

Friends *of the* Ordinariate

Supporting the Holy See's Vision for Christian Unity



**Statue of Our Lady after Sunday
Mass, Husbands Bosworth**

Photo by Ruth Clensy.

From the Honorary President



Mgr Keith Newton

Dear Friends,

In June this year Archbishop Dermot Farrell of Dublin asked all the faithful to pray earnestly for an increase in priestly vocations. At present there is just a single seminarian in training for the Diocese of Dublin.

In England and Wales the situation is not nearly so acute. The National Office for Vocations in England and Wales has published a graph entitled: 'Ordinations and Projected Future Ordinations to the Diocesan/ Ordinariate Priesthood in England and Wales'. The numbers peaked (in recent years) in 1996/1997 with around 110 annual ordinations. The graph extends to 2023 where the projected number is 18.

The reasons for this decline are complex and the Bishops of England and Wales are looking at new and imaginative ways of reversing this downward trend.

When Benedict XVI established the three Ordinariates, perhaps vocations to the priesthood were not at the forefront of his thinking but the establishment of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham has given, and continues to give, a much-needed boost to vocations.

This year we ordained one priest and two permanent deacons. We have another young man who has now finished his formation and is undertaking a parish placement in the hope he will be ordained next year.

At present we have four seminarians studying at Allen Hall. Two are former Anglican priests in their second of three years. One, older, former-Anglican priest is in his first year and another young man has recently begun his full six years of formation.

In addition we are in regular contact with four former Anglican priests who are enquiring about ordination. We also have several men enquiring about the permanent diaconate.

We must continue to pray earnestly that this flow of vocations continues to grow. We face, however, a practical problem. Full-time seminary study costs the Ordinariate between £25,000-£30,000 per person per year. This is way beyond our limited resources and others within the Catholic Church have shown enormous generosity in helping us train these men.

The Friends of the Ordinariate have helped in a particularly important way. Once ordained, the new priests need a curacy of at least two years to help them 'learn on the job', so to speak. The Friends have

materially supported three curates in this way. Happily, more curates will – God willing – be turning to the Friends for material support. I hope you will be able to help them.

Rt Revd. Mgr. Keith Newton

Ordinary of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham

GDPR Compliance

Under the legislation which came into effect in May 2018, all public bodies, including charities are obliged to take greater steps to ensure the privacy of those persons whose information they hold on file.

The Friends of the Ordinariate sent out a request form to all non-donors whose names are held on our database, asking for their explicit approval to remain on our database and have altered the information we hold accordingly.

Our database continues to be held in a secure manner and is in no way accessible to anyone without appropriate authorisation. Nor will we use it for anything except to further our work of fund raising for the Ordinariate.

Have you Gift-Aided your Donation?

If you are a UK taxpayer and donate to the Friends of the Ordinariate, we can claim 25p from HMRC for every £1 that you give us. For this reason, we urge all our donors to fill in and tear off the Gift Aid form on the back page of this Newsletter, returning it to us at:

**The Administrator
Friends of the Ordinariate,
24 Golden Square, London W1F 9JR**

Even if you have already filled in a Gift Aid form, we would appreciate it if you were to complete this form again for our records. We recently received a substantial Gift Aid payment from HMRC, which will go towards our work in supporting and highlighting the work of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

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Editors: Michael Hodges and Peter Sefton-Williams

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Chairman's Message



The last Chairman's Message was written during the holiday devoted to celebrating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. In September we were all deeply saddened by the death of Her Majesty, a great Queen and a great Christian. I sent a letter of condolence on behalf of all the Friends of the Ordinariate to His

Majesty the King. This Chairman's Message is written during the month of November when we pray for the Souls of the Dead and, in particular, for the soul of Her Late Majesty. God Save The King!

At the last board meeting of the Friends of the Ordinariate in 2022 (no. 37 since FOTO came into being) we discussed what we needed to do for the Ordinariate in 2023. The Friends raise funds for two principal purposes: to provide financial support to the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham and those associated with the Ordinariate and to publicise the work of the Ordinariate in the wider Catholic world and beyond, particularly in the Anglican world. Since the Friends began their work, the two areas where we have provided the greatest level of support have been the acquisition or improvement of real estate (£138,000) and support for priests in formation or newly ordained (£80,000). The next largest area of support has been liturgical texts (£31,000). In the coming two or three years we expect that the most significant call upon our resources will be support for priests in formation or newly ordained. In Monsignor Keith Newton's letter you will have read that the Ordinariate has a good number of ordinands who, once ordained, will require support as they begin their ministry. The Ordinariate is unusual in that some of the ordinands are married with families and therefore require more financial support than unmarried priests. This is the natural result of the continuing movement of priests from the Church of England into the full communion of the Catholic Church. The invaluable financial aid of the St Barnabas Society perforce has to cease when a former Anglican priest is ordained as a Catholic priest.

Grants made by the Friends are all made in accordance with the Grants Policy whose latest version is dated June 2021. I would like to take this opportunity to note that almost all the Friends of the Ordinariate are Catholics who are not members of the Ordinariate. We are deeply grateful to them for their support both financial and through their encouragement of our mission. As always, there is a Requiem Mass in November each year for deceased benefactors of the Friends of the Ordinariate. This year it took place on 25th November 2022.

Thank you for your continued support!

Nicolas Ollivant

Chairman, Friends of the Ordinariate

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Hon Vice Presidents: *The Rt Rev'd Abbot Hugh Allan OPræm; Dom David Charlesworth OSB; The Very Rev'd Fr Ignatius Harrison CO; The Duke of Norfolk GCVO; The Duchess of Somerset; The Countess of Oxford and Asquith; Lord Nicholas Windsor; The Rt Hon the Lord Deben PC; The Lord Moore of Etchingham; The Lord Gill; The Rt Hon Sir Edward Leigh PC MP; Sir Adrian FitzGerald Bt; Sir Josslyn Gore-Booth Bt; The Squire de Lisle; The Hon Veronica Hodges.*

Cover photograph: *The Lady Chapel at St Mary's Church, Husbands Bosworth, Leicestershire, was added in 1891 by A. E. Purdie as a monument to Sir Francis Fortescue-Turville who built the church in 1873. © Ruth Clensy.*

My Journey to the Catholic Church

by Timothy Ezat

Childhood and Conversion to Christianity

I am originally from Kurdistan (north of Iraq). I was born to a Muslim family in the early 1980s, the second child of three. My father had a degree in archaeology and worked as a civil servant, and my mother was a primary school teacher. Growing up, most of my immediate and wider family were nominal Muslims, with a few who renounced belief in all religions. Like most children, I learnt the basic tenets of Islam from school and picked up some from my parents who used to fast the month of Ramadan and occasionally read the Quran, however, I was never a practising Muslim.

In 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait committing the country to yet another long and devastating chain of events. One such event was the loss of my father during the Kurdish uprising of March 1991. My father's death and the subsequent civil war caused me to question God's existence. After several conversations with one of my uncles, an ardent atheist, I identified with the idea that there probably isn't a God.

However, this changed when in 1996 I viewed a film on the life of Jesus Christ based on St Luke's Gospel. The film engendered in me a sense of curiosity, leading to exploration of the person and teaching of Christ. I was intrigued by the thought of the Son of God, or a prophet, being crucified. The obvious place to start my investigation was the New Testament; hence I acquired a copy and spent several months reading it with immense interest. Gradually, this led me to seek occasions to approach Christians and ask questions about their faith. For various reasons, unfortunately, I could not make contact with the only church in the city, which was Chaldean Catholic. However, as a result of conversations with several schoolmates, I was introduced to an underground evangelical community—one consisting mostly of converts, who helped me make a profession of faith. Given where we lived, my conversion did not go down well with my family and the local community. It took my family several years to accept that their son had become a Christian (something they are at peace with now). Furthermore, at the time, there was unease in the wider community about the phenomenon of a group of Kurds converting to Christianity. The tense atmosphere meant that the evangelical fellowship could not offer me baptism. This had to wait for another time when a more favourable set of circumstances became available.

A year after my conversion and, due to the civil war and the ongoing unrest in the region, my mother made the decision for us to migrate from Iraq and seek refuge in a safer part of the world. Like many at the time, we took the long road to Europe, and in 1999 we arrived in England and soon settled in West London. In 2005, we obtained British citizenship. Life in the UK began by taking English classes and then working for several years in retail as a shop assistant. I was also introduced to an Arabic evangelical fellowship, where I was baptised. I enrolled in a one-year Bible College in 2001 and got actively involved in the Arabic fellowship. By 2007, I left retail and began working for the London City Mission, devoting more time to ministry, serving as an evangelist in West London.

Another development during this time was my marriage to Hend, who was living in Duhok, Iraq when we first met in early 2004. Hend is a Chaldean Catholic but at that time she was exploring evangelicalism through a local fellowship in Duhok. Given the unstable situation in Iraq, we travelled to Beirut, Lebanon, where we were married at an evangelical church in June 2007. In 2009 we moved to Oxford to embark on theological study at Wycliffe Hall and it was during this time that we were blessed with the birth of our daughter Leeva in February 2010. Since our marriage, we have journeyed together through different theological terrains seeking a true spiritual home, which ultimately led to the Catholic Church. For Leeva and me it involved reception into the Church, for Hend it was a rediscovery of her childhood faith that was nurtured in the Chaldean church in Duhok.

Theological Journey and Reception into the Catholic Church

A key focus of my life since becoming a Christian has been my journey towards the ordained Anglican ministry and ongoing discernment. Having become a Christian, I had a deep desire to learn about my new faith, its history, theology and practice. I first stumbled across the term 'theological college' when I was a new Christian in Iraq, while listening to another Muslim convert's testimony on an audio cassette. I was keen to learn about Christianity's historical development, particularly the immediate post-New Testament era. Hence, upon arrival in England, I took the first opportunity to enrol in a Bible school. The course was disappointing, as there was no mention of the post-apostolic age. However, on a positive side, the bible



Timothy Ezat pictured on a visit to the Vatican with clergy of the Anglican Diocese of Chichester in 2019

school was an eye-opener, as it put me on course to begin the slow process of questioning the evangelical narrative of Christianity and its historical roots. After this initial setback, the search continued, and by the time I was working for the London City Mission, I was introduced to the Church of England.

