



# EPSOM DEANERY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE #3

## Pentecost 2025



Welcome to the third *Epsom Deanery Newsletter*. In this issue, you can read about a number of recent and upcoming events and more about our response to Bishop Richard's Call to Mission. In our opening article, Canon Kieron O'Brien, Episcopal Vicar for Formation, explores the progress of the Diocesan Plan and the importance of *Vision, Mission* and *Synodality*.

I am writing this just days after the news of the death of Pope Francis and this has certainly focused the mind on the essentials of our Pastoral Plan, as so much of what we are about finds echoes in the priorities he had during his papacy. He gave us a vision of a different kind of Church, one which is outward facing, deeply relational and always directed towards mission. Another vital component of this model of Church is the increasing understanding of the importance of *synodality* - that way of listening to each other, in the Spirit, in order to discern the way ahead with faith and hope.



Over the past 15 months, across the Diocese, each of the eleven deaneries has started the process of growing towards becoming a new parish, served by a team of clergy, who, while retaining their particular connection to a specific community, will be working more closely with each other. Each of these new parishes is at a different stage and the pace of change needs to be tailored to local circumstances, but it is hoped that all new parishes will be formally established this year. This new model will hopefully facilitate some economies of scale and sharing of resources, but if we see this purely as a structural change, to enable greater efficiency, we would be missing the whole point of the Pastoral Plan. We need to return to these key words: *Vision, Mission* and *Synodality*.

It is essential that the leadership (clergy and laity) in our new parishes can unite around a shared vision of what the Catholic Church in this time and place can look and feel like. Bishop Richard has shared his vision for the Diocese in the opening pages of the Pastoral Plan; that is a good place to start, but the vision also needs to set the direction of travel locally, so every Parish can be truly mission-focused. This vision of how the Church can be should be something that excites and inspires people, so they want to be part of it and others will want to join. Pope Francis famously likened the Church to a *field hospital*, where all are welcome to receive healing grace. One of the early tasks of Parish Leadership Teams will be to communicate vision in ways which are attractive and compelling.

The vision must inform our *mission*, another word which is often misunderstood, or simply avoided – because it is always someone else's job! The truth is that all of the baptised are called to become *missionary disciples*, so we must find creative and attractive ways of explaining what that means. The well-publicised upturn in the numbers of people joining the Church, or simply attending Easter services, shows there is a real hunger for faith, to which we are not always well-equipped to respond. Far from making us complacent, this good news should spur us to an even greater sense of mission.

All of this can only be achieved in a spirit of *synodality*, which is church speak for “walking together and accompanying each other in faith.” Key to this are *conversations in the Spirit*, which can be one to one or in small groups, whereby we listen deeply to each other to discover what is on our hearts for our new Parishes. Important decisions can then flow from these conversations, which should happen at every level involving clergy and lay faithful alike. The description of the *Parish*, which Pope Francis give us in *Evangelii Gaudium*, is now even more relevant for our new reality:

*In all its activities the parish trains its members to be evangelisers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey and a centre of constant missionary outreach.* [E.G.28]

Canon Kieron O'Brien is currently Episcopal Vicar for Formation in Arundel and Brighton and has been a Trustee of the Diocese since 2016. His ministry has included appointments as Parish Priest in Crawley, Chichester and East Brighton; he was safeguarding lead in the Diocese from 2005 until 2015 and a member of the Cumberlege Commission, which published its report, *Safeguarding with Confidence*, in July 2007.

# Focus on Prayer

In the last issue, Fr Chris reminded us of the three key strands of how Bishop Richard is asking us all to respond to his *Call to Mission*: **Prayer**, **Formation** and **Mission**.

***‘Prayer – the ‘raising of one’s mind and heart to God’ – is the necessary foundation for every step that we take.’***

[from “*The Pastoral Plan: Call to Mission*” paragraph 3.1.i]

Here, your editor reflects on what this can mean for all of us ...

People have been asking ‘how should we pray?’ for a long time – in Luke’s Gospel, one of the apostles asks Jesus this and it is from his reply that we have what we now know as ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ [Lk.11:2-4]. But the use of formal prayers is only one part of the answer to the question.

