments about their own experiences. Sr Veronica, one of the panellists, revealed that it was the 25th anniversary of her profession that very day.

In the evening there was a social for East Anglian and Catholic Association Pilgrims at the Hotel Eliseo – a chance to meet and chat over a drink with other pilgrims and Bishop Peter gave a blessing for any religious items that were brought along.

Thursday arrived, the last full day of our pilgrimage. Time had flown by. We began by visiting the baths where we took part in the immensely moving 'Water Gesture' repeating the actions of St Bernadette when, at the instructions of Our Lady, she found the spring in the Grotto. After this there was a service of Anointing of the Sick in the morn-

ing during which it poured down with rain and, thankfully, the worst of the downpour had passed by the time we finished.

The joyful Thanksgiving Mass, the final gathering for the whole pilgrimage, was led by the Glanfield Children's Group and closed with the song 'Rise and Shine' led and signed by the children. This Mass was described by Fr Peter Wagnanski as one in which 'anything can happen' and in his homily we were reminded that with God there is so much more.

Friday was the day of departure. The flight for Stansted left later in the day and so East Anglians were able to spend the morning in Lourdes. Mass was available at St Joseph's Chapel in the Sanctuary and Bishop Peter celebrated Mass in the Accueil Marie St Frai for assisted Pilgrims and helpers also waiting for the later flight.

Everything ran smoothly for our return home and we arrived back at Stansted with no delays. Deo gratias.

Next year's pilgrimage to Lourdes will be from August 22 to 29. Put it in your diaries and do join us, if you can, in answer Our Lady's call to 'come in procession.'

www.catholicassociation.co.uk

Gearoid is honoured

At the concluding Mass of the 2024 Catholic Association's Lourdes pilgrimage, Gearoid McNamara, a parishioner at St Luke's, Peterborough, was presented with a certificate in recognition of his service and contributions to the pilgrimage. The award, which acknowledges Gearoid's 'selfless dedication, hard work and generosity', was presented by Bishop Peter Collins.

Gearoid, along with his late parents Virginia and Desmond, has been a longstanding pilgrim to Lourdes, particularly with the Catholic Association. For them, it has been a place of prayer, healing, and refreshment, expressing their deep faith in Christ and devotion to Our Lady.

Gearoid and his parents have also been longstanding parishioners of St Luke's in Peterborough, faithfully supporting and attending the local 'Mass Centre' before the current church was built in 1989. Throughout this time, Gearoid has been a devoted altar server, his long service recognised by the Guild of St Stephen with a special silver medal. He particularly enjoys serving at Our Lady's shrine in Lourdes, alongside the pilgrimage liturgies, prayer, and social events.

Greatly loved by the community at St



Gearoid McNamara receiving his award in Lourdes from Bishop Peter Collins.

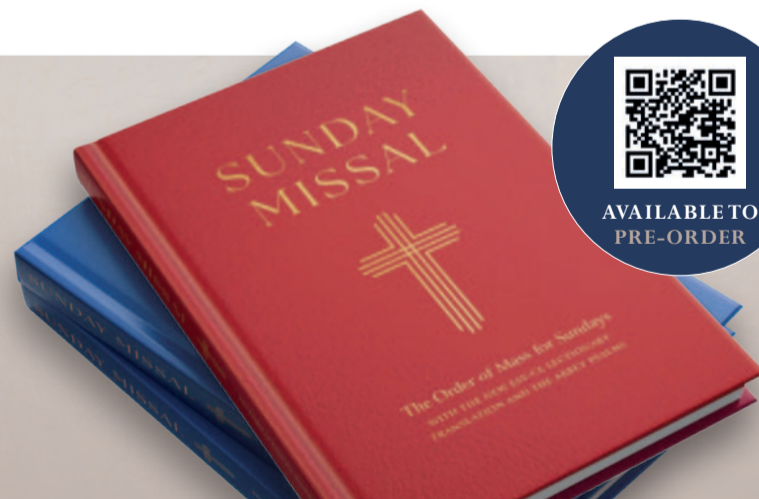
Luke's, Gearoid provided great support to his devoted parents as they grew older and frailer, while also managing to become very independent and enjoying various activities, including canoeing at Ferry Meadows, with the encouragement of Virginia and Desmond. Since their deaths, and with the support of family and friends, Gearoid has continued to enjoy his favourite activities.