Compared to the nonconformist evangelical groups I had experienced; the Church of England was theologically and historically more grounded. I was exposed in a limited way to the idea of liturgy. Moreover, though it was a product of the Protestant Reformation, it benefited from a structure and did not dispense with Holy Orders. Not that I understood the full weight of these claims but there was enough to make me curious. Most importantly to me at the time, it claimed to have historical roots going back to the early Church. Soon after discovering the Church of England, I set on the path of discernment to ordained Anglican ministry.

In 2009 I was recommended for priestly formation and began reading theology at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford. I had a wonderful time there and I am thankful for what it gave me. Though, being in the evangelical tradition of the Church of England, Wycliffe Hall had its limitations.

For example, it was somewhat disappointing that it did not teach us much about Anglican history, worship and theology. However, its place in the University of Oxford afforded me the opportunity to immerse myself in subjects beyond the curriculum offered at the college. Hence, for the first time, I got my hands on Early Church writings which I came to cherish beyond my time at Oxford and to the present day.

As I began reading Patristic texts, some key elements of my understanding of Christianity were challenged. To give a few examples; the writings of saints such as Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus of Lyons, to name a few, made clear that from early on the Christian community had a higher view of the Eucharist than, by now, my familiar evangelical perspective. The Eucharist was central to the Christian gathering for worship. It also became evident that Holy Orders, especially the episcopacy, soon became the established form of governance in the early Church, and that Rome occupied a special place. Moreover, within the Church of the Fathers, which had bishops and gathered around the eucharist, the notion of the New Testament as holy scripture was gradually formed and passed on to subsequent generations. Hence, Tradition has played a foundational role in Christianity's formation and self-understanding. Consequently, scriptural interpretation takes a new and more generous role. We are not merely reading the sacred text to reconstruct the intent of original authors and the way their first hearers understood them but we also take into account the long tradition of its reading and reception in the Church. Finally, it was clear that the Church is the vehicle of salvation; we find redemption within the Church, rather than reducing salvation to a private affair between God and individuals. The writings of the Fathers challenged my understanding of Christianity in many respects. In time, it injected into my bloodstream a renewed love for Scripture and the Sacraments and an appreciation of Holy Orders and Sacred Tradition.

At this stage and upon my ordination to the diaconate in 2012, whilst I had come to question the evangelical narrative, I still identified as an evangelical Anglican. I thought that normative Anglican theology, including its evangelical flavour, is by nature sacramental and appreciative of Holy Orders. That is to say, although Wycliffe Hall did not emphasise the above, I hoped and believed that the reality in the parish would be different. However, my curacy at All Saints Church, Eastbourne, an evangelical church, proved to me otherwise. After my ordination to the priesthood in 2013, it gradually became apparent that I held a higher view of the sacraments and Holy Orders than either was incumbent in my training or among the congregation. Consequently, I was relocated to St Mary the Virgin, Old Town, in the same town in the High Anglican tradition, where I spent the rest of my curacy (2014 – 2017). Here I was immersed in liturgical worship, daily Eucharist, Benediction of the Blessed

Sacrament and public prayer of the Daily Office, which were some of the marks of Anglo-Catholicism. I found space to grapple with the notion of priesthood as it was advanced by Catholic reflections. I learnt to rehearse the Anglo-Catholic narrative of the Church of England, as it was initiated by the Oxford Movement. This narrative provided justification for the Anglo-Catholic take on the Church of England, attempting to provide a coherent story linking us back to the Early Church. To the best of its intention the Anglo-Catholicism I belonged to sought to uphold a Catholic ecclesiology centred on Scripture and the Eucharist, fostering a sacramental understanding of priesthood. It further had the desire to see the Church of England reunited with the Holy See. During this time, I kept on with patristic texts, undertaking an MA with research on St Cyril of Alexandria's interpretation of Scripture. I also engaged with the writing of the Oxford Fathers and a number of Catholic theologians, such as Benedict XVI, on priesthood, the sacraments and liturgy. By the time my curacy finished, I identified strongly with the traditional flavour of Anglo-Catholicism which I believed to be the natural heir to the Oxford Movement.

My incumbency at St Richard's church, Langney, in Eastbourne began in March 2017 and lasted a little over three years. I loved serving the parish and its people. The day-to-day life of ministry, with its joys and sorrows, helped me grow closer to God. But as time went by, it became apparent that what I have come to hold dear about the Catholic and patristic tradition could not be sustained in the Church of England. My parish and the wider church's reality revealed how fragile and unrealisable are the aspirations and ideals of Anglo-Catholicism. Several members of the congregation publicly voiced their concern regarding my understanding of priesthood and more generally my Catholic views. The reality hit me, that whilst Anglicanism has reserved a number of precious Catholic elements within its life, it is not the Catholic Church, nor can it be without visible unity with the See of Peter. The Anglo-Catholic movement rightly sought to highlight the Catholic aspects of the Church of England but its narrative without full communion with the Holy See is far from straightforward; its hopes and aspirations within the Church of England fail to fathom the conflicting and competing identities of Anglicanism forged at its conception during the Protestant Reformation.

More personally, as I began to take an honest look at my belief and practices, there was no hiding from the fact that they did not sit comfortably within the parish and Anglicanism at large – for their natural habitat is the Roman Catholic Church. Hence, although I remain grateful for all that the Church of England has given me, I sensed it pointing me beyond itself. It became clear that, while one can appreciate Catholic thought and practice, one cannot be a Catholic outside the Catholic Church.

This of course took me some time, during which I agonised over my future within Anglicanism. Questions regarding communion with the Catholic Church began to surface more frequently. I had the chance to meet Fr Gerard Hatton, a Catholic priest in Eastbourne. We had frequent and open discussions about the differences between our churches. Finally, in January 2019 after discussing it with HEND, who was very much a partner on this journey, we decided to attend to the matter. I began to contact a few other Catholic priests in Eastbourne, among them Fr Neil Chatfield, a priest of the Ordinariate. After several months of discussion and preparation classes, in which I came to look closely at the apostolic constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* of October 2009, I asked to be received into the Church through the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham. In March 2020 I informed the Anglican bishop of Chichester of my intention to be received into communion with the Catholic Church. The plan of reception in Holy Week/Easter 2020 was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, my Anglican parish required pastoral attention as news of the virus was emerging and we were entering a period of lockdown. However, once the situation eased, and the necessary preparations were made, my daughter and I were received into the Catholic Church by Fr Neil Chatfield and Fr Thomas Mason, on June 27th, 2020 – the feast of St Cyril of Alexandria!

Since my reception into the Catholic Church, we have relocated to London with the help of the St Barnabas Society, to whom we are immensely grateful. Following her graduation in Fine Art in 2020, HEND is occupied with developing her practice in contemporary and sacred art. I am currently in second year of formation at Allen Hall and on the verge of starting a PhD on St Cyril of Alexandria. More immediately, Leeva is due to be joined by a sibling sometime in December 2022!



Timothy Ezat with his wife HEND and daughter Leeva

Convert Poets – Dame Edith Sitwell (1887-1965)

by Michael Hodges and Peter Sefton Williams

Edith Sitwell was born in Scarborough in 1887, the eldest of the three Sitwell siblings, Osbert being born in 1892 and Sacheverell in 1897. Her father was Sir George Sitwell, 4th Baronet and her mother Lady Ida Denison, daughter of the 1st Earl of Londesborough. The Sitwells had lived at Renishaw Hall in Derbyshire, some eight miles south of Sheffield, since the 14th century.

Edith Sitwell said in 1938 her childhood was “so unhappy that even now I can scarcely bear to think about it”. She was taught at home by a couple of governesses. From 1903 this was the cultured and musical (and Catholic) Helen Rootham who was to become Edith’s closest friend for the next thirty five years. The same year Edith was confirmed by the Bishop of Hull at Hackness Church outside Whitby.

She duly “came out” (in the old sense of the word) but became increasingly interested in the worlds of poetry and modern art. Life at home was oppressive mainly because of the events that were to lead in due course to Lady Ida Sitwell’s imprisonment in 1915 for financial fraud. In 1912 Edith escaped to London to share a flat with Helen Rootham. There is no evidence that they became lovers.

Her first poem *Drowned Suns* was published in 1913. Three years later she and her brother Osbert wrote a joint book of poems, *Twentieth Century Harlequinade*. From 1916 to 1932 she held a literary gathering each Saturday at their flat in Pembridge Mansions, attracting luminaries such as Yeats, Eliot, Sitwell, Graves, Forster, Huxley and Greene for strong tea and halfpenny buns.

In 1914 she met the Chilean artist Álvaro de Guevara with whom she fell in love. It is unlikely anything physical happened. Harold Acton described her “a sex-starved spinster all her life. She really desperately needed someone to take her to bed but I’m sure no one ever did. Certainly if it did happen - which I doubt - he was an extremely courageous gentleman... dear Edith wasn’t exactly what you might call cuddly.” From 1917 a close friendship also developed with the then homosexual Siegfried Sassoon.

Edith remained pious but was disaffected from the Church of England. In 1918 she wrote “It makes me feel more and more as though one day I shall become Roman Catholic (It is the only creed for someone like myself, I do feel that more and more)”.

Sacheverell Sitwell went briefly up to Balliol College, Oxford in 1919 and during his stay there met William Walton, whom he introduced to his sister. Walton and Edith spent the two years from 1921 to 1923 collaborating on the modernist *Façade* which received its first public performance at the Aeolian Hall on 12th June 1923.



Edith Sitwell by Howard Coster copy print, 1937

The Sitwells became increasingly notorious figures in the literary world. In 1927 Edith met Pavlik Tchelitchew, the gay Russian artist, with whom she fell passionately and unsuccessfully in love. 1928 saw the publication her *Gold Coast Customs*.

