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Canon David Finegan, Bishop Peter Collins & Canon Sean Connolly.

Installation of new Canons at Cathedral

The Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich was filled with clergy, parishioners and friends on Saturday 26 June 2025 for a joyful celebration of the Dedication of the Cathedral, marked also by the installation of two new Canons of the Chapter: Canon Sean Connolly and Canon David Finegan. Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Peter Collins, who spoke of the importance of remembering the Cathedral's consecration as both a place of worship and a spiritual home for the Diocese.

The readings proclaimed during the liturgy illuminated the significance of the Church as God's dwelling place among His people. The first reading, from Ezekiel 47:1–2, 8–9, 12, described the life-giving river flowing from

the threshold of the Temple, transforming all it touched. This powerful image of water bringing healing and abundance invites the faithful to consider how the grace that flows from the Church sustains and renews the world.

The second reading, from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians (3:9–11, 16–17), reminded all present that "you are God's building" and that no foundation can be laid other than Jesus Christ himself. St Paul's words underline the responsibility entrusted to all Christians to build up the Church with reverence and fidelity, mindful that it is God's holy temple.

The Gospel reading, taken from John 2:13–22, recounted Jesus cleansing the Temple in Jerusalem. This dramatic episode challenged the assembly to renew their own commitment to holiness and to ensure that the Cathedral remains a house of prayer, worthy of the Lord's presence.

Following the proclamation of the Gospel and Bishop Peter's homily, the Rite of Installation commenced. Mgr Eugène Harkness,

Diocesan Chancellor, read out the Letters of Appointment, after which Canon Sean Connolly and Canon David Finegan made their Profession of Faith. They each took the Oath of Office, kissed the Book of the Gospels, and were vested in the Mozetta — the violet shoulder-cape worn by Canons.

In a moving moment, the newly vested Canons knelt before Bishop Peter, who placed the biretta on each of their heads and offered his personal congratulations. This rite signified their new role within the Chapter of Canons, who assist the Bishop in the governance and the liturgical life of the Cathedral.

After the solemn celebration, clergy and parishioners gathered in the narthex and the cathedral gardens to share tea, coffee and refreshments, continuing the spirit of fraternity and thanksgiving.

The day was a memorable occasion for the Diocese, uniting the faithful in gratitude for the gift of their Cathedral and in prayerful support of Canon Sean and Canon David as they begin their ministry as Canons.

Inspiring pilgrimage to Bury St Edmunds

■ On Saturday 21 June, parishioners from Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and St Edmund's, Hunstanton with St Cecilia's, Dersingham undertook a pilgrimage to Bury St Edmunds in honour of one of their patronal saints.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, the parish chose to shape their pilgrimage around the six themes of Hope, drawing upon prayers, information, insights and reflections specially provided for the Jubilee.

The journey began prayerfully with the recitation of a full Rosary incorporating the Hopeful Mysteries: *Creation, Abraham's Sacrifice, The Great Flood, The Exodus, and The Immaculate Conception*. Alongside these meditations, the Jubilee Prayer and the theme of Care for Creation were also observed. To mark the tenth anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, the pilgrims sang a hearty rendition of the hymn *Laudato Si'*, originally written in 1981. The chorus, derived from a traditional Italian melody, with verses added by Damien Lundy, served as a joyful reminder of the Lord's wonderful gift of creation.

Upon arrival in Bury St Edmunds, Mass was celebrated at St Edmund's Catholic Church by Canon Peter Rollings, assisted by Fr Henry McCarthy. The group were particularly inspired by the Gospel reading of the day which — providentially — centred on hope and trust in God. This provided an opportunity to deepen reflection and prayer on the theme of Food Poverty.

The pilgrimage continued at the Cathedral of St Edmund, where the Reverend Canon Matthew Vernon welcomed the parish warmly and granted the use of the magnificent Chancel. Here, parishioners gathered to consider the issue of Modern Slavery. The Cloisters offered a peaceful setting for lunch.

Afterwards, the group made their way to the Church of St Mary's for prayer and reflection focused on Managing Debt.

A visit to the Holocaust Memorial in the Abbey Gardens followed, providing a poignant space to reflect on the theme of Forgiveness, accompanied by hymns and prayers.

Throughout the day, Canon Peter shared his wealth of historical knowledge about the town and its sacred sites, greatly enriching the pilgrimage experience.

After a long and very hot day, the sight of the air-conditioned coach was most welcome. The return journey provided a fitting time to contemplate the final theme of the pilgrimage: Rest and Worship.