Fr Jeffrey Downie, parish priest at St Luke's said: "Gearoid serves at the altar every week and was thrilled to join the Catholic Association pilgrimage this summer. Gearoid's award is exceptionally well deserved, and he looks forward to joining the pilgrimage to Lourdes for many years to come!"

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SVP ROUNDUP

National SVP Pilgrimage for the Sick at Walsingham

■ The Chapel of Reconciliation was full to overflowing at the National SVP Pilgrimage for the Sick, which took place at the Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham on Sunday July 7. Eldred Willey reports.

Some 800 pilgrims had made the journey to Walsingham, and many stood outside with umbrellas in the rain to participate in the opening Mass, beyond railings which were hung with balloons to mark the 180th anniversary of the founding of the SVP.

Some had come from far beyond the Diocese of East Anglia, where the shrine is situated. There was representation from Northampton Diocese and even a coachload which had come up from London. The pilgrims were seeking both the consolation of Our Lady's presence at Walsingham and the power coming from the Sacrament of Healing, which was celebrated later in the afternoon.

Presiding at the Mass was Bishop Emeritus Alan Hopes, assisted by Fr Peter Wygnanski, Private Secretary to Bishop Peter Collins. Fr Anthony Asomugha, Chaplain to the SVP Central Council of East Anglia, was also at the altar.

In his homily Bishop Alan spoke about the 'Apostolate of Love' which belonged to members of the SVP.

Before the anointing with oil in the sacrament, the bishop and priests present held up their arms in silence over the congregation, invoking God's blessing. The special grace of Walsingham, the joy of the Annunciation, rewarded the sick and their helpers who had made the pilgrimage.

SVP showing signs of growth in East Anglia

The St Vincent de Paul Society, or SVP, continues to show signs of growth across the diocese, and over the last year new conferences have started in several new parishes. Two of these are in Aylsham and Diss.



Maria Endall, Chris Falla, Mary Wallace and Pauline Andrews in Aylsham.

■ The SVP offers practical support, friendship and comfort to people suffering all kinds of sickness, poverty or isolation, whether these are a part of the Catholic community or are currently beyond its borders. Often a particular need sparks the creation of a conference, and that was certainly the case at St John of the Cross church in Aylsham.

Maria Endall and Pauline Andrews from Aylsham had for several years been informally supporting one particular lady – Mary – who was a huge part of the Catholic community but was becoming less mobile. The parish had created a WhatsApp group, to communicate about the needs of its more struggling members like Mary.

When Mary moved into a care home, Maria realised that something more organised was needed to ensure that Mary and several people like her received visits and communion. With the support of the parish

priest, Fr Peter Raj, she appealed for volunteers to form an SVP group, where those with a compassionate heart and an interest in social outreach could pray together, form deeper relationships and share ideas. The response went beyond Maria's expectations, and the group launched with ten members.

Each of these brought their own passions, gifts and connections. Mary Wallace, for example, was already working in the café of Aylsham Care Trust, which provides counselling, and provision for elderly people with dementia and those with special needs. She was directly in touch with the kind of people who would need SVP's support and she was well networked with other caring organisations in the town.

Maria herself lives on an estate where broken families need help and where, in the absence of any youth facilities in the town, anti-social behaviour is growing. A concern for the needs of young people has become a key part of the fledging group.

Chris Falla, another of the founding SVP members, was already visiting on an informal basis. Pauline was already involved in Churches Together in Aylsham and was helping with soup lunches for the homeless and lonely at the Methodist church. Like other members of the group, she was interested in working ecumenically and particularly in building contacts with Aylsham Community Church which does much social outreach.

Aware that a united group of ten can do much more than isolated individuals, the new SVP group is now brainstorming and building its vision of how it can best meet social needs in the parish and beyond.