Her unusual angular appearance attracted personal attacks. She was caricatured by Noel Coward as Hermione Whittlebot in *London Calling*. The Sitwells refused to talk to Coward for forty years.. Wyndham Lewis attacked the Sitwells in *The Apes of God*. F.R. Leavis announced “The Sitwells belong to the history of publicity rather than of poetry”. She gave as good as she got. She described the latter as “a tiresome, whining, pettifogging little pipsqueak”.

In 1935 Edith stayed for the first time at the Sesame, Imperial and Pioneer Club at 49 Grosvenor Street, Mayfair, a club with an all female membership and a low subscription. The Sesame served as her residence in London for twenty six years and her dinner parties, luncheons and cocktail parties there attracted writers, musicians and artists.

Helen Rootham died painfully of cancer in 1939. Edith spent most of the War fairly austere at Renishaw Hall as the guest of her brother Osbert. This gave her much time to write. Her most famous poem, full of Christian imagery, *Still Falls the Rain* describes the Blitz in 1940. It starts:-

“Still falls the Rain
Dark as the world of man, black as our loss
Blind as the nineteen hundred and forty nails upon the Cross.”

In 1946 she published *Fanfare for Elizabeth*, which sold nineteen thousand copies. She began to spend more time in London, and also started travelling again to Europe and America. She was created a Dame in 1954.

In 1955 she eventually became a Catholic having pondered the step since 1918. She wrote to the convert Eddie Sackville-West “You say it took twelve years to bring you to your resolution. It must have taken about the same time to bring me to mine.” She first wrote to the convert poet Roy Campbell asking him and his wife Mary to be godparents. She then approached Father Martin D’Arcy SJ for instruction. He wrote “Your letter reached me this morning. I cannot say how happy it made me. I had felt such love moving in your last volumes of poetry. I am anxious to help in every way I can.” However he was at Notre Dame University in Indiana for the summer term and recommended she speak to Father Philip Caraman SJ. The latter told Edith on the 1st May “I am convinced that the Holy Spirit has so worked already in your heart and mind that there is little left for a priest to do, save take you systematically through the principal articles of Catholic faith.”

Father Caraman made several trips to Renishaw Hall in July to see her. It was decided that she should be received into the Church on the 6th August, the Feast of the Transfiguration, which Caraman thought fitting as “a revelation of the blinding beauty of the soul in God’s grace.” The Campbells lived in Portugal and could not attend the ceremony so Edith asked Evelyn Waugh to serve as an additional godfather. On the 7th August he wrote to Nancy Mitford “Yesterday I went to London to stand godfather to Edith Sitwell who has submitted to the Pope of Rome. She looked fine - like a 16th century Infanta - and spoke her renunciation of heresy in silver bell tones”. Alec Guinness, shortly to be a fellow convert, was also present. Waugh expressed some hope for Sitwell’s moral character in a letter to her “I heard a rousing sermon on Saturday against the danger of immodest bathing-dresses and thought that you and I were innocent of that offence at least.”

Edith spent her declining years in trouble with the Inland Revenue, and in declining health. The death of Pavel Tchelitchev in 1957 was a great shock. Her overdraft grew uncontrollably until 1961 when it was cleared by the sale of her manuscripts. The same year she moved into a flat in Hampstead.

In 1964 she died of heart failure in St Thomas’s Hospital, London. On 14th December Father Martin D’Arcy celebrated a Requiem Mass at Farm Street and her funeral took place later that day at Lois Weedon Church near Sacheverell Sitwell’s home at Weston Manor, Northamptonshire. Her grave overlooks a pleasant valley where sheep graze immediately beyond, and the grass slopes down to some quiet fish ponds. On her gravestone is a plaque by Henry Moore. Engraved below it are lines from her poem *The Wind of Early Spring*:-

“The past and present are as one
Accordant and discordant, youth and age
And death and birth. For out of one came all -
From all comes one.”

The Second Part of Mgr. David Silk’s Fascinating Memoir Covering the Turbulent Years 1980 - 1995.

Part III to follow.



In January 1980, only four years after we had arrived in Beckenham, Bishop Richard Rutt of Leicester wrote me a handwritten letter, inviting me to consider appointment as Archdeacon of Leicester to share with him “the pastoral care of the city and eastern half of the county”. I had met him but a couple of times or so,

since - his brother was one of our lay Readers. It was, of course, indecently soon to consider moving - five years at the very least would be barely acceptable - and I had not even imagined such high responsibility, let alone sought it. When asked by Bishop David Say of Rochester, how I saw my future I had replied, “Not gaiters...maybe the Liturgical Commission?” [He kept his word - I was appointed in time to enjoy contributing to the Alternative Service Book 1980 which placed alongside the Tudor-Stuart Book of Common Prayer a complete set of 20th century alternative texts for worship.]

Joyce and I visited Leicester, met with Joan and Richard Rutt, were given a Cook’s tour of the archdeaconry, and learned that the immediate task was pastoral re-organisation; too many churches...many in the wrong places, a national fall in vocations to the priesthood to be met by “clergy-rationing”, tertiary education and hospital chaplaincies inadequately served, and mining development in the Vale of Belvoir. Many of these ministries required an adequate ecumenical structure, as did the churches’ mission in new housing areas. There was a major job to be done - my ecumenical experience would be useful.

There were major family commitments to be considered. My elderly uncle was showing signs of the onset of dementia and had just come to live with us. Our son was settling into secondary education, and our daughter was but three years younger. Two months had elapsed before I could with confidence accept the invitation and the installation was scheduled for October - five years to the day!

In November I was elected for the first of three successive five-year terms as Prolocutor – Spokesman and Chairman of the House of Clergy in General Synod. My duties would take me to three General Assemblies of the World Council of Churches, to many meetings of the British Council of Churches as it was changing to accommodate the Roman Catholic and Black-Majority Churches. For fourteen years I should be addressing the development of the worship, work and witness of the churches locally, nationally and internationally in the context of a Britain which was in the throes of the Thatcherite “revolution”, growing more aggressively secular in its spirit, more consciously multi-cultural, in a fast-shrinking world. In 1982 the nation would find itself at war with Argentina and the Archbishop of Canterbury (MC for bravery in Normandy) would be publicly chided for a focus on repentance and reconciliation rather than victory.

In 1984 Indira Gandhi was assassinated and the shock waves were felt not least in Leicester where a population of 286,000 included 44,000 Hindus, nearly 20,000 Muslims, significant communities of Baha’is, Buddhists, Hebrews, Jains, Sikhs and a cluster of Zoroastrians. The bishop was away from Leicester – on sabbatical as I recall - and, as a diocese, we had no formally appointed officer to respond to Interfaith concerns. It was however fortunate that there was a senior Methodist minister, born and ordained in India, who was an international figure in the interfaith industry, and could guide us. Accompanied by him as chief-of-staff, and supported by a goodly retinue of priests, a detail of Anglican and Catholic Sisters and a handful of hastily press-ganged lay folk, I joined the thousands who crammed into the De Montfort Hall to mourn and pray. It was clear that one of us was expected to speak and - coached by the helpful Methodist – I stepped up. Consequently, within two years, Leicester was the third city, after Leeds and Wolverhampton, to have a Council of Faiths linked with the UK Interfaith Network. I was elected as Chair for seven years running and doubled as Chair for the (Churches Together) Commission for Interfaith Relations.

In 1985 the Archbishop of Canterbury’s Commission published its Report “Faith in the City” and was greeted by a chorus of adverse criticism from the government benches. Members of the Government wrote it off as “Marxist”. But, apart from asking awkward social and economic questions prompted by the Christian understanding of the Gospel, the Commission homed in on the failure of the Church of England to make space for the very many Christian migrants who had come to the UK in answer to handbills showered around in the Caribbean in which the Minister of Health – one J Enoch Powell no less! - invited them to come to the UK and work in the National Health Service and London Transport. Joyce and I were much onside, for the best

man at our wedding, a fellow-student at Exeter and a formidable bridge-partner, was an Anglican priest from Jamaica.

It took a long time for the penny to drop, and I must confess to failing to grasp the point myself until brave and blunt folk from our Afro-Caribbean community in Leicester tackled me personally and bluntly. The Archbishops, Prolocutors and Chair and Vice-Chair of the House of Laity, with some of the senior administrators and lawyers accepted an invitation to a residential Conference in Birmingham with ethnic minority clergy, pastors and laity of the Anglican and Black-Majority churches and were exposed to the depth of their anger, frustration, and sense of alienation at what seemed to be an effortless racism. Eventually, alongside the Synod Standing Committee itself, there would be a new, permanent, Committee for ethnic minority concerns as a focus for a strategy of inclusive decision-making. It has achieved much but, alas, there is still a long way to go.