The pilgrimage was a grace-filled occasion, drawing together prayer, learning, fellowship and reflection in celebration of this Jubilee Year of Hope.

Celebrate the season of creation as Pilgrims of Hope

■ CAFOD in East Anglia and Sawston Live Simply group invite you to join us on Saturday 6 September 2025 at Our Lady of Lourdes Church 135 High St, Sawston, Cambridge CB22 3HJ.

Coffee will be served from 10.30am followed by a presentation from Jo Kitterick, CAFOD's Director of Participation and Fundraising from 11-12.30pm. In her presentation Jo will link CAFOD's work to the Jubilee of Hope & the Season of Creation.

The Season of Creation runs from September 1 to October 4 every year. It is a time for Christians to come together to pray and act for Creation. This year's theme is the Garden of Peace in Isaiah 32:14-18. Creation is desolated because of the broken relationship between God and humankind. Christians share the hope that justice and righteousness can lead to peace and the restoration of Creation.

CAFOD's Harvest appeal this year focuses on Waré, a mother of five from southern Ethiopia. She and her husband herd goats in a region that has faced four years of drought. With livestock lost and water scarce life is hard. But she has hope. CAFOD is working alongside her community to build an underground water tank, a life-changing project to provide clean, reliable water even through the toughest dry seasons.

Our new Pope Leo XIV linked his ministry to both the Jubilee of Hope and peace in a speech to the Diplomatic Corps:

"My ministry has begun in the heart of a Jubilee Year, devoted in a particular way to hope. It is a time of conversion and renewal and, above all, an opportunity to leave conflicts behind and embark on a new path, confident that, by working together ... we can build a world in which everyone can lead an authentically human life in truth, justice and peace"

All are welcome to join us, there is plenty of parking and step free access. There is no need to book a place but if you would like more information contact Jane Crone: jcrone@cafod.org.uk

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Concert series boosts organ rebuild fund

■ St Peter's Church in Gorleston has recently hosted a highly successful series of Lunchtime Concerts, raising valuable funds for the church's Organ Rebuild Fund. Matthew Hardy reports.

The series began at the end of June with a delightful performance by The Chorus of St Cecilia. Their programme of popular choral music was warmly received by the audience, setting the tone for the events to follow.

On 4 July, the church had the honour of welcoming David Grealy, diocesan Director of Music, for a solo recital. His performance was a true musical highlight, showcasing a wide range of tonal colour and expression with extraordinary virtuosity. The repertoire ranged from the Baroque brilliance of Buxtehude to the stirring grandeur of William Walton's Crown Imperial March. It was a memorable recital, much appreciated by all in attendance, and the church extends heartfelt thanks to David for his support and superb musicianship.

The most recent concert took place on Fri-

day 11 July, featuring celebrity soloist Neil Francis. Drawing a large and enthusiastic audience, Neil performed a selection of popular songs from the musicals, bringing the series to a joyous close.

In total, the three concerts raised £777.50, taking the Organ Rebuild Fund past the £15,000 mark — a significant milestone in the parish's ongoing efforts.

These events have not only contributed financially but have also brought the

community together in celebration of music and heritage. St Peter's looks forward to continuing this musical tradition as the campaign to restore the church organ progresses.



David Grealy, Diocesan Director of Music.

Jubilant Jubilee Masses unite SJB Trust schools

In this Jubilee Year, the Catholic Church is inviting communities everywhere to experience the joy and strength that comes from coming together in faith. It is a time of reset, renewal, and recommitment to building a more just and compassionate world.

■ Saint John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust recently marked this special year by organising two celebration Masses for their schools, held at St Mary's, Lowestoft.

The liturgies featured a new Mass setting created in collaboration between Notre Dame's Shine Band and Hamish Macqueen, Director of Youth Service for the Diocese of East Anglia. The music was based on Hamish's uplifting hymn *It's a Jubilee*, which he kindly came along to perform live with the



Students with their pledges at Mass.

band and St Martha's, King's Lynn.

The Masses were celebrated by Fr Pádraig Hawkins and Fr Gordon Adam. In their homilies, both priests spoke about the importance of

young people sharing their hopeful perspective with the wider world. Fr Gordon suggested that one of the best ways for them to do this is by singing with confidence during Mass. Judging by the enthusiastic voices filling the churches, the children were

more than happy to rise to the occasion.