*‘For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.’* [St. Thérèse of Lisieux]

The Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC ##2626-2649] describes five types of prayer:

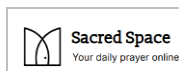
- we can **pray in adoration**, exalting the greatness of the Lord who made us and the almighty power of the Saviour who sets us free from evil;
- we can **petition God** for something [we think] we need;
- we can **pray for intercession** on behalf of other people, asking Jesus, the Holy Spirit, Our Lady, or one of the saints to intercede – whether for family or friends, or people we have never met or even cannot identify by name – to petition for something [we think] they need;
- we can **thank God** for something specific he has done, for us or anyone else, or given, or in general;
- we can **praise God** for His greatness, His infinite mercy, the wonders of creation, or all he has done.

There are formal prayers for all these purposes – we say some regularly as part of the Mass; others form their own distinct acts of worship (such as the Rosary, or Stations of the Cross); here are some links to just a few of the many sites available to help make sure you can always ‘find’ a prayer.



**TheRosary.online**  
How to pray the Rosary

**The Petros Path**  
*The Delightful Journey into Enlightenment*  
at Our Lady & St Peter, Leatherhead



**Daily Prayers on Universalis**

**Morning Prayer**  
(Lauds)

**Vespers**  
(Evening Prayer)

... and a gateway to much more



“guided prayer, every day, for free”

**Stations of the Cross**

using the stations in St Joseph’s, Epsom

But we don’t always need someone else’s words: **in our own words** is a powerful way of talking to God, who knows what is in our hearts and minds and will listen to whatever words are in our heads.

And we don’t always need **any** words: **silent reflection**, committing to God our lives, or something specific that we have done or plan to do, can work just as well, as God knows what is in the heart and mind of every one of us, even when we cannot find the words to articulate it – and He knows too the hearts and minds of people who are incapable of forming words to articulate their thoughts.

And while, when we can, it is important to make time to concentrate on prayer, this does not always have to be a “separate” activity in our lives: we can offer what we are doing – our daily work, routine chores, doing something special for another person, or indeed anything we do – as a prayer to God, **‘any time, anywhere’**, in the certain knowledge that, whenever we can find a moment, God will be listening.

**“How do I know if my prayers are heard?”**

God listens to **all** our prayers. But that does not mean that God will give us everything we ask for, even if we are asking on behalf of others. God will give what is needed, even if we don’t understand what it is he





# Plans for our new Parish

*Fr Chris writes:*

Since our last newsletter...

- Deanery clergy have been continuing to reflect and discuss the Pastoral Plan in their regular meetings and, shortly after Easter, the clergy met with Bishop Richard to share their reflections to date, gain a better understanding of some particular issues, and seek his guidance about the way forward. It was a good meeting, open and constructive, and helped to deepen clarity about the Plan that will in turn better enable effective and enthusiastic action.

We will now need to move forward with the plans I outlined in the last newsletter, in particular, continuing to identify the individuals in each of our existing communities who will come together as the new Parish Leadership Team. This group will play a key role in helping to shape our local plans so that, as a community of communities, we can be – as Canon Kieron O’Brien reminds us we need to be – “truly mission-focused”.

- As a clergy team, we have also been discussing the possibility of holding some ‘Open Meetings’, in a number of locations across the deanery, to give everyone the opportunity to engage directly with our evolving plans and to commit their own energies to helping us make them happen. The best time to hold such meetings is something we are still discussing.
- One specific aspect of the way forward is a presentation, which I will have to make, to the Council of Priests of the Diocese, whose advice the Bishop is obliged to seek, particularly their opinion that any proposed changes are for the more effective service of the mission of the Church. Canon Kieron’s article mentions Bishop Richard’s ambition that all the existing deaneries will be formally established as new parishes by the end of this year: this will mean each deanery having to present local plans to the Council of Priests before the Bishop can enact the formal canonical change, but, as Canon Kieron observes, “the pace of change needs to be tailored to local circumstances”.
- A paper has been prepared to help us reflect on the question: are we ready? What this means is that although it's not necessary for **all** arrangements to be in place before canonical change happens, there is a sense that there should be **sufficient** understanding and willingness to take the next step. (Each person will undoubtedly have their own opinion about where to strike the balance between these two.) Some of these conversations have been had in parishes; some have been had at the Deanery level (Deanery Clergy Meetings / the gathering of Core Teams at St Andrew's / the meeting together of Finance Chairs / this Deanery newsletter!); but there is still more to do. Please do look out for opportunities to share in these conversations.
- Finally, a quick plug for an event next year: we’ve been exploring the possibility of arranging, for July 2026, a shared post-Holy Communion celebration, inviting families from all our communities to celebrate Mass together and enjoy a picnic. With potentially large numbers involved, we’ve been in conversation with Cranmore School, West Horsley, about using their facilities – more details to come!