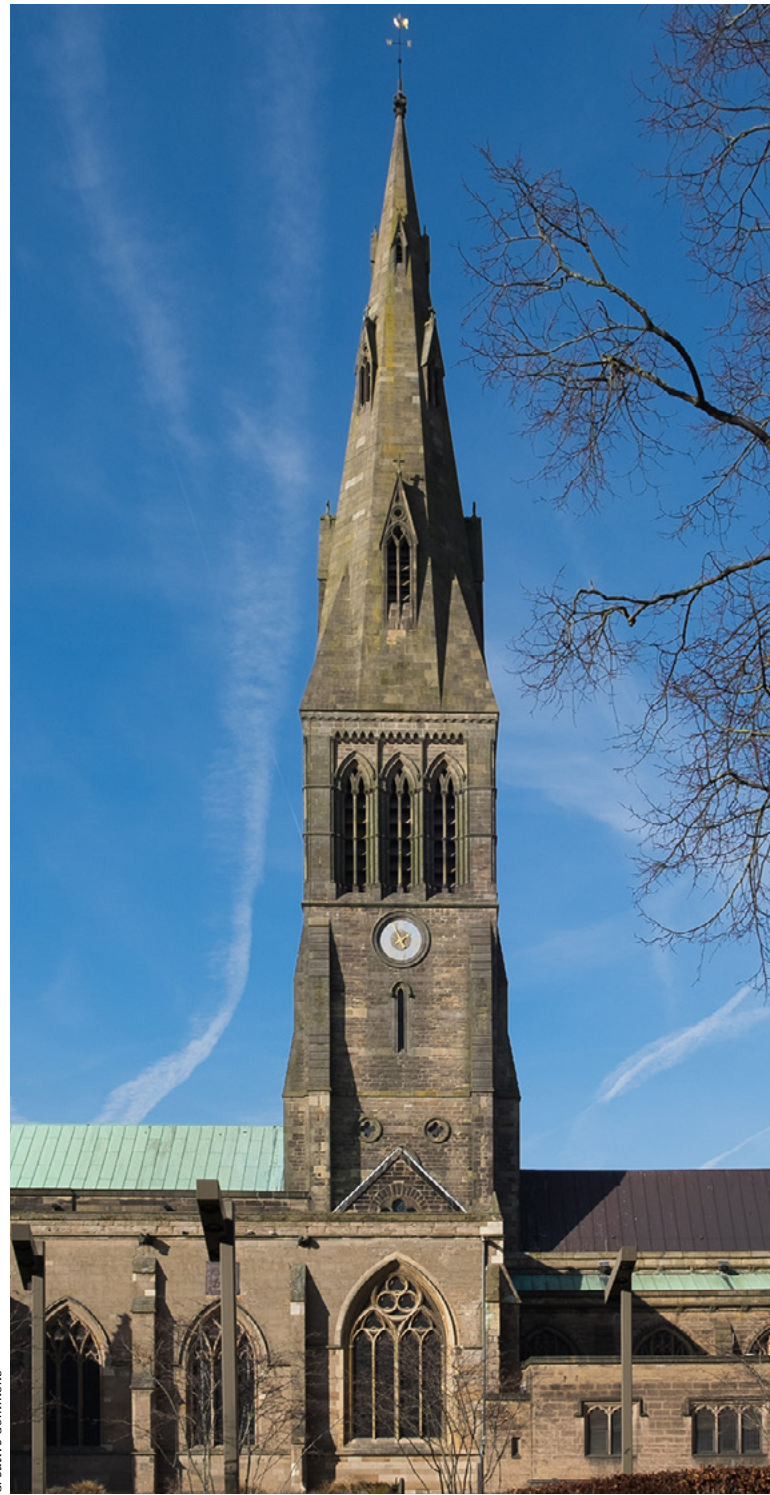
During the nineteen-eighties the Church of England at every level was seriously considering the admission of women to both the diaconate and the priesthood. There is good evidence of a female diaconate from biblical times until at least the twelfth century, and the office of deaconess had been restored among Anglicans in the nineteenth century. As it became clear that there was strong support for the admission of women to the diaconate, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to the Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch with whose churches the Church of England was in official and intentional conversation. Their replies implied that we should feel free to go ahead – no major principle was involved.

By contrast, a year or two later another letter to both Pope and Patriarch, focusing on the admission of women to the priesthood, drew forth a response which warned of serious difficulties for the work of ARCIC and the Anglican-Orthodox Commission. Nevertheless, the Church of England pressed on until on 11 November 1992 the General Synod met at Church House, Westminster to debate the Final Approval of a Measure to admit women to the priesthood. While the debate would address the principle itself, its effect would be draft legislation and the Synod would need to consider not only theological principle and ecumenical practice, but also the legal and practical details of the Measure and its provision for those who in conscience would be unable to accept and implement it. Invited to lead for the opposition, I argued that the proposed Measure was “unfair and unworkable”, as well as being inconsistent with the understanding of those Anglicans, ordained and lay, who had hitherto been in some way “Catholic” and feared that they would no longer be able in conscience to continue to live the Catholic pattern of life as Anglicans.

The two-thirds majority required in each House – Bishops, Clergy and Laity – was achieved by a whisker. I resisted the temptation of the disappointed rugby fan on a bad Calcutta Cup Day – if winning, celebrate with a good malt; if losing, commiserate with a good malt! There was work to be done. What Joyce and I personally should ourselves do was wait – we must now do the best we could for those who had lost the day and found themselves adrift, as it were, in unfamiliar and dangerous waters. For posterity, the legislation must be improved, the Resistance – which included a significant number of Anglican Evangelicals as well as Anglo-Catholics – rallied, organised, and supported, ecumenical progress maintained and individuals who in conscience were unable to remain as Anglicans assisted to leave with dignity and a fair deal. The result was the foundation of Forward in Faith and the provision of Alternative Episcopal Oversight, dubbed by the Press “flying bishops”!

Richard Rutt’s unsought invitation to Leicester had once encouraged us to put our trust in God. A new, equally unsought, invitation – this time to Australia – would challenge us to renew that trust. A couple of years before two Anglican priests, the Archdeacon of Benalla (Diocese of Wangaratta, Victoria, Australia) and a parish priest in the Archdeaconry of Leicester, had taken a holiday by swapping parishes for several months! A friendship formed between the two archdeacons and their wives, and a year later, when I was in Canberra for the Assembly of the World Council of Churches, I spent a free weekend with them and met the Bishop of Wangaratta. The following year the bishop called on us in Leicester and invited me to visit his diocese to conduct the priests’ annual Retreat, to run a travelling roadshow on the liturgy around the deaneries, and to update the diocese on church affairs in England. Joyce joined me at our own expense, and we made a holiday of it.

The bishop of the next-door diocese – Ballarat – was on gardening leave, awaiting retirement. The Archdeacon Administrator asked Wangaratta if they could and would spare me and my roadshow for their clergy conference...and when in May 1993 he and the Dean delivered Joyce and me to the airport they asked out of the blue, “Would you be willing to leave the UK?” Much flummoxed, I was brief: “I will write to you”. As we took off, Joyce drily commented, “we could do it – the cat has died, and the children have left home.” I duly wrote the promised letter, saying that any proposal would be considered with care. In late August I received a fax, “May we put your name before the Nominators?” I replied in the affirmative, under the impression that it meant inclusion on a short list. Wrong. At the start of September another fax arrived: “unanimous, letter follows!”



Creative Commons

Leicester Cathedral – viewed from the south

On the Feast of Saint Polycarp, February 23, 1994, I was ordained bishop in Westminster Abbey and on the Feast of Saint Joseph, March 19 I was installed as Bishop of Ballarat in the Cathedral. The Diocese was waiting to make a delayed start to a response to the Decade of Evangelism/Evangelisation. The General Synod was preparing to debate A Prayer Book for Australia in 1995. In Melbourne the leaders of the major Faith-communities were considering the next steps forward... and their bright young pioneer was about to move to the United States and was wondering who might replace him. I had hit the road running... (*...to be concluded*)

The Leicestershire Ordinariate Group

by Nicolas Ollivant

The Leicestershire Ordinariate Group based at Husbands Bosworth has been one of the great successes of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Husbands Bosworth is some thirteen miles south of Leicester on the borders of Northamptonshire. It has been a centre of Catholicism since 1630 when Grace, the widow of Sir Francis Fortescue of Salden (Buckinghamshire), came to live in Bosworth Hall. The Fortescues were a Catholic family and the hall became a mass centre which was served by Jesuits. Maria Alethea Fortescue died unmarried in 1763 and the estate was left to an infant Francis Fortescue Turville, the great grandson of William Turville who had married her aunt Frances Fortescue. The former's grandson was the diplomat Sir Francis Fortescue Turville KCMG (1831-89). After his death the estate became the property of his third cousin Oswald Petre (subsequently Turville-Petre) (1862-1941). On his death the estate descended to his daughter Alethea who married Major David Constable-Maxwell (1904-1985). The estate is now owned by Robert Turville Constable-Maxwell DL and his wife Susan (née Gaisford-St Lawrence). The former was educated at Ampleforth, served in the Grenadier Guards and was High Sheriff of Leicestershire 1991-2.

The church of St Mary was built in the grounds of Bosworth Hall in 1873-4. The original architect was Gilbert Blount. The church is built of ironstone and limestone in an Early Decorated style. It originally consisted of apsidal chancel, nave, north porch and a west bellcote containing one bell. In 1889 the widow of Sir Francis Fortescue added a north chapel by A.E. Purdie containing a recumbent effigy of her husband. Several stained glass windows were brought from the demolished church at Witley in Worcestershire. The chancel has painted decorations by W.H. Romaine-Walker; the latter was educated at Lancing College and was, perhaps appropriately in the present circumstances, an Anglican architect and interior decorator, albeit one employed by the Jesuits at Beaumont College and Farm Street.



The church of St Mary

For many years Husbands Bosworth was served with an 8.15am Sunday Mass by the Catholic priest at Market Harborough. In 2020 the Bishop of Nottingham closed the church for regular masses at the start of the national lockdown. A decision was made,

when restrictions were lifted, that the church would not re-open. Various members of the congregation talked to Father Matthew Pittam, the (Ordinariate) parish priest



Fr. Matthew Pittam, pastor of the Leicestershire Ordinariate group, is being supported by the Friends of the Ordinariate to undertake a remote-learning MLitt course at St Andrew's University in Bible Studies and the Contemporary World. He is currently working on his dissertation which has the working title: 'How can a biblical understanding of the Kingdom of God help develop a particular understanding of Catholic Social Teaching within

the Ordinariate'. He said: "I am very grateful to the Friends of the Ordinariate in their support in funding my course fees for further study. Undertaking this course has brought many blessings and has helped me to engage afresh in study of scripture."

of St Joseph's, Monks Kirby in nearby Warwickshire. He approached the Ordinary and then the Constable-Maxwells, both of whom were enthusiastic about the possibility of the Church becoming a centre for the Ordinariate and re-opening as a centre of the faith.

