



*From the Bishop*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

One of the distinguishing features of the Ordinariates' calendar is the keeping of the season of "Pre-Lent": the weeks preceding Ash Wednesday, including the Sundays known as Septuagesima; Sexagesima and Quinquagesima. In many years, 2026 is an example of this, Septuagesima fall before 2nd February. Thus two liturgical seasons collide: Candlemass, concluding the extended 40 days of Christmas, falls within Pre-Lent. This is not a problem, rather it sets before us a profound truth. The gospel reading for Candlemas – Luke's beautiful account of the presentation of Jesus in the Temple – includes Simeon's *Nunc Dimittis* and his prophecy to Our Lady "a sword will pierce through your own soul also". The joy of the Incarnation naturally morphs into a prediction of his passion, which itself leads to the glory of the resurrection.

Lent was originally the final stage of the intense preparation of those who were to be baptized at Easter. After significant prayer and catechesis, they kept 40 days of particular prayer and penance in the joyful expectation of their sins being washed away as they entered into the life of the Risen Jesus in the waters of baptism.

In time, Lent came to be observed by all of the faithful. Each year we renew our baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil and it is right and fitting that before we do so, we should spent time in fasting and prayer, recalling our sins, by which we have failed to fully live out our Christian life and have become less that the person God made us in Baptism. But Lent is not a time of misery and despair: it is painful to reflect on our sinfulness but we are accompanied by Jesus, who died and rose for us and who

provides the sacrament of reconciliation to absolve our sins and who receives anew our renewed but still fragile baptismal promises.

This Lent, let us pray for one another as we reflect on our sins in the confident knowledge that Jesus comes to us where we are, not to leave us there, but to lead us to Heaven.

Finally, whilst writing, I would like to share with you a few dates for upcoming events which are important to building up and celebrating our common life:

### **26th March | 11.30 | Chrism Mass**

The Chrism mass is the occasion when the priests renew their ministerial commitment and when the Oils for use in the coming year are blessed/consecrated. Laity are very much invited to attend to support the clergy; indeed the Chrism Mass is a highlight of the year as we gather together as the Bishop, Clergy and Laity of the Ordinariate, giving full expression to our identity as a Particular Church.

### **28th May | Walsingham Pilgrimage**

Full details will follow but please book the day in your diary. In the morning we will walk the Holy Mile and we will have mass at the Shrine at 12.00.

In previous years we have held events in the 2 days running up to the pilgrimage. We hope to do so this year, but in a slightly different way. You may be aware that accommodation is very tight in Walsingham that week – don't worry – Our Lady has identified an exciting alternative! Details for 26th will follow but on **27th** we will be holding a full day of worship, praise and celebration at the pontifical shrine in King's Lynn.

Some of you will remember that we enjoyed a happy afternoon there as part of the 2024 pilgrimage and many asked for more time there. Final details will follow but the

day will include a concelebrated Mass at 12 noon, a Rosary “mini pilgrimage” to the Red Mount Chapel (Our Lady of the Mount, a medieval Pilgrim Chapel near the old town walls of Lynn), Evening Prayer and Benediction, and other cultural opportunities connected with pilgrimage and the historic religious history and heritage of Lynn. We will need an idea of numbers in due course but at present please book the date.

Re booking accommodation, people may find it easier to stay in Kings Lynn and then to drive to Walsingham on the Thursday morning.

### **13th – 15th October | Annual Festival in Eastbourne**

Fr Neil Chatfield and members of the Eastbourne Ordinariate Mission have attended all of our festivals and I am delighted that they have kindly offered to be the hosts this year. Full details will follow but please save the dates. The festival is always a fantastic opportunity to come together; as always, participants will need to make their own bed and breakfast arrangements.

Be assured of my Love and Prayers as we prepare for Lent and Easter, I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming events.

In Christ

+ David