## OUR PARISH MISSION

**“Join with me in forging our parishes into communities of saints, into strong, lively and welcoming schools of discipleship.”**

“May they be communities where the Lord is known and loved;  
where the liturgy is experienced as an encounter with the wonder of heaven;  
where daily prayer is a natural part of life;  
communities of healing,  
where all are welcomed,  
their dignity as children of God always recognised;  
where young people grow in deep love for the Gospel,  
for the sacramental life of the Church and for prayer;  
where all know the riches of the Faith and seek to share it with others.”

**Bishop Richard Moth**

from “The Pastoral Plan: The Call to Mission” para.1.5

*Fr Chris Bergin*



# Recent Deanery Events

## Epsom Deanery Confirmations 2025



On Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May, Bishop Richard celebrated two services at Arundel Cathedral, during which he confirmed 130 candidates from across Epsom Deanery. He told the congregations that this brought the number of young people confirmed in Arundel and Brighton this year to over 500 and that, by the end of July, the figure will be over 1,000.



Deacon Kevin O'Brien led the arrangements for the Deanery and special thanks are due to all the clergy and catechists in our parishes who prepared the candidates.



The singing was led by a specially-formed choir, comprising singers from five of our parishes, with accomplished support on the keyboard, trumpet and cathedral organ.



After each service, Bishop Richard posed for parish group photographs with the candidates and then for many individual family snaps.



We can also record our gratitude to His Grace the Duke of Norfolk and his staff, who kindly arranged for parking in the castle grounds to ease the usual nightmare of parking in Arundel.



### A PRAYER FOR THE NEWLY-CONFIRMED

God our Father,  
through the Sacrament of Confirmation,  
you send on your people the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete,  
the spirit of wisdom and understanding,  
the spirit of counsel and fortitude,  
the spirit of knowledge and piety.

Help our newly-confirmed to grow in faith, hope and love  
and to know you as the one true God,  
who loves them without limit.

May their hearts welcome you gladly,  
their ears hear your voice in the scriptures  
and their eyes see you in all things;  
and may they proclaim your glory  
as they walk in the ways of Jesus Christ,  
our Lord and Saviour.

**Amen**

Excerpts from the English translation of the *Order of Confirmation* © 2013  
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## Ladywell Lent Retreat

Reproduced with permission from a longer article in the Easter issue of *The Trumpet*, the Parish magazine of St Michael's, Ashted. For a copy of the full article, please contact [epsomdeanerynewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:epsomdeanerynewsletter@gmail.com)

I am sad and embarrassed to say that the words *Lent Retreat Day* struck fear into my heart. When I heard that the whole thing was going to be thrown open to the deanery and I'd have to sit with new people, my heart sank even lower. And when Caroline said to me, "I think we should go," at that point, I have to confess, I was pretty terminal.

But Caro often tells me that my worst fears are rarely even half-reasonable, let alone realised. And such was the case with our retreat at Ladywell Convent near Godalming.

In fact, not only were my fears groundless, but my spirit actually soared as the day progressed. The agenda was simple and unambitious... just two talks, two periods of prayer and contemplation, a fabulous lunch, the rosary and all in the most beautiful spaces you can imagine.

The Franciscan Centre, Ladywell is a ministry of the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood, who believe that the vision of St Francis and St Clare of Assisi is as relevant today as it was in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The place is deceptively large with a number of spacious and comfortable meeting rooms, spaces to settle and pray, a spectacularly beautiful chapel, a refectory and beautifully kept gardens with wonderful views over the rolling Surrey hills.

We gathered for coffee at 10.30... not too early a start...I can manage that. There were a few of us from St Michael's and others from parishes across the deanery – an amiable bunch who immediately became friends.

The day was to be led by Fr. Alexander Lucie-Smith, Parish Priest of St Clements in Ewell.

The first reflection, to last 45 minutes or so, was entitled *Re-Imagining the Stations of the Cross*. Fr. Alexander is a gifted speaker who approached the subject from a quite unusual perspective. *Low hanging fruit*, he called it... regular prayer practices we can take for granted. He took a number of Stations and helped us to reassess what they meant and why they are there.