The Bishop of Nottingham gave his blessing. Initially an agreement was drawn up between the Constable-Maxwell family and the Ordinariate for one year which commenced in July 2021. A new Sunday Mass time began at 11am with only a handful attending initially but over the year that grew to between 50-70, as people were received into the Church and others joined from the local area. Midweek Masses also were reinstated after many years as well as Masses on Holy Days. Evensong has also been celebrated throughout the year. Christmas saw a Midnight Mass and a Mass of the day, with standing room only at both. In Holy Week the first ever Triduum was celebrated in the Church.

In addition to the liturgical life, a programme of study groups and social activities is now in full swing, helping the growth of the community and reaching out to the local villages. The Friends of the Ordinariate have provided grants for altar servers' cassocks and cottas, and for the new external notice board. A local person coordinates the social media so that all of the local villages and communities can be reached. Next year is the 150th Anniversary of the consecration of the Church and a large number of events are planned, which include the wider community.

As the first year drew to a close the agreement between the family and the Ordinariate has been renewed. This demonstrates that it is far more than a Mass centre and that a vibrant community of faith is developing. All liturgy is according to Divine Worship and many of the cradle Catholics have even developed a taste for Cranmer's English.

A Very Protestant Funeral

Fr. Nicholas Levisour examines the religious formulations of the late Queen's Funeral

The funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was extremely moving, beautifully executed, remarkably long and unapologetically Christian. How remarkable then that no one thought it appropriate, or presumably necessary, to pray for Her Majesty's soul. As Catholics we regard that as the primary duty of those who mourn and those heartfelt prayers and the most holy sacrifice of the Mass for the repose of the soul of the faithful departed are what lie at the very centre of our liturgies for the dead. Yet in the very beautiful tonnage of word, declaimed, prayed and sung that day not one was devoted to that most desirable and essential end. Amongst the cast of thousands present in Westminster Abbey on the 19th of September there were eleven holding themselves out as archbishops, of whom five were Catholic, and one, of York, who, erroneously, thinks of himself as such. One can only hope that someone had the grace to pray quietly as the coffin passed on the long journey to the crypt of St George's Windsor. Can it really be, as the bidding prayer puts it, 'that part of the Catholic Church long established in this realm' sent its Supreme Governor into her tomb without a single thought for her soul. Apparently so.

The funeral service was divided into three parts. That called the funeral was held in Westminster Abbey and presided over by its dean. The committal was held in St George's Windsor likewise presided over by its dean, a bishop and a knight of the sovereign's personal order of chivalry. The burial, that evening in the crypt of St George's, was an entirely private service conducted by the dean. The first was obviously as public an event as could possibly be imagined, the second although broadcast around the world, was very much more intimate and apparently personal. The third we know nothing about at all.

Westminster Abbey when full of noise, or when entirely silent save for the sound of a bearer party slow marching up the never ending nave, is as John Donne put it, the very place where at our last awakening we are brought to the house and gate of heaven. The music was triumphant, solemn and moving and there was something quietly charming about the Prime Minister assuring us that "in my Father's house are many mansions". Her Majesty was not short of houses and so in death as in life. The unfortunate Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster had to read out something about the Commonwealth which he fairly obviously had not written himself. Others, likewise, made their contribution and settled back down into well-deserved obscurity. The Chief Rabbi, also present, kept an altogether more appropriate, and dignified, silence. Crimond, Blaenwern, Sir Hubert Parry, Sir Edward Elgar and Charles Wesley filled the gates of heaven with sounds that the angelic host must themselves have thought worthy of the throne of God. The Archbishop of Canterbury, thoughtfully arrayed in cope of black and carrying as is his wont the trumpet of uncertain

note, began quietly and prayerfully and preached powerfully and well on the way, the truth and the life. It was a very great sermon and one which will do much on the day of judgement to enable those who heard it and turned to Christ to enter in to the gates of heaven. It was the Archbishop who said let us commend to the mercy of God, our maker and redeemer, the soul of Elizabeth our late Queen and thence to the anthem, the blessing and the simple prayer for the well-being of the sovereign that we know as the national anthem. Nothing however for Her late Majesty's soul to rest in peace.

And so to Windsor and the committal after that long march home. The bidding prayer called us to remembrance of that which she had been, and to honour her memory so that at the last we shall know the joys of life eternal which was a curious inversion of what we were about. The music was glorious and the hand of the Duke of Edinburgh obvious in the Orthodox kontakion. Two hymns, two psalms, a new heaven and a new earth courtesy of St John the Divine, and John Donne, again, brought us hard up against the words of the Garter King of Arms "Thus it has pleased Almighty God to take out of this transitory life unto His Divine Mercy"; the Lord Chamberlain snapped his wand of office and the piper slowly, so slowly, piped us to eternity. Prayers there were, prayed with holiness and sincerity, and Her Majesty was again bidden to go forth on her journey from this world O Christian soul which she silently did. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of All England and Metropolitan, pronounced the blessing and that simple prayer sung, as always, for the well-being of the sovereign concluded the service. Nothing however for Her late Majesty's soul to rest in peace.



Fr. Nicholas Levisour is a priest of the Ordinariate of Our Lady Walsingham and a practicing barrister.

No one could possibly conclude anything other than that Queen Elizabeth was a devout Christian whose life was grounded in her strong and certain faith. Her funeral reflected that faith and was a magnificent assertion that Christ is the way the truth and life and that there is no other way save through Him to eternal life. Again and again the hymns proclaimed it, the prayers asserted it and the very stones rang out in joyful acclamation. The assumption was that having commended her soul to God's mercy there was nothing more that could be done. That is not our way nor is it our faith. Of your mercy pray for the soul of Queen Elizabeth, and of your great mercy have Masses said for the repose of her soul. They will not, but we must. Rest eternal grant unto her O Lord.

Abbot Oswald Hunter-Blair O.S.B. (1853-1939)

by Michael Hodges

David Hunter-Blair was born on the 30th September 1853, the eldest of thirteen children of Edward Hunter-Blair, shortly to be 4th Baronet of Dunskey (Wigtownshire).

In 1854 his father's elder brother was killed at the Battle of Inkerman and his father inherited the baronetcy and estates. According to the arrangements of the settlement he was obliged to divest himself of the estate of Dunskey if he was to inherit Blairquhan. David Hunter-Blair therefore became the laird of Dunskey at the age of four.

In 1864 he went to prep school at May Place, Malvern Wells. From there he proceeded to the Upper IVth form at Eton. He became increasingly intrigued by the Catholic past through the novels of Walter Scott and he noted that at Eton "*the aura of Catholicism... still hung faintly about her venerable halls and cloisters.*"

Hunter-Blair went up to Magdalen College, Oxford from 1872 to 1876. The religious question became increasingly clear in his own mind. In March 1875 he travelled to Rome to see Archbishop Manning receive his cardinal's hat. On the Feast of the Annunciation (25th March) he was received into the Catholic Church by the convert Father Edward Douglas C.S.S.R in the Redemptorist House on the Esquiline Hill.

He returned to Oxford to April and devoted considerable but vain efforts into trying to convert Oscar Wilde, his fellow undergraduate at Magdalen, to Rome. Together they attended the opening of St Aloysius's Church on 23rd March 1875 at which Cardinal Manning preached on the Oxford motto *Dominus Illuminatio Mea*, denouncing the university for its spiritual apathy and decay. Eventually it became clear that Wilde had chosen a different path although Hunter-Blair's efforts eventually came to fruition at Wilde's deathbed in Paris in 1900 when the latter was finally received into the Church.

Hunter-Blair obtained his MA in 1876 and in the same year was appointed Captain in the Prince Regent's Royal Ayrshire Militia. Over the next two years he poured a fair amount of his wealth into the Diocese of Galloway and other Catholic causes. He contributed heavily to the building of new churches at Girvan, Stranraer and Newton Stewart.

He also contributed £72,677 to Fort Augustus Abbey between 1877 and 1879 and was largely responsible for its fine monastic library. The land for the monastery had been given to the Benedictines by Simon Fraser, Lord Lovat. The initial foundation came about in 1876 through the enthusiasm of Dom Jerome Vaughan OSB (brother of the future cardinal). On 15th September 1878 the foundation stone of the monastery was laid by Lord Lovat. That of the school was laid at the same time by the convert Marquis of Ripon.



On 11th November of that year Hunter-Blair began his postulancy at the monastery. As a novice he took the religious name of Oswald. In those days the English Benedictine Congregation ("EBC") had a common novitiate at Belmont whither Hunter-Blair went at the end of August 1879. He made his simple profession the next summer.

The EBC was, however, going through a period of tension. Its strong pastoral emphasis meant they ran parishes and schools outside their monasteries. Most Benedictine monks came from privileged backgrounds and this was reflected in the ambience and standard of living in the monasteries. Monastic reform on the continent had pointed out a more austere direction. Important issues such as whether claret should still be served in the refectory arose as did the need for greater silence in the cloister.

Hunter-Blair's close friend and fellow convert the 3rd Marquis of Bute was pushing for the establishment of a separate Scottish Benedictine Congregation, as was Lord Lovat. On the Feast of the Epiphany 1883 Fort Augustus was formally separated from the EBC. Dom Jerome Vaughan was

unpopular and replaced as Prior by Fr Kentigern Milne. In 1888 Dom Leo Linse from Erdington Abbey became the first Abbot of Fort Augustus.

Hunter-Blair was ordained deacon the same year. He worked on *A History of The Catholic Church in Scotland, from the Introduction of Christianity* at the same time as becoming involved with the exotic figure of Frederick Rolfe, soi-disant Baron Corvo, whom Lord Bute had employed to become choirmaster at Oban Cathedral.

Fr Oswald was headmaster of the school before becoming Master of Scholastics. From 1886 to 1911 Fort Augustus was affiliated to the Beurones Congregation. The latter asked for help with its moribund communities in Brazil and Fr Oswald went out there for some months in 1896. That year he succeeded as 5th baronet. From 1898 until 1908 he was the first (and very successful) Master of St Benet's Hall in Oxford.