Kim Payne, Interim CEO of St John the Baptist Catholic Multi Academy Trust, shared her reflections on the celebrations:

"In this Jubilee Year, it has been truly inspiring to witness our young people come together in faith, joy, and hope. These Masses were a wonderful reminder that our schools are not just places of learning, but communities of love and light, committed to building a just and compassionate world. I am deeply proud of every pupil, member of staff, and others who made these celebrations so meaningful."

As part of the Jubilee Year, CAFOD has invited all schools to create their own special pledges to show how they will commit to being *Pilgrims of Hope*. During the offertory, pupils brought forward their school's pledge as a powerful symbol of their desire to offer their lives in service and hope.

These joyful gatherings were a testament to the faith, creativity, and dedication of the young people and staff across the Trust, and a fitting celebration of this extraordinary year in the life of the Church.



Students show how they will commit to being Pilgrims of Hope.



East Anglian Pilgrims in Rome for the Jubilee of Youth.

Pilgrims return from Jubilee of Youth

A large group of young pilgrims from the Diocese of East Anglia, accompanied by Bishop Peter Collins, travelled to Rome this summer to take part in the International Jubilee for Young People.

■ Over the course of a week, they experienced a rich blend of faith, fellowship, and exploration in the heart of the Catholic Church – a journey that deepened their spirituality and forged lasting friendships.

The pilgrimage began with a 5am departure for Rome, the early start matched by a high sense of excitement. Upon arrival, the group were delighted to discover that the Vatican was visible from their hotel windows – a constant reminder of their spiritual purpose. The first evening allowed time for informal meals in small groups, with pilgrims sharing stories about their home parishes and reasons for joining the pilgrimage.

Later, they gathered in the Augustinian Chapel for their first Mass, celebrated by Bishop Peter, grounding the journey in prayer. A peaceful evening stroll through Rome's streets closed a day filled with anticipation for the week ahead.

The second day began with Fr Peter Wygnanski delivering a captivating talk on the history and symbolism of St Peter's Square,

followed by a lively "orientation challenge" around the city. The opening Mass for Jubilee week, celebrated by Archbishop Rino Fisichella, brought an unforgettable surprise – Pope Leo passing just three metres from the group.

Day three saw pilgrims visiting the 13th-century church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva to pray at the tomb of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, soon to be canonised. They also toured the Venerable English College, where many English priests, including East Anglian martyrs, trained during the Reformation. Visits to St Augustine's Church and St John the Baptist's Church provided quiet moments for prayer before the day ended with Vespers in St Peter's Square.

On day four, pilgrims walked through the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica, prayed at the tomb of St Peter, and continued on foot to St Paul's Basilica, passing through a second Holy Door. Many also visited the Basilica of Mary Major, completing three Holy Doors in a single day. The evening ended with Mass in the Chapel of St Monica, a visit to the Trevi Fountain, and a well-earned gelato.

Day five began with Mass at the Augustinianum and a thank-you gift for the Augustinian community's hospitality. A visit to the Missionaries of Charity offered an encounter with the sisters' joyful witness, before the evening was brought to life by a concert from Matt Maher. Some pilgrims also completed visits to all four of Rome's Holy Doors, marking a personal journey of

renewal.

Saturday took the group to Tor Vergata for the vigil and Papal Mass. Travelling by metro and on foot, they arrived in high spirits, joining pilgrims from around the world. Mass celebrated by Fr Peter and Fr Gladson included a special blessing for a couple celebrating their 15th wedding anniversary. Joyful singing, dancing, and prayer filled the day, culminating in Pope Leo's arrival and a powerful evening vigil with Eucharistic adoration.

Sunday dawned with a stunning sunrise over the camp, followed by the closing Mass of the Jubilee with Pope Leo, attended by over a million young people. The East Anglia group again found themselves close to the Holy Father as he greeted the crowds. After a challenging return journey in the summer heat, the pilgrimage concluded with a celebratory three-course dinner, filled with reflection, laughter, and heartfelt thanks to the Ignite team, Hamish, Rebecca, and Fr Peter for their dedication.

The Jubilee of Youth in Rome was a transformative experience for the Diocese of East Anglia pilgrims. They returned home with renewed faith, strengthened friendships, and treasured memories of moments when the Church's unity, history, and joy were felt most deeply. As one pilgrim reflected, walking through the Holy Doors was not only about tradition, but about stepping into a deeper understanding of what it means to be part of a living, united, and joyful Church.

Ecumenical event marks 1700 years of Nicene Creed

■ Parishioner Rachel Tearle reports on an Anglican–Catholic collaboration in Ipswich to mark 1700 years of the Nicene Creed.