■ A similarly encouraging story has been playing out at St Henry Morse parish in Diss. Last autumn around the Feast of St Vincent de Paul, Kevin Escott launched a new SVP conference in the parish with the support of his parish priest, the Fr Alex

Anaman, who comes from Ghana.

The new group quickly began visiting needy people in the local community to offer support. One of the early beneficiaries was also a Catholic from Ghana – an asylum seeker who had been moved down from the Midlands and was not just isolated but also on crutches, which made it difficult for her to get about.

One of the conference members had worked in Bangladesh with her then husband, the well-known Dr Jack Preger, setting up a street clinic. She is still involved in helping marginalised people in Dhaka, and the conference is now exploring the possibility of twinning with Bangladesh.

A couple of members are also supporting a man with a visual impairment and the conference is building many relationships with people who have moved into the area



Victor, Cathy, Mario and Kevin in Diss.

and are finding it hard to break into a somewhat closed culture of market town Norfolk.

If your parish does not have an SVP group but you would like one, please first talk with your parish priest. If he shares your enthusiasm, please contact Eldred Willey, SVP Membership Support Officer for East Anglia, on andrewww@svp.org.uk, who will be happy to help.



■ North Norfolk SVP Conference has increased its family based emergency accommodation with the reopening of Blessed Rosalie Rendu House.

The SVP Temporary Emergency Accommodation (TEA) Project, first established over five years ago in Cromer and Sheringham has now been further enlarged to cater for more homeless families since the need for emergency family accommodation has doubled during that period. The whole project of three properties now protects up to seven families and more than 20 children at any one time.

After some four-and-a-half months of building work started in February 2024, the £110,000 building conversion work was

successfully completed. On July 11, North Norfolk Conference President Michael McMahon, assisted by SVP Local Housing and Support Manager Debbie-Anne Farrow and with conference members welcomed representatives from North Norfolk District Council Housing Department and other guests (including Fran Ludden from the newly formed Sacred Heart SVP Conference based at Aylsham) to the blessing ceremony at Bl Rosalie Rendu House in Cromer. They went on to inspect the high quality of the three apartments now fully furnished and available for use by new families urgently awaiting emergency accommodation.

In the last financial year the TEA Project has safeguarded 12 families (including 33 Children). Some 25 families and 44 single people have moved on positively from the SVP houses into permanent homes since 2019.

Pictured right, with a NN conference member looking on, Fr Trindade Monteiro, Parish Priest of Our Lady & St Joseph, Sheringham, blesses the Rosalie Rendu icon during the opening and re-dedication service at the now refurbished three-apartment property. New residents started to take up residence from July.

Dereham Sisters feature on BBC

The popular BBC online website has carried a feature about the vocational stories of the sisters of the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham near Dereham. The story, titled “I wanted seven kids but instead I became a nun”, shares the journeys of Sr Catherine, Sr Theresa and Sr Camilla.

■ At 26, Sr Catherine, initially dreaming of marriage and motherhood, found her calling through experiences of profound peace in prayer. “I can remember those times where I’d come across a chapel or a church and have that real sense of deep peace – almost a sense of being held – in God’s presence,” she shared.

Her life in the convent, though challenging, is deeply fulfilling. Paul Moseley, BBC News, reports: “A typical day involves at least three hours in prayer and silent contemplation. But Catherine and the other sisters are also involved in the community, giving talks in schools, working in prisons, and also with



Pictured from the left, are Sr Camilla, Sr Catherine, Sr Gabriela and Sr Theresa from the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham.

university students.” The sisters also enjoy crafting, baking, and movie nights, creating a balanced life of contemplation and community engagement.

Sr Theresa, now 39, has been with the community for almost 15

years. She recalls her initial hesitation but also a deep-seated joy when considering the religious life. “I had an inkling when I was about 18 that God was saying ‘You know, you could be a sister.’ And, at first, I thought ‘Oh no Lord, surely not,’”

she explained. Her work as an assistant chaplain at a local university allows her to nurture young people’s faith, fulfilling her motherly instincts in a spiritual context. “There’s that idea of nurturing others and helping them to grow

and really flourish,” she says.