In 1913 Fr Oswald was elected the second Abbot of Fort Augustus. He announced his determination to complete the abbey church, which still lacked a choir. He switched the style from Gothic to Romanesque, and used Reginald Fairlie as his architect in place of Hansom and P.P. Pugin. The community by then numbered some forty monks. The First World was a difficult period. In 1917 he resigned as Abbot and spent the new two and a half years at Caldey Island, the home of a Benedictine community of former Anglicans who had joined the Catholic Church in 1913. He was created titular Abbot of Abingdon. He spent most of his period there writing his memoirs (*A Medley of Memories*) as well as the biography of the 3rd Marquis of Bute who had died in 1900. His entertaining memoirs give a slightly curious picture of monastic life concentrating as they do on country houses, famous names and exotic locations. In 1920 he was created titular Abbot of Dunfermline in the place of Abingdon.

He passed the rest of his life from 1920 onwards unable to settle. He spent periods in Brazil (his portrait still hangs in the Refectory of the Benedictine Abbey in San Paulo), acted as a chaplain to noble families, wrote prolifically for books and magazines, resided for some years at the New Club in Edinburgh and was much in demand as a speaker for events and social functions at which he was invariably the life and soul of the gathering. In 1935 he had an audience in Rome with Pope Pius XI with whom he mainly discussed the Loch Ness Monster.

He was generally deemed to be unwilling to let monastic life interfere with his social engagements. Although he spent most of his life outside the cloister his heart remained in the monastery where he had made his profession. His health deteriorated in his eighties. Lying ill in St Mary's Hospital, London he knew that death was drawing nigh and asked to return to St Benedict's Abbey in Fort Augustus. He was taken by train to the abbey and died on 12th September 1939, being buried in the abbey cemetery.

His aristocratic connections and evident enjoyment of them may seem out of keeping with his monastic vows but these were deliberately employed for higher ends. Scottish

life in the main was still violently anti Catholic. The ease with which he glided through the upper classes enabled him to advance Catholic causes that might have otherwise been obstructed; his success in gaining a foothold for the Benedictines in Oxford was just one instance.

Abbot Oswald must be weeping at the fate of the two religious establishments with which he was most associated. The Benedictines abandoned Fort Augustus Abbey in 1993 and it is now a holiday centre called the Highland Club; a swimming pool is situated in the former monastic chapel. In 2021 the University of Oxford announced it would not be accepting further matriculations from St Benet's Hall in 2022. The Ampleforth Abbey Trust has as of last September sold the buildings to St Hilda's College, Oxford. It remains to see what the latter do with the buildings. *O tempora, o mores.*

The Rev Stanley Bennie 1943-2022



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Father Stanley Bennie died on 24th October 2022 in the Golden Jubilee Hospital in Clydebank near Glasgow at the age of 79, from a leak in the aortic valve of the heart, after suffering from breathlessness for some months. He received the last rites from Father Len Black.

He was born in 1943 in Inverness and completed his studies

for the priesthood at Mirfield. After ordination he served a curacy in Ashington in West Sussex. In 1970 he returned to Scotland to become Precentor of St Andrew's Cathedral in Inverness. After a short period as Rector of All Saints, Buckie (Moray) he moved to Stornoway on the Isle of Lewis in 1984. He remained Rector of St Peter's, Stornoway until 2011 when he retired.

He was received into the Catholic Church in Stornoway through the Ordinariate in 2012 and ordained priest the same year. He was one of the four Ordinariate priests in Scotland and helped out mainly in Stornoway.

His funeral was held in Inverness on 7th November and he was buried in Stornoway.

(This obituary is drawn from a longer version which appeared in the November 2022 edition of The Portal)

The Reverend Paul Gibbons

RIP 1937-2022

by Father Christopher Pearson

Even if you didn't know Fr Paul Gibbons, he was easily knowable: he always wore a cassock, a black skullcap and had a full beard. He has looked the same since he was forty, and somehow always enjoyed being old, even from a young age.

He was the middle of three boys, born in Sydenham and obtained a music scholarship to Ardingly College. He was called to National Service in the RAF, much of which he served in Cyprus where he developed an appreciation of Orthodox Christianity. It was there too his own faith developed. He discerned a vocation and attended Chichester Theological College. Ordained at Canterbury Cathedral to a Title at St Michael's, Croydon - which was then in the Diocese of Canterbury - he moved only once, to be Vicar of St Michael and All Angels, Maidstone, where he faithfully served for over forty years.

His interest and love of the Orthodox Church led him in 1980s to spend a long sabbatical in Russia and Ukraine. Friendships grew and he went as often as he could; and St Michael's vicarage had a constant stream of visitors from the people and countries he loved. As an act of solidarity, he was presented with an Orthodox Cross around his neck, which he never removed, and is indeed around his neck even now!

It was the dignity of worship and mystery which he found attractive in Orthodoxy: a dignity he maintained whilst vicar of St Michael's, Maidstone. There was nothing 'high' or eccentric, but a wonderful blend of Catholic Liturgy with Orthodox mystery and Anglican Music: Sung Mass every Sunday with some Orthodox singing; Evensong & Benediction every Sunday to Anglican Chant. His musical training helped develop the musical tradition at St Michael's with a choir with local people who went on to careers in music, some becoming Organ Scholars and reading music at top Universities.

His pastoral care for his people was quiet, diligent, and faithful. He taught each week in the primary school, but never religion. He taught them Roman Numerals or binary counting. "Children believe anything you tell them when they're young, they will miss the impact of someone rising from the dead if told too soon!" He taught them how to cross themselves, how to genuflect how to bow, and so on, but never explained why. "You can't reduce these things to words!" He took his responsibility of teaching his people very seriously. When a questionable sermon was delivered by a guest preacher at St Michael's, Fr Paul stood up and said "My dear people, what you have just heard is one man's opinion. The Church teaches this..." and contradicted what had just been said. He later explained: "I can't have my people learning something that's wrong: I am responsible for them. What if God asks me about it on judgement day? I can't risk that!" A faithful pastor practically too, with his



Fr. Paul Gibbons pictured in 2010 with Monty, one of his two pet donkeys

care for those in prison and, more importantly, he helped developed schemes to stop them from starting the road to prison. And gently he encouraged: he would send an anniversary card every year to those he baptised until they came to Confirmation. In the forty years, he sent thousands of cards!

Even if the unchurched in Maidstone didn't know of Fr Paul by his cassock, they knew him by his donkeys - Bella and Monty. When on a pastoral visit Bishop Edwin Barnes asked what he could do to help, Fr Paul got him re-painting the stables! It caused him much sadness when first Bella, then Monty became old and moved to a donkey sanctuary. He visited them often.

He was received into Full Communion of the Catholic Church and ordained to the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, continuing to minister in Maidstone. He formed an Ordinariate Group at Watlingtonbury and organised a regular Catholic Mass at the Anglican church in Nettlestead. He supported three parish priests at St Francis' Maidstone telling them they need to learn Greek if they want to understand properly the scriptures!

In poorer health, he moved to Holy Cross Priory Nursing Home in Heathfield where he died on 25th August, a priest of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham in his 85th year, his 10th year of priesthood and his 50th year of public ministry. He is buried at Brookwood, amongst friends.

Father Christopher Pearson

(The Reverend Christopher Pearson is a priest of the Ordinariate and is parish priest of the Most Precious Blood, Southwark)



Convert Architects – Charles Alban Buckler (1824-1905)

The exterior of St Thomas à Becket at Exton in Rutland

by John Martin Robinson

Charles (Alban) Buckler was born in 1824, the son of the architect and antiquarian writer John Chessell Buckler, who worked much in Oxford and also rebuilt a number of Catholic country houses such as Costessey, Oxburgh and Hengrave Halls. He was also the architect to Lincoln Cathedral, the only major English cathedral not to be restored by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott. He was himself the son of John Buckler, the Surveyor to Magdalen College, Oxford.

Charles Buckler was received into the Catholic Church on the Feast of the Transfiguration, 1844, slightly over a year before John Henry Newman took a similar step. He took the name Alban ‘the illustrious Protomartyr who gave glorious testimony of steadfastness in the Faith’. His three younger brothers, Albert, Edmund and Reginald Buckler also converted, respectively in 1847, 1851 and 1855. They were professed in 1854, 1856 and 1857 as Dominican friars, becoming known as ‘the Buckler Trinity’. They all trained for the Dominican noviciate at Woodchester in Gloucestershire.

Charles Buckler married Mary Louisa, the daughter of the Evangelical John Farbrother of Magdalen Hall in April 184. They were to have no children.

Charles Alban Buckler set up his own mainly Catholic practice in 1856. He was devoted to “First Pointed” or “Early English” Gothic rather than Pugin’s beloved “Middled Pointed”. He was not that prolific an architect, usually undertaking one church commission a year. Many of his commissions came from the Catholic upper classes. He was a very scholarly architect and designer.

He gained an early commission from the Dominicans, presumably through the influence of his brothers, to build the Church of the Immaculate Conception for their mission in Stroud. It has an impressive spacious interior and is built in the Gothic style of c1300.

Another early work was the beautiful narrow Sodality Chapel of Our Lady at Stonyhurst in Lancashire which was completed by him in 1859. Here in fact his inspiration was 15th century - hence the flat headed Perpendicular mullioned windows. The complex ribbed



The narrow Sodaloty Chapel of Our Lady at Stonyhurst in Lancashire



The interior of St Thomas à Becket at Exton in Rutland

and panelled polychrome ceiling is far more lavish than most of Buckler's work. The feretory under the altar table contains a relic of St. Gordianus.

Buckler restored the medieval chapel of St Amand and St John the Baptist at Hendred House at East Hendred for Charles Eyston in 1863 and two years later built the Church of St Mary in the village. The church, linked presbytery and school form an attractive group of buildings. It has a three bay nave and pyramidal stone spirelet, built in Early English style

The Countess of Newburgh endowed Buckler's church of St Richard, Slindon, Sussex (1865) for the local Catholic community. It is an attractive village church in the English Gothic style of c1300 and has good contemporary glass by Hardman.