On the weekend of 14–15 June, Christians in Ipswich came together to mark the 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed – a foundational statement of Christian faith that has united believers across the centuries.

The weekend was hosted by Revd Tom Mumford, Vicar of Ipswich Minster, and Fr Luke Goymour, Catholic Rural Dean of Ipswich, whose joint efforts offered a powerful witness to the shared faith and unity between Anglicans and Catholics.

Revd Tom and Fr Luke – long-time friends with a deep commitment to ecumenism – developed the idea through a series of informal conversations and joint prayer services held earlier in the year. Recognising the anniversary as a moment of significance, they saw in it a unique opportunity for theological reflection and interdenominational dialogue.

Affectionately termed "fireside chats", their discussions focused on the Nicene Creed, first adopted at the Council of Nicaea in AD 325. Together, they explored how this ancient declaration of faith continues to speak to the Church today, encouraging a renewed understanding of Christian doctrine and unity.

The first gathering took place at 7pm at St Mark's Catholic Church, Ipswich. Fr Luke opened the evening with a reflection on the creed, followed by a roundtable discussion and Q&A session with both clergy. The atmosphere was warm and welcoming, drawing a diverse group of Christians from across the town. The evening concluded with Compline – a peaceful and contemplative night prayer.

The celebration continued the next afternoon with Choral Evensong at Ipswich Minster, beginning at 3.30pm. Once again, Fr Luke and Revd Tom led a thoughtful discussion and answered questions from attendees. The event concluded with light refreshments, allowing time for conversation and fellowship.

Both sessions were well-attended and deeply appreciated, with many participants commenting on the spirit of openness and collaboration that characterised the weekend. Attendees described gaining fresh insights into the creed, along with a deeper appreciation for the unity that can be found in shared faith.

Revd Tom and Fr Luke's friendship and mutual respect modelled the kind of cooperation essential to ecumenical work. Their dialogue – rooted in theological depth and pastoral sensitivity – demonstrated how shared initiatives can nurture spiritual growth and bring communities closer together.

As Ipswich continues to grow as a centre for ecumenical dialogue, this celebration stood as a testament to the continuing relevance of the Nicene Creed. Its enduring words call Christians to stand together in faith, seeking understanding and unity despite differences in tradition.

Restoring faith's fabric: saving vestments

Members of the History Group at St Edmund's Church, Bury St Edmunds, continue their valuable work.

■ In addition to previously cataloguing all the items in the church and maintaining an impressive parish chronicle, the group has now turned its attention to the repair, conser-

vation and preservation of the church's historic vestments.

RoseMarie Counihan, who is leading the project, explained: "We discovered several vestments at the church that are of significant historical interest, being more than 100 years old and most likely the oldest clerical vestments in the town. They are of exquisite quality but, sadly, in the past these vestments have been unused and uncared for.

We aim to revive, reveal and explain what was previously hidden. A textile conservator has been engaged to catalogue the vestments, to advise on their condition and to carry out any necessary remedial work to preserve them for future generations to appreciate."

Throughout this work, the group has been supported by the parish priest, Fr Sean Connolly.

One example among the ten vestments currently undergoing conservation is a cream silk damask cope shown in the accompanying photographs. Dated to the late 1800s, it appears that the embroideries are about a century older, created from exceptionally fine hand-sewn silk threads. The remarkable detail includes images of St Edmund and Our Lady, and a depiction on the back of angels and a monstrance.

RoseMarie continued: "We are keen to hear from anyone who may have memories of the past use of the vestments, so that we can piece together their history. It is our intention to produce a booklet detailing the vestments in time for our St Edmund's Day celebrations in November, and subsequently to exhibit them to young people studying art, design and textiles, as an inspiration for their own work."

Inevitably, the project requires funding. The Chair of the group, John Saunders, added: "We have a target of £10,000 and are already a third of the way there. This is about rescuing our Catholic history and heritage. We would be grateful for any donations, and we also welcome suggestions for potential funding sources."

If you would like further information or can help in any way, please contact RoseMarie Counihan at rosemarie166@icloud.com or John Saunders at jes767894@btinternet.com.

Background Information

The St Edmund's Catholic Parish History Group comprises 16 parishioners engaged in a range of projects. These have included cataloguing all items within the church and producing a secure record of assets, which can be reviewed at intervals. The history of many of these items is set out online at St Edmund's Chronicle, a detailed record of events since the chapel was first established in Bury St Edmunds in 1762 and the dedication of the church in 1837.