Sr Camilla, who has been a sister for almost 40 years, found a different expression of her vocation in religious life. Formerly a palliative care nurse, she sees her role as a continuation of her love for God and people. “I think if I had been a nurse and got married, I would have had a similar kind of freedom. But the possibility to serve others – and the breadth of experiences I’ve had because of this life – has made it even more beautiful in many ways.”

The community’s convent, known as ‘House of the Divine Will’, was a former family home converted in 2018. The sisters hope to expand in the future to include men who wish to join them as brothers. “We are seeing more women interested in this kind of life and also some men approaching us, with an idea of becoming brothers in the future,” Sr Camilla noted.

The Community of Our Lady of Walsingham exemplifies a life of joy, service, and deep faith. As Sr Camilla puts it, “I do believe that if young people knew just how beautiful this life is, many more would choose it. It’s almost a sense that people just don’t know how beautiful the interior peace is when you have a life and relationship with God.”

Article extracts from: bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c255rpwyxr20

‘God, please don’t ask me to become a nun’

A sister from the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham near Dereham, has shared her journey into consecrated life on the international Catholic video channel Shalom World. Eunice Kwashie reports.

■ In the video entitled “God, Please Don’t Ask Me To Be A Nun,” Sr Theresa talks about how she found peace in accepting God’s will and offers encouragement to young people considering their own vocations.

Sr Theresa embodies her community’s charism, “the Fiat of Mary,” which focuses on offering spiritual support to help others say ‘yes’ to God’s call. As an assistant chaplain at the University of East Anglia, she guides students who are often uncertain in their faith, nurturing their growth with a “motherly desire to nurture life... in a different way.” She recently shared her journey on Shalom-World, discussing how she initially didn’t want to become a nun and how God ultimately changed her mind.

Growing up in a Catholic family, Sr Theresa found comfort in prayer from a young age. She recalls being told that “prayer is like a telephone conversation with God,” a lesson she took to heart, praying about the typical concerns of a young girl. As



a child, she dreamt of marriage and having children, which shaped many of her prayers. However, at 15, the thought of religious life began to surface, and she often prayed, “God, please don’t ask me to become a nun”. Despite this, she sensed God telling her to reframe her focus saying, “I’m the most important thing... put me first”.

After school, Sr Theresa pursued nursing

as a way to serve God through helping others, while still holding onto her dreams of marriage. During a Move 2000 retreat, she was first confronted with the difference between her will and God’s. Feeling afraid and uncertain, she clung to the idea of marriage, which felt “safe and normal.” Yet, the thought of becoming a sister persisted, and when she finally asked God if she should be a nun, she heard a gentle “yes”.

A pivotal moment came during a retreat at Walsingham, where she felt called to fully surrender to God. The message “God won’t make you do anything; you need to give God permission”, resonated deeply, helping her release her fears and accept the possibility of a religious vocation. She began attending daily Mass, praying for guidance and even started a young Catholic social group to share her spiritual journey.

Her encounters with the sisters of the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham during Youth 2000 further deepened her sense of calling. Attracted by their joy and community, she attended more retreats and prayed: “Lord, help me to trust you, help me to believe you want what’s best for me”. Sr Theresa began to feel peace about the idea of becoming a sister. After completing her nursing training, she joined the community in 2010, leaving her nursing role behind.

Initially, Sr Theresa felt shy, especially when others seemed highly skilled in areas like cooking. However, she soon realised that the “real blessing of community” lies in

celebrating everyone’s unique gifts. Through retreats and talks, she gained confidence and flourished. Although she struggled with not having children, she discovered a deep sense of “spiritual motherhood,” by redirecting her love for children into her work.

In April 2018, she made her final vows, describing it as “like marrying Jesus”. Reflecting on her journey, she speaks of the depth of God’s love and hopes more people consider the consecrated life, believing that “the only way to repay Him is through love” and “giving our whole selves”.

Sr Theresa believes the solution to the need for more priests and sisters lies in fostering a “culture of holiness” where everyone listens to God’s will. Despite challenges, she finds joy in her religious life and trusts that “God never revokes His choice”. She encourages young people not to be afraid to “give it a try because you have nothing to lose and God always rewards our generosity” and advises them to get in touch with priests, and sisters or visit communities to explore their faith.