I guess I'd always just taken the stations for granted ... they're just there - fourteen pictures of a gruesome episode in Jesus' ministry ... something we feel we have to get through to get to the resurrection ... the main attraction. But no, the stations have so much more to tell us ... about us.



*"the most beautiful spaces you can imagine"*

We then gathered for midday prayer in the chapel, a wonderful lofty, light and colourful space. We then had an hour of quiet prayer and contemplation – time to reflect on what we'd discussed in the morning.

Lunch was a surprise too. None of this school and institutional food. Oh no. They have a great chef who produced a wonderful and wide selection of the most delicious, freshly prepared food...and plenty of it. And here was a further opportunity to mix with friends from other parishes.

The afternoon session was entitled *Re-Imagining the Rosary*. The Rosary is such a staple of Catholic upbringing that it is very easy to take for granted. But Fr. Alexander surprised us once again and gave us a very different perspective on its use and on its purpose.



We then had the opportunity to say The Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary in the Chapel and of course, because of our new insight, the prayer meant so much more.

To be honest, the day was over much too soon and I was genuinely sad to leave. But we made good friends in other parishes and have already found other shared activities in the deanery more welcoming as a result.

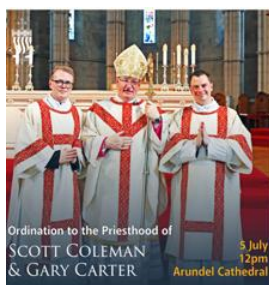
*Mike King*



# Upcoming events

## Celebration of Ordination, Arundel Cathedral, 5<sup>th</sup> July

Bishop Richard will be ordaining two new priests for the Diocese at **12:00 noon on 5<sup>th</sup> July**: Gary Carter, who has been serving as Deacon in our Deanery, at Epsom, since last September, and Scott Coleman, who has been serving as Deacon at Guildford.



Prayer from the  
English translation of  
the *Rite of Ordination*  
of Priests © 2018 ICEL.  
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### Prayer for those to be ordained

Lord our God, who in governing your people make use of the ministry of Priests, grant a persevering obedience to your will to Gary and Scott, Deacons of your Church, whom you graciously choose for the office of the priesthood, so that by their ministry and life they may gain glory for you in Christ. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

### Festival of Hope at South of England Showground, Ardingly : 20<sup>th</sup> September : 10:00am-4:30pm

We are gathering as a Diocese to celebrate the Jubilee Year of Hope, the 60th Anniversary of the Diocese, and our continuing mission. The celebration will include guest speakers to inspire and uplift us, as well as a *youth stream* for younger members of our congregations. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will be available throughout the day, which will finish with Mass. The festival is free to attend. **Tickets have been allocated proportionally to each parish according to Mass attendance: check with your Parish Office if any of your local parish tickets are still available.** For full details, see [Festival of Hope](#)

**12<sup>th</sup> June**  
11:00 am

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass at Worth Abbey.** All are invited to join the celebration of the anniversary of the Consecration of the Abbey Church.

**12<sup>th</sup> June**  
12:00 noon

**Mass for Jubilarian Priests at Arundel Cathedral.** All are invited to join priests of the diocese who are celebrating 25 (*including our own Fr Charles of Effingham & Fetcham*), 40, 50 (*incl. Fr Graham Bamford, formerly at Ewell*) & 60 years of priestly ordination.

**15<sup>th</sup> June**

**Day for Life**, an opportunity to celebrate the dignity of all human life from conception to natural end. The theme for 2025 is 'Hope Does Not Disappoint: Finding Meaning in Suffering'. Details @ [Day for Life 2025 - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#).

**starts 18<sup>th</sup> June**  
7:30 pm  
*St Clement's, Ewell*

**A Biblical Walk through the Mass (online by Zoom).** Five sessions looking at the Biblical roots of the Mass, what it all means and why it matters. Each session involves a video and questions for reflection. **Please contact [Johnlodge47@gmail.com](mailto:Johnlodge47@gmail.com) to register.**

**18<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> June**  
W: 9:30am-7:00pm  
Th: from 9:30am  
Mass at 5:30pm

**Corpus Christi Carpet of Flowers at Arundel Cathedral.** Experience the beautiful Carpet of Flowers. The Cathedral will be open to view the carpet all day on Wednesday and on Thursday until 5.30pm, when Mass begins; a procession to Arundel Castle follows. All are welcome. Booking is not required. Free entry. Donations very welcome.