Various ongoing projects have emerged from this cataloguing process, such as researching the origins of plate and vestments. The project described in this article concerns vestments discovered during cataloguing, many of which showed signs of neglect. A professional conservator has been engaged to assess their condition and to carry out any necessary conservation work to ensure they survive for future generations.

To enable this, £10,000 needs to be raised, of which about one third has already been secured from donations, including contributions from The Bury Society, town and county councillors, and two funding grants.

The intention is to restore ten of the most significant vestments and to exhibit them publicly, beginning with a small exhibition during the St Edmund's Day celebrations in November. This will be followed by wider displays to parishioners and to young people studying art, design and textiles, offering inspiration for their own creativity.

These vestments are a remarkable testament to the faith and generosity of their donors over many years, particularly in the period before Catholic Emancipation.

This article aims both to inform readers of this important work and to appeal for donations and information that may help identify further funding opportunities.



Vestments found at St Edmund's Catholic Church.

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Young leaders receive awards

On a radiant Sunday morning, the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, the 11am Mass at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist was a joyful celebration of the fruitful ministry of the Ignite Team and young leaders.

■ The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Peter Collins, who, at the beginning of his homily, presented the young leaders with *Faith in Action* Award certificates. The *Faith in Action Award* is an innovative programme provided by CYMFed, the Catholic Youth Ministry Federation. It recognises young people who actively live out their faith and help build the Kingdom of God in their schools and parishes. Bishop Peter presented eleven awards, ranging from Bronze to Gold.

The young Catholics who received the award have worked tirelessly for the Kingdom this year. Their contributions have included boldly speaking about the existence of God in confirmation classes and English Speaking exams, sharing personal testimonies during First Holy Communion sessions, discussing their faith and hopes for the new pope on BBC News, and inviting friends to a growing

youth group — now attended by around 50 young people.

These courageous and inspiring acts are a testament to the flourishing state of youth ministry in the Diocese of East Anglia, driven in large part by the young people themselves.

Following the presentation of awards, Bishop Peter delivered a compelling homily on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, fitting for the solemnity. At the conclusion of the Mass, he invited each member of the Ignite Team to the front of the sanctuary, where he presented them with a *Certificate of Catholic Mission*, in recognition of their year of dedicated missionary service to the diocese. The certificates, a heartfelt gesture of gratitude from the Bishop and the wider diocesan community, were received with appreciation by the team, along with a firm handshake from Bishop Peter.

The team have had a rich and fulfilling year in youth ministry. In addition to visiting primary schools, they have expanded their work with secondary-aged

students through deanery and parish youth days, youth groups, confirmation preparation sessions, and school retreats. These events have been a great success, encouraging many young people in their faith journeys while deepening the team's own relationship with Jesus.

Each team member will carry the memories of this special year of ministry in their hearts.

After the Mass, the Ignite Team and young leaders had the privilege of being photographed with Bishop Peter. This was followed by a time of fellowship and a delicious celebratory meal. It was a beautiful and joyous occasion on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity — one that will remain etched in the memories of these inspirational young Catholics.



Bishop Peter Collins with young leaders receiving their awards.

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West Norfolk Catenians raise over £1,000 for night shelter

The West Norfolk Circle No. 231 of the Catholic Catenian Association has proudly announced the success of their President's Charity for 2024–2025, raising an impressive £1,005 in support of the King's Lynn Night Shelter.

■ The donation was formally presented to Lucy McKitterick of the Night Shelter by Chris Davey, Past-President of the Circle, accompanied by fellow Catenians Peter Eyre and Peter Coates.

The King's Lynn Night Shelter provides essential accommodation and pastoral support to those facing homelessness, welcoming guests throughout the winter months. Demand for spaces remains high, with approximately three referrals received for every available bed. Many guests experience complex needs, and the shelter offers them a private room along with round-the-clock care.

Notably, the Night Shelter currently operates without any local or national government funding. Around 30% of its annual budget is met through Housing Benefit for eligible guests, while the remaining costs are covered by grants and community fundraising efforts.

Guests frequently share how dangerous and traumatic homelessness and rough sleeping can be, regardless of the season. In light of this, the Night Shelter is preparing to extend its services year-round from summer 2025 — a vital and welcome development. However, the success of this initiative will be heavily reliant on sustained financial support from the community and benefactors.

The West Norfolk Catenians' generous contribution is a testament to their ongoing commitment to charitable works and to supporting those most in need within the diocese.