Her story is a powerful testament to the transformative power of faith and the unexpected paths that God’s guidance can lead us down. Sr Theresa hopes to inspire others to listen to God’s call, just as she did, and to foster a culture where everyone seeks and follows God’s will in their lives.

Picture and story from: www.shalom-world.org/episode/god-please-dont-ask-me-to-become-a-nun-sr-theresa-weight

RELIGIOUS LIFE

Two local Augustinian Orders

The Congregation of our Lady (CSA)

■ The Congregation of Our Lady, Canonesses of St Augustine (Original Latin: Congregatio Nostræ Dominæ, Ordinis Canonissarum Regularium Sancti Augustini) was founded on Christmas Eve 1597 in Lorraine, France, by Blessed Alix Le Clerc (1576-1622) and Saint Peter Fourier (1565-1640).

Alix was called by God “to found a new [kind of] religious house to do all possible good.” She did not know what this would be until she met her new parish priest, a young Augustinian Canon, Fr Peter Fourier, whose motto was “Do harm to none, do good to all.”

He recognised Alix’s call as a providential answer to the urgent need in the world of the Counter Reformation to provide education for girls, “poor and rich alike,” who would shape the next generation. “Zeal for education is the soul of my calling” – Alix would later declare. Soon schools proliferated, first in Lorraine and then throughout France and other parts of Europe. The Congregation flourished and spread,

surviving the trauma of the French Revolution and other upheavals.

Today there are just over 300 sisters worldwide. In Europe, numbers are decreasing with age, but there is expansion else-

where, especially in Africa and the Far East. In Britain, where the Congregation first arrived in the early 20th century, there are currently 14 sisters, aged between 61 and 103. Although no longer able to maintain schools,

they all live out their vocation to promote the growth of the whole person, which is the essence of education, in whatever way they can, nurtured by the Augustinian spirit. They are chiefly in London and East Sussex (St

Leonards), and maintain a small presence in the Diocese of East Anglia. Sr Sandra lives in Walsingham and supports numerous people in small but effective ways. Sr Jennifer is based in Cambridge. She is in charge of Great Britain’s sisters as the Delegate of the Superior General, and is the link with the rest of the Congregation.



Pictured, standing, from left to right: Sr Chris Brown CSA (London), Sr Jennifer Dines CSA - Sister-in-Charge of the Delegation of Great Britain of the CSA (Cambridge), Sr Mary Inchbald CSA (St Leonards), Sr Jo Langford CSA (St Leonards), Sr Lucy Yeardsley CSA (St Leonards) Seated, from left to right: Sr Martina Boylan CSA (St Leonards), Sr Nicole Mai-Duval CSA (London).

Inset is Sr Sandra Wellington CSA (Walsingham).

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 two Augustinian Orders.

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The Augustinians (OSA)

■ The Order of Saint Augustine (Latin: Ordo Fratrum Sancti Augustini – OSA) is one of the several religious orders based on the Rule of Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430), who is their spiritual founder and they follow his Rule and way of life as a guide for living in community.

Bishop Augustine is one of the great figures of history and one of the great saints of the Catholic Church. Even though he lived at the turn of the 4th and 5th century in Algeria, Africa, he continues to connect with people today through his inspiring writings, such as The City of God and his compelling life story, The Confessions of St Augustine.

Augustine of Hippo searched for happiness in all the wrong places before he discovered true peace, meaning and happiness in knowing Jesus Christ.

Since the foundation of the Augustinian Order in 1244, its members have always sought to live out the ideals of monastic life among the people with service to their spiritual needs and have accompanied many on the path to true happiness.

The Augustinians have created one



Pictured from left to right: Fr George, Fr Stefan and Fr David.

religious Order, of which there are 2,700 friars in 50 countries around the world. Today, they aim to help the Catholic faithful grow in their faith as disciples.