**21<sup>st</sup> June**  
9:30am – 4:00pm

**Day of Reflection for Diocesan Musicians at St Dunstan's Woking**, with time to reflect on the liturgy, the role of music within it and how we prepare for our service. Details @ [A&B Day of Reflection for Musicians](#)

**9<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> August**  
**10<sup>th</sup> August**  
*(Reigate to Epsom)*  
**11<sup>th</sup> August**  
*(Epsom to Weybridge)*

**Diocesan Walking Pilgrimage – across the Diocese, from Horley to Eastbourne.** This year's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Pilgrimage will visit all 11 Deaneries / new Parishes in the Diocese, *including Epsom Deanery on Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> and Monday 11<sup>th</sup> August*. The pilgrims hope to inspire people from the Deaneries they walk through to join them as day pilgrims. Details @ [Pilgrims Live!](#)

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See all A&B upcoming events at <https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/diocese/events>

FEEDBACK: [epsomdeanerynewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:epsomdeanerynewsletter@gmail.com)

# Getting to know each other

## Provost William (Bill) Davern



On the morning of my ordination to the priesthood, 14 July 1981, my brother called me, exclaiming that many are called but few get up.

I did get up and that day I, along with Fr Martin Breen, was ordained by Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, in my home parish of St John the Baptist, Hospital, Co. Limerick.

My response to an earlier call took place while I was working as a trainee nurse at Brookwood Hospital, Knaphill, near Woking, Surrey. It was a strange call, prompted by some of my work colleagues who were themselves lapsed at the time, that I should become a priest.

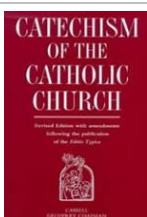
Eventually I plucked up the courage to go and see my parish priest Fr Brendan MacCarthy, who at first suggested that I might like to apply to the Archdiocese of Southwark, but after a discussion he arranged for me to see the vocation Director, Fr Barry Wymes. At their suggestion, I finished my nurse training and then went to Campion House, Osterley, in September 1973, spending two intense years there gaining some further academic qualifications before being sent to St John's Seminary, Womersley, for six years.

After ordination my first appointment was to St Ann's parish, Banstead, and as chaplain to St Andrews School, Leatherhead for five years. My second appointment was to Cardinal Newman school in Hove as full-time chaplain. In 1990, I was asked to look after St Clement's in Ewell for nine months until a parish priest was appointed. Then off to Rome to study at the Angelicum for a BA in Spiritual Theology, returning to become, for the first time, Parish Priest, at Our Lady and St Peter's, Leatherhead, where I spent one glorious year before being posted here to St Joseph's Epsom.

There is much to be thankful to God for in being able to get up for on that morning of July 1981.

Canon Bill modestly omits mention of what he has done in Epsom since being appointed by Bishop Cormac in 1992, not least shepherding the Parish from its small site in the middle of town to a new hill-top church and parish centre. The first Mass was celebrated in the church on Maundy Thursday, 2001. The church was consecrated, by the same Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, by then Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, on the feast of St Joseph the Worker, 1<sup>st</sup> May 2001.

## Some further reading on Prayer:



See 'PART FOUR:  
CHRISTIAN  
PRAYER'

## Pilgrims of Prayer

The Jesuit Institute has produced a guide based on St Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, a variety of ways of praying to develop our spiritual health and wellbeing – "the more you practise, the more benefits you will feel".



## St Augustine's letter to Proba

Probably Augustine's best-known letter, written in the year 412 in reply to a question on how to pray.

The letter is a short instruction on Christian private prayer. In it, Augustine explains the purpose of private prayer and uses the Lord's Prayer to illustrate "all the praise and petition that prayer requires".

**"We must continue to become more and more a people of prayer. Every person living in the Diocese will be given the opportunity to learn about prayer and to experience the different ways of praying. As communities across the Diocese develop in new ways, it will be important for the successful experiences of introducing people to prayer to be shared."**

from *"The Pastoral Plan: The Call to Mission"* paragraph 3.1.vii

Please let us know if there are specific topics you would like to see addressed in future issues of this newsletter, by emailing to:  
**[epsomdeanerynewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:epsomdeanerynewsletter@gmail.com)**