Buckler built St Edward's, Windsor in 1867-8 on land purchased by Count Ramon Cabrera de Morella. It is a large church built of Kentish ragstone in late 13th to early 14th century style. The interior is spacious and well-lit, and is rich in fittings, furnishings and decoration.

St Thomas à Becket at Exton in Rutland was built in Clipsham stone in late 13th century style for the convert 2nd Earl of Gainsborough in 1868-9. The interior has exposed stone. The upper tribune was built for the family to attend Mass. The "Catholic World" rather touchingly described the new church in evocative terms "The little belfry where an old bell found among the ruins of the old manor-house of Exton rings the daily Angelus of restored Catholic belief."

The commission for Our Lady of the Rosary and St Dominic, Haverstock Hill (1874-83) was awarded to Charles Alban Buckler, again probably because of his three Dominican brothers. A grand symbol of the revived Dominican order, it is one of the largest Catholic churches in London. The style was Early English. Conceived as a shrine to Our Lady of the Rosary, fourteen chapels are devoted to its mysteries; the fifteenth mystery (the Coronation of the Virgin) is depicted in stained glass above the high altar. The Chapel of the Annunciation was the personal gift of Buckler who is depicted in the window. The plan is



The exterior St Edward's, Windsor



The interior St Edward's, Windsor



A detail of St Edward's, Windsor

unique in England. The church is built in multi-colour stock brick with stone dressings. It has a long nave of eight bays. The high altar was designed by Buckler with central tabernacle, pinnacled Gothic tower, surmounted by a gilded imperial diadem. The Dominicans continue to be located at the priory.

Buckler built St Edward the Confessor, Sutton Park, near Guildford in 1875, in a fine parkland setting in Early English Gothic style in flint with stone dressings. Its churchyard is surrounded by flint wall. Arthur Hinsley, later Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster was parish priest here from 1905 to 1911.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary and St Dominic, Homerton was built by Buckler (unusually in Early Christian) classical style from 1877 to 1884. It has been largely rebuilt after severe bomb damage in 1941.

In 1877 the converts the Hon. William North and his wife Frederica commissioned Buckler to build the attractive small Early English style church of Our Lady Immaculate and St Philip Neri in Cambridgeshire, near the Tudor Kirtling Tower. It is built in flint with limestone dressings and has a two arched belfry.



The interior of St Edward the Confessor, Sutton Park, near Guildford



The exterior of St Edward the Confessor, Sutton Park, near Guildford



The exterior of St Thomas of Canterbury and the English Martyrs, St Leonards-on-Sea in Sussex

Charles Alban Buckler's chef-d'oeuvre was undoubtedly the rebuilding of Arundel Castle between 1877 and 1901 for the 15th Duke of Norfolk. The castle's origins went back to c 1068. It had been the principal ducal seat since 1787. Buckler may have come to the 15th Duke's notice through the latter's mother Minna for whom Buckler had designed the church of St Peter Shoreham (closed in 1982 and sold for development).

The first phase of the works started in 1877 and included the Drawing Room and the Billiard Room in the south range and a suite of principal bedrooms in the north end of the east wing. The second phase included in the south range the quadrangle façade and Dining Room, a new chapel and the Baron's Hall in the west wing together with the restoration of certain walls and outlying towers.

The Chapel is dedicated to Our Lady and was inspired by both the Angel Choir at Lincoln Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. The interior is lavishly embellished with Purbeck marble and sculptural stone carvings, with magnificent stained glass by Hardman. It was consecrated on completion by the Bishop of Southwark.

Charles Alban Buckler was mainly a church architect but also did some important country house work, including restorations of Newstead Abbey and Sutton Place.

One of Buckler's last ecclesiastical commissions was St Thomas of Canterbury and the English Martyrs, St Leonards-on-Sea in Sussex. It has a somewhat austere exterior in ironstone with Bath stone dressings and tall lancet windows. The rather wonderful painted interior was done by Nathaniel Westlake between 1908 and 1911 after Buckler's death.



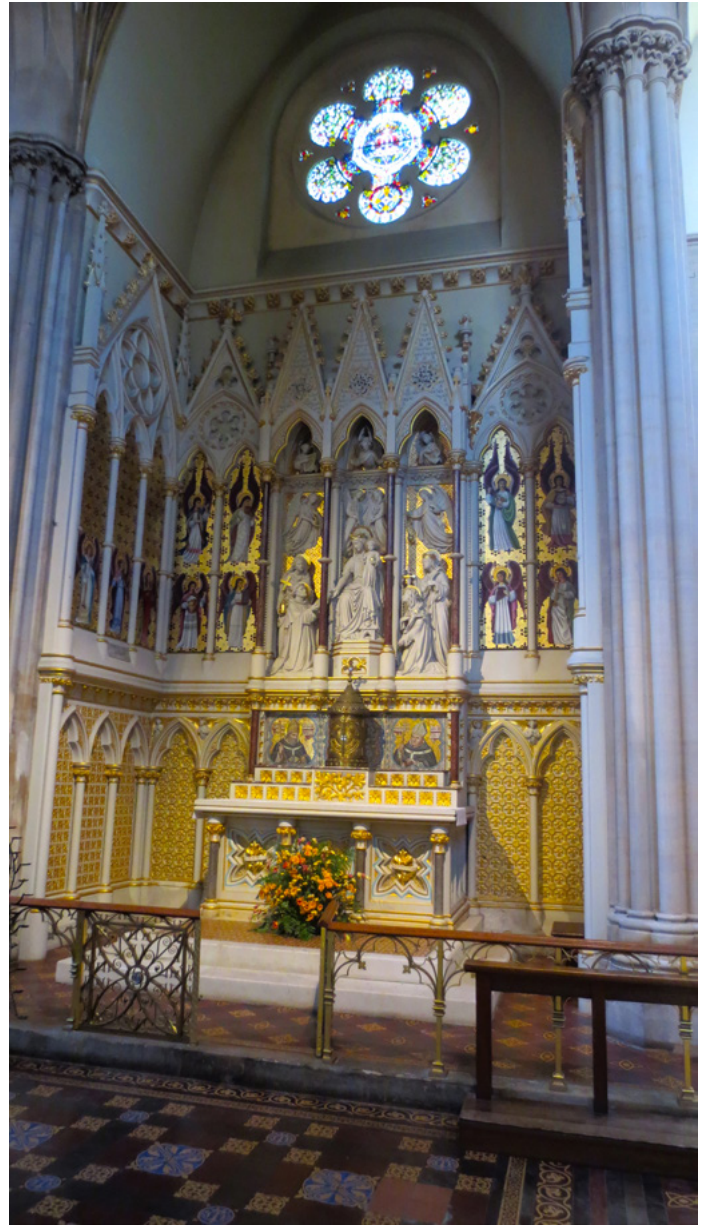
St Thomas of Canterbury and the English Martyrs, St Leonards-on-Sea in Sussex.

The painted interior was done by Nathaniel Westlake between 1908 and 1911 after Buckler's death.

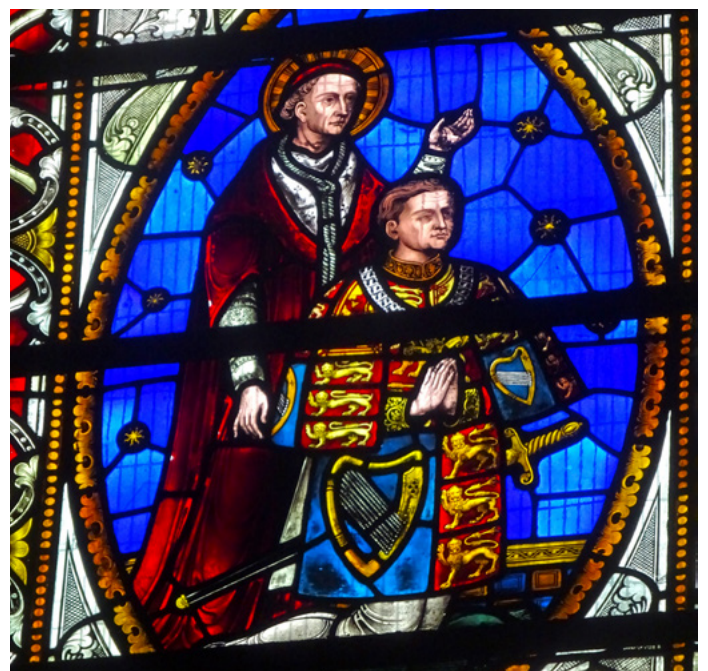




The interior of St Dominic, Haverstock Hill



St Dominic, Haverstock Hill



Stained glass window of Buckler at St Dominic, Haverstock Hill



The exterior of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and St Dominic, Homerton



The church of St Richard, Slindon, Sussex



The interior of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and St Dominic, Homerton

Buckler was nothing if not socially upwardly mobile. He lived at 6 Hereford Square in genteel South Kensington. He joined the Sovereign Military Order of Malta as a Donat of Devotion First Class in 1885, becoming a Knight subsequently. He was created Surrey Herald Extraordinary at the College of Arms. He managed to trace his paternal descent to Sir Walter Buckler, Fellow of Merton, and thereafter Canon of Cardinal College (Christ Church), who was knighted in 1547. He made a number of designs for civic regalia, and designed the Great Seal of Edward VII.

Buckler was a fairly austere and withdrawn figure, happiest in the company of Catholic aristocrats. He was generally seen as somewhat aloof. The editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1865 disoblingly called him "one of the almost obsolete school of antiquaries". He retired in 1900. Three years later he wrote a pessimistic letter to the Duke of Norfolk about the future. His jeremiad concluded "I entertain serious misgivings of the 20th century as regards the improvement of taste". What would he have made of the 21st?

Buckler died in 1905 and is buried in the churchyard of St Edward the Confessor, Sutton. He was buried with his wife under a simple memorial slab. He is however depicted in the church in stained glass in the south wall in his tabard as Surrey Herald Extraordinary with a SS collar and wearing a Maltese cross.