They care for the parishes of St Augustine’s, Hammersmith and St Monica’s, Hoxton, both in London; in Birmingham they run the parish of St Mary’s, Harborne. In the Diocese of East Anglia, they are in charge of the parish of Our Mother of Good Counsel, Suffolk, in Clare Priory with the Retreat

Centre located there.

The Clare community consists of three priests: Fr George Donaghy OSA (Parish Priest), Fr Stefan Park OSA (Prior) and Fr David Middleton OSA.

From October three young Augustinian Friars from the Province of Nigeria, will arrive to serve at the National Shrine of Our Lady, at Walsingham. They are Fr Sunday Ikpe OSA [Prior], Fr Charles Chimaobi OSA, and Fr Eric Taru OSA.



Tributes paid to Fr Neville McClement

■ The Bishop of Northampton has paid tribute to Fr Neville McClement, who retired to Beccles in Suffolk, and who died in February, aged 91, as a consequence of being involved in a road traffic collision, the Suffolk Coroner's Court concluded on September 9.

A Requiem Mass was held for Fr Neville at Our Lady Star of the Sea in Lowestoft back on March 19, following his death in February. Fr Neville was ordained in 1958 and he retired in 1997.

The Northampton Vicar General, Canon Michael Harrison, spoke at the funeral saying: "Half a coachload of parishioners have come from St Martin de Porres Parish in Luton the final active parish of Fr Neville, where he served for 17 years. He was very much appreciated by the people there and they still remember him. He used to come back to do supply and for funerals and Luton was very much in his heart."

Canon Michael also read a message from the Rt Rev Dr David Oakley, Bishop of Northampton, who wrote: "Unfortunately I never had the opportunity to meet Fr Neville but my heart has been touched by the many people who have spoken to me about him, since his death was announced.

"He is remembered with great affection by so many people. They speak of his pastoral solicitude and commitment to the people he was sent to serve. It is good to know that he was able to enjoy a long retirement in Beccles, and with a community he knew and loved."

Fr Neville was born in Wisbech where he grew up and later returned many years later to care for his 90-year-old mother until her death

He had an early vocation and entered Usher Seminary, aged 16, along with Frs Philip and Tony Shryane.

His first appointment was as a curate at Great Yarmouth and later Lowestoft where his gentle but robust ministry especially to the youth won him many friends. He returned to Our Lady Star of the Sea in his retirement where with his older brother Eric he enjoyed many Sunday roast with parishioner Jenny Dowson and daughter Catherine, who kept a caring eye on them, along with other parishioners

The Diocese of Northampton was the one he chose to remain in when the Diocese of East Anglia was formed from the eastern counties.

Dcn Stephen Pomeroy said: "My personal memory of him in his retirement in Lowestoft is of a wise and experienced priest but one with firm action should the situation demand it. Beloved by so many, including children to whom he had a special gift in the sacrament of reconciliation. When attending Mass he always wore the most elegant and highly polished black shoes."

The Suffolk Coroner's Court inquest heard on September 9 that Fr Neville had spent his final months taking care of his brother before they were involved in a head-on car crash days after Christmas.

The court heard that Fr Neville, of North Cove, had retired to Suffolk where he lived with his elder brother, Eric, who had been diagnosed with bladder cancer.

Fr Neville was taken to the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital with fractures to his ribs and sternum. He was transferred to the James Paget University Hospital in Gorleston where he died on February 6.

Assistant coroner for Suffolk, Dr Daniel Sharpstone, concluded that he had died as a consequence of being involved in a road traffic collision.

Watch Fr Neville's Requiem Mass at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=OWv4QNojNl4

East Anglia call for fight against Modern Slavery

The disgracefully overlooked crime of Modern Slavery, including in the UK, must be fought with both action and awareness, says Mark Little MBE, founder and Chairman of the Rotary Action Group Against Slavery.

I have been living on this planet for over 80 years and for three-quarters of that time, I am ashamed to admit that I had no idea that I lived in a world chockful of slaves. Then in 2001, I happened to watch a Channel 4 documentary on the subject, which shook me to the core. Slavery in the USA?... surely not. Slavery in the UK?... never. Millions of slaves in India? Within four months I was out in India specifically to visit two of the child slave rehabilitation centres, featured in that documentary film.