Peter Coates, Lucy McKitterick, Chris Davey and Peter Eyre at the Night Shelter in King's Lynn.

Dereham's heart beats strong: 100 years & more

■ On 25 July 2025, Sacred Heart & St Margaret Mary Catholic Church in Dereham celebrated a momentous milestone — 100 years of faith, service, and community.

The centenary celebration began at 6:00pm with a solemn Mass, presided over by Bishop Peter Collins as the principal celebrant and concelebrated by priests. The Church was filled with joy as parishioners gathered in worship. Bishop Peter, in his homily, spoke of the parish as a place of "encounter with God," a living wit-

ness to the enduring presence of Christ in the heart of Dereham.

Following the Mass, a festive banquet was held, bringing together clergy, parishioners, and guests in an atmosphere of fellowship and gratitude.

Among the honoured guests was Mayor of Dereham, Ray O'Callahan, whose presence underscored the Church's lasting contribution to the civic and spiritual life of the town.

More than a look back, the centenary marked a living legacy of faith, with mission at its very heart.



Bishop Peter Collins and parishioners in Dereham.

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St Edmund’s International Pentecost Mass

■ On Pentecost Sunday, the vibrant community of St Edmund’s Church in Bury St Edmunds came together to celebrate its now-traditional International Mass, an uplifting occasion which reflected the rich cultural diversity of the parish.

The celebration began with a colourful procession of flags representing over 20 different nations, carried proudly by members of the congregation. The church was filled to capacity, as parishioners and visitors alike gathered in a joyful expression of faith and unity.

The liturgy was brought to life by the contributions of various communities who regularly attend the parish. Music and hymns in Hispanic, Nigerian, Polish, Malayalam and Filipino traditions created a dynamic and prayerful atmosphere. The Psalm was read in German, while the Second Reading was proclaimed in Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines. The bidding prayers were offered in a beautiful array of languages, including English, Spanish, Danish, French, Malayalam, Xhosa, Polish, and Nigerian Pidgin, each voice adding to the collective sense of belonging and celebration.

Fr Anthony Asomugha was the principal celebrant, and his presence further underscored the inclusive and welcoming spirit of the parish. His homily encouraged all present to embrace the gifts of the Holy Spirit and to continue fostering unity through diversity.

Following the Mass, the celebration moved into the parish hall for a festive shared lunch. Each community contributed homemade dishes, offering an impressive spread of traditional delicacies from around the world. It was a wonderful opportunity for fellowship, as parishioners exchanged stories, laughter, and flavours from their homelands.

The International Mass at St Edmund’s has become a cherished highlight in the parish calendar, embodying the spirit of Pentecost — when the Holy Spirit united people of many languages and backgrounds. It was a powerful reminder that, despite our differences, we are all one in Christ.



Bishop Peter Collins with Deacon Jonathan Wright (left) and Deacon Jonathan Callejo (right). Picture by Charlie Bohan-Hurst.

The Diocese of East Anglia joyfully welcomed two new permanent deacons on Saturday 19 July, as Jonathan Callejo and Jonathan Wright were ordained during a solemn Mass celebrated by Bishop Peter Collins at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist in Norwich.
Charlie Bohan-Hurst reports.

■ The cathedral was filled with family, friends, clergy, and parishioners from across the diocese, all gathered in prayerful support of the two men as they took this significant step in their journey of faith and service.

The Rite of Ordination began after the proclamation of the Gospel. As Bishop Peter, wearing the mitre, sat at the chair before the altar, the candidates were called forward by a deacon. At the sound of their names, each man responded and approached the Bishop with a sign of reverence. They were formally presented to the Bishop, who then examined them publicly, affirming their readiness to be ordained.

The candidates then knelt before Bishop Peter, placing their hands between his in a traditional gesture of obedience and making their promises to faithfully serve the Church. This was followed by an invitation to prayer and the solemn chanting of the Litany of the Saints, during which Jonathan Callejo and Jonathan Wright prostrated themselves before the altar

in a powerful sign of humility and surrender to God’s will.

The Bishop then laid his hands on each candidate in silence – a moment marking the calling down of the Holy Spirit – followed by the prayer of consecration. The newly ordained were vested with the stole and dalmatic, signs of the diaconal ministry, and were presented with the Book of the Gospels, symbolising their role in proclaiming the Word. They received the kiss of peace from Bishop Peter and from their brother deacons, signifying their full incorporation into the diaconal order.

Jonathan Callejo and Jonathan Wright then joined Bishop Peter at the altar for the remainder of the Mass