John Martin Robinson is Maltravers Herald Extraordinary. As well as being a noted architectural historian he has been Librarian to the Dukes of Norfolk since 1978 and is a trustee of Arundel Castle.

Divine Worship

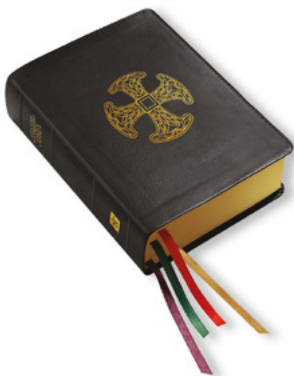
Liturgical Resources



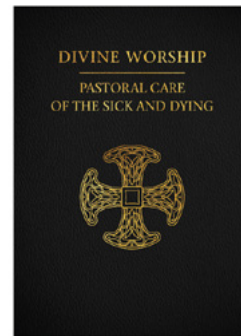
Divine Worship: The Ordinate Missal £325. 2022 edition with latest approved texts for new saints. Includes the Order of Mass, Proper of Time and Sanctoral cycle with votive, ritual and Masses for the dead. High quality leather binding, gilding, Florentine blocking, ribbons and beautifully illustrated.



Divine Worship: The Ordinate Study Missal. Now back in stock. £65.00. A smaller ritual edition of the Divine Worship Missal, useful for liturgical planning. Includes the Order of Mass, Proper of Time and Sanctoral cycle with votive, ritual and Masses for the dead.



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- Email orders@ctsbooks.org

How we help the Ordinariate

The Friends of the Ordinariate have two principal functions: the first is to raise funds for projects which are important for the Ordinariate but for which it lacks the funds. The second is to raise awareness about what the Ordinariate is doing and why it exists. The majority of the supporters of the Friends are Catholics who are not members of the Ordinariate. We are very grateful for their support!

In recent years our major expenditure has been on newly-ordained priests who are serving as curates in their first parish. The requirements in this area are growing as Mgr. Newton outlines in his message on page 2 of this newsletter. We have given Mgr. Newton the assurance that, in those far as our resources allow, we will support newly-ordained priests in their first curacy for two years at a cost of at least £17,000 per person per year. We are also committed to helping the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary with the particular needs associated with their move to Prinknash Abbey, which is to be their new home, in the next year or two.

Since the last newsletter we have given a grant of £2,000 towards the costs of publishing the Portal Magazine. We have also agree to support the Fr. Bradley and Fr. Lloyd with expenses in connection with their doctoral studies in Vienna. The Friends have made a grant of £2,500 to allow those in formation for the Ordinariate priesthood to participate in the Ordinariate's Pilgrimage to Compostela in June 2023. The Torbay Ordinariate, which owns its own church, has identified a suitable reredos that has become available. There is no charge for the reredos itself but the cost of transporting it to Torbay from Lancashire and restoration would be in the region of £10,000. So far £5,000 has been raised by the Torbay Group. The Board of the Friends has said it will look favourably on supporting the project and await a detailed application. Almost £1,000 has also been spent on altar Missals for donation to Ordinariate groups.

To find out more about our work, please visit our website: www.friendsoftheordinariate.org.uk

The Friends on Social Media



The Friends of the Ordinariate are active on social media, especially on Facebook. Please like our Facebook page: "Friends of the Ordinariate"!

The website is: www.friendsoftheordinariate.org.uk

If your address has changed recently please notify us at friendsoftheordinariate@gmail.com

THE PORTAL

THE PORTAL is the monthly review of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham

THE PORTAL is a free on-line publication and is aimed at those in the Personal Ordinariates of the Catholic Church, Anglicans who are interested in the Ordinariate and all Catholic friends of the Ordinariates. THE PORTAL is published on the first day of every month of the year and has an average readership of 7,300 every month. It covers News, Events, Personalities, Catholic teaching, Letters, Features, Catholic and Anglican history, and Ordinariate news. <http://www.portalmag.co.uk/>

Ordinariate Lapel Badges



For those familiar with the Anglo-Catholic movement in the Church of England, lapel badges are an important thing: the Society of Our Lady of Walsingham, The Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, The Society of Mary, The Catholic League, The Society of the Holy Cross, all have their badges as an act of witness and support for their particular guild.

The Ordinariate has continued this small part of the patrimony through the production of lapel badges bearing the coat of arms of the Ordinariate, and the Friends are proud to say that they have assisted in this production through a grant.

Unlike those Anglican guilds it is not necessary to be a member of the Ordinariate to wear the badge, but rather it is a way of showing support for it.

If you would like to display your support for the Ordinariate, and support its work, you can purchase lapel badges from:

Ordinariate Lapel Badges,
Ladies' Ordinariate Group,
22 Redcross Way,
London SE1 1TA

The price is £5 including postage. Please make cheques payable to "Ordinariate OLW"



Remembering the 'Friends of the Ordinariate' in Your Will



If you are considering making, or updating, your will, please remember the 'Friends of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham'.

Such bequests can help the Ordinariate to grow and flourish through:

- The support of seminarians
- The acquisition of churches and presbyteries
- Contributing to building repair and maintenance costs
- Adding to the 'Sick and Retired' clergy fund
- The production of new liturgical books and the purchase of vestments

Mgr Keith Newton, the Ordinary of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, offering the annual Requiem Mass for deceased benefactors of the Friends of the Ordinariate. Mr Nicolas Ollivant, chairman of the Friends, is serving the Mass which took place at Our Lady of the Assumption and St Gregory, Soho, on 25th November 2022.

When mentioning the 'Friends' in your will, please include the following details:

The Friends of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham

Registered address: 24 Golden Square, London W1F 9JR

Registered Charity Number:1142667



Please support the Friends of the Ordinariate

How to Donate:

The Friends of the Ordinariate support the work and mission of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham by providing financial and practical assistance. We warmly invite the support of all those who share in the Holy See's vision of Christian Unity and who wish to see the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham succeed. All are welcome to support the Friends of the Ordinariate, be they cradle Catholics, former members of the Church of England, or those who remain within the Anglican tradition but who wish the Ordinariate well.

Standing Orders

The best and most reliable way of giving is by Standing Order. Please complete the Standing Order form printed here and send it to the address shown below.

Cheques

If you would like to support our work by making a donation via cheque, please make a cheque payable to "Friends of the Ordinariate" and send it to the address shown below.

Electronic Transfers

Here are our bank details if you would rather donate by bank transfer:

Bank: **Lloyds Bank plc**
Sort code: **30-90-69**
Account no: **22689660**
Name: **Friends of the Ordinariate**

Donations may also be made via PayPal

Legacies

It is hoped that the work of the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham will continue for many years to come and so we would ask that you remember the Friends of the Ordinariate when you come to write or update your will. Legacies form the backbone of any charity and we are most grateful to all those who have remembered us in their wills.

Gift Aid

giftaid it
Please make the gift-aid declaration (if appropriate) by marking the small box (✓ or X). This will enable us to reclaim money from HMRC if the donor is a tax-payer.

Details provided here will only be used in connection with the work of the Friends of the Ordinariate.

GIFT AID DECLARATION

This declaration confirms that I wish the Friends of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham (Charity No.1142667) to reclaim tax on all donations I make hereafter. I understand that I must pay income tax and/or capital gains tax equal to any tax reclaimed by the Friends of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham. I confirm that I am a UK taxpayer and that I will advise the Friends if this situation changes. I have read and agreed to the above Gift Aid Declaration.

Application to support the Friends of the Ordinariate

Title: _____

Surname: _____

First name (s): _____

Address: _____

Post code: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Please complete either Section A (Standing Order) or Section B (Single Donation) and then complete the Gift Aid declaration if appropriate.

Section A:

To the Manager of: _____

Bank/Building Society

Address: _____

Post code: _____

Name of Account Holder: _____

Sort code: _____

Account no: _____

Please debit this account and pay to:

Friends of the Ordinariate

Sort code 30-90-69 Account number 22689660.

The sum of: £ _____

per month/quarter/annum (delete as appropriate)

_____ (in words)

pounds per month/quarter/annum

Starting from _____ (date) until further notice

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Section B:

I/we enclose a donation of £ _____

Please return this form to:

**The Friends of the Ordinariate,
The Presbytery,
24 Golden Square,
London W1F 9JR**

If you have any queries about this form, please contact the Administrator at: friendsoftheordinariate@gmail.com

Would you like to be a Friend of the Ordinariate?



*Back row: Fr Leonard Cox, Fr David Pritchard, Fr Timothy Boniwell, Fr Thomas Mason.
Front row: Fr David Hathaway, Fr Michael Ward, Monsignor Keith Newton, Fr David Jones, Fr Jonathan Creer.*

The Friends of the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham was established in 2011 to assist with the work of the newly erected Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham through practical and financial support. It was also established in order to raise awareness of the Personal Ordinariate's life and mission within the wider Catholic community.

The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham was established by Benedict XVI on 15 January 2011 and is a special structure within the Catholic Church which allows former Anglicans to enter into full communion with the Pope while also retaining many of the treasures and gifts of their Anglican heritage. The Ordinariate groups and religious communities which have so far been set up in England and Wales represent an important development in the work of promoting Christian unity and a fundamental part of the New Evangelisation in England and Wales.

The Friends is a separate charity from the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, with its own trustees, but we work closely with the Ordinary of the Personal Ordinariate, Monsignor Keith Newton, to identify areas where the Friends can be of assistance. Mgr Newton is also the President of the Friends.

The Friends of the Ordinariate charity gratefully receives donations from individuals and organisations who share in the Holy See's vision of Christian unity, which has been made manifest in the Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

If you would like to help the Friends of the Ordinariate in our work of supporting the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, or would like to know more about our work or about the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham, please complete the contact details on the form overleaf and send it either to: **The Administrator, Friends of the Ordinariate, c/o 24 Golden Square, London W1F 9JR; or by email: friendsoftheordinariate@gmail.com**