The nature and extent of this global crime has dominated my thoughts and actions ever since I first listened to the heart-breaking testimonies of some of the survivors, I met on that first visit, 23 years ago, who were in the process of rebuilding their lives at those centres.

Ashraf was one of those survivors, it was his story which propelled me to leap from outrage to action; to help alleviate the effects of a crime which is still expanding like knotweed around our planet. For drinking some milk without his master's permission, Ashraf's right hand was blackened over the flames of a gas stove. Then, his body and face were branded, by his master, with a red hot screwdriver. When I met Ashraf at the Rehabilitation Centre, I counted 21 marks on his face.

I know that many people in the UK still labour under the comforting myth that slavery is a thing of the past and that the practice ceased with the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and the American Civil War. Others see the problem from a different perspective. They believe that "Modern Slavery" is a new phenomenon but that it is restricted to countries such as China, India, Nigeria and North Korea rather than the UK.

The reality is that whilst the laws permitting slavery have been repealed everywhere, people around the world continue to be brutalised, broken, exploited and enslaved through violence or the threat of violence. Making something illegal doesn't make it cease to exist. Making something illegal only causes it to vanish from view.

According to the Global Slavery Index, there were approximately 50 million people enslaved worldwide in 2021 and a quarter of these were children. The Index also estimates that 122,000 people were living in Modern Slavery in the UK on any given day in 2021. So behind closed doors, in remote places and right under our noses – in



Anti-slavery campaigner Mark Little and Indian victim Ashraf.

plain sight – slavery has continued in the UK because of the public's lack of awareness or apathy, because of our porous borders and because of the failure of past UK governments to tackle the problem, especially the exploitation of young girls into sex slavery.

Someone has aptly described "slavery" as "the most disgracefully overlooked crime against humanity". The charge is justified because many Governments appear to be doing very little to enforce laws against slavery. As a result of this governmental inaction, the traffickers and slave masters are getting away with it. So, how can we help in this struggle against Modern Slavery? Well as a first step:

We can educate ourselves about Modern Slavery and help others to become aware of the problem.

We can give or organise presentations.

We can insist that businesses check their supply chains for slave-produced goods.

We can provide anti-slavery organisations with funds to support their work.

As consumers, we can restrict our purchases to fairly traded goods.

We can urge our political representatives to promote and/or strengthen anti-slavery laws.

In the past 23 years, I have travelled all over the UK and abroad, trying to open the eyes of as many people as possible to the unseen world where millions languish in slavery because of poverty, because of corruption and because of man's greed for profit on the backs of vulnerable people. I have looked into the eyes and hearts of hundreds of survivors, like Ashraf and felt their pain, which is why I created a global Rotary Action Group Against Slavery.

Now, I want to use the knowledge and contacts I have gained on

Modern Slavery to help in the work and initiative which has been launched in the Diocese of East Anglia by the former Secretary of the Action Group, Simon John.

In the last several months, Simon has been inexhaustible in his appeal for volunteers to join the team which will help in the struggle against Modern Slavery.

Are you up for answering his search for help? Edmund Burke said, "all that is necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing". We must avoid such a situation. After all, if we are neutral in situations of injustice, we have already chosen the side of the oppressor.

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Picture gallery from parishes around the Diocese

■ A Year of fun and Grace: Reflecting on the 'Jesus Hug' Cantonese Children's Fellowship in and around Cambridge. Frances Tai and Elizabeth Lam report.

This last year has been a year of Grace for the children's fellowship, part of the RCDEA Cantonese Chaplaincy.

June 15 marked the end of its first year with a special mass, during which Canon John invoked a special blessing over 13 children. The community prayed together for all the children, asking for the Lord's guidance to help them share such Grace with their friends and for them to grow in wisdom and faith, and be in expressed communion with their fellow Christians and with Jesus Christ.

Over 30 parents, children, and "volunteer teachers" took part in the end-of-term party, some of which took place in the grounds of Our Lady of Lourdes, Sawston.

The past year, the "Jesus Hug" Cantonese Children's Fellowship saw, on average, 18 children participating. These sessions were held after each monthly Cantonese mass celebration, to nurture faith through their first language namely

Cantonese, of the mainly Hongkongers. The varied sessions helped to deepen children's understanding of God and the Catholic Church. Through prayers, singing, storytelling, crafts, short films, and games, volunteers have devoted themselves to making learning fun and to foster a sense of community and fraternal love amongst the children.

The children were also given opportunities to play an active role, including leading prayers, in the offertory rite of the gifts of bread and wine, and assisting in instructions for the younger children. On one level, the children are being prepared for the future; the hope is that they will pick up the torch to



maintain and develop the Cantonese-speaking faith-based community, with the possibility of establishing an ecclesial entity sometime in the future.

The "Jesus Hug" Group would like to recruit more children and voluntary

teachers to expand our network in the coming year, so that they may share in the love and blessings of the Lord, through youth formation.

For inquiries, please contact canton-massea@gmail.com



■ A group of people from Walsingham made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Grace in Ipswich on July 6, reciprocating a pilgrimage made from Ipswich to Walsingham in 2023. Fr Michael Rear reports.

Medieval pilgrims walking to Walsingham from the south of England frequently visited shrines en route, and among the most popular of these was Our Lady of Grace in Ipswich. In 2023 on the Feast of St Maria Goretti a group of pilgrims from Ipswich came to Walsingham, and this year it was reciprocated.

Both Shrines were destroyed on the orders of Henry VIII, but happily both have been restored. Walsingham was restored (first in King's Lynn in 1897) and Ipswich in 1990 when Ipswich Council unveiled a bas-relief of Our Lady of Grace on a commercial building which stands on the site of the original Shrine in Lady Lane. In 2002 the Shrine was restored and blessed by Anglican and Catholic bishops along with Orthodox and Methodist clergy inside the nearby medieval Church of St Mary Elms.

But is it true that Our Lady of Ipswich was destroyed? There is evidence that the image of Our Lady of Grace escaped destruction, saved by devout sailors and taken to Italy where it was off-loaded at Nettuno, a port south west of Rome. Here it was enshrined in the seaside chapel of the Annunciation. Here Maria Goretti used to pray before her, and the image remained until Maria was canonised, and Pope St Paul VI asked that the small

chapel should be replaced, as it was in 1969, by a beautiful new Sanctuary where Our Lady of Grace is enthroned above the high altar, and St Maria Goretti rests in the crypt.

The Walsingham pilgrims first went to Mass at St Pancras where Fr Joseph welcomed them and preached a fine homily, before leading us into the Chapel where a beautiful new statue of Our Lady of Grace was blessed by our bishop this year. Here we said the Prayer for the Conversion of England and sang a Salve. The kind people of St Pancras provided a lovely lunch before the 'Wolsey Walk'.

This was a walk Wolsey himself planned to make from the College he built in Ipswich to the Shrine in Lady Lane. It was rehearsed the day before, on September 7th, but atrocious weather prevented it, and two years later Wolsey died on the way from York to face a charge of treason, having failed to obtain a divorce for the King from Katherine of Aragon. However, in memory of Ipswich's most famous son the Walk was revived in 1978, 450 years to the day of the rehearsal.

Stopping to pray the rosary outside St Peter's church where he worshipped, the statue of Wolsey in Silent Street, the Church of St Nicholas in which he was baptised, and at the Town Hall Steps and then in Lady Lane, before finally reaching St Mary Elms. Here parishioners fed us more delicious food, before the vicar, Fr John led us in devotions at the Shrine.

■ The CAFOD group at North Walsham Parish put on an afternoon walk in the grounds of Blickling Hall near Aylsham in early September.

Organiser John Holden said: "It wasn't a fund raising venture but an environmental awareness day which nestled in with the Pope's monthly intention of climate change and that all will undertake to personally care for the world in which we live.

"The group stopped for prayers and reflections at various points along the route. We hope that this will be a forerunner for more similar events in the parish."

Pictured below are the North Walsham group just prior to the first prayer stop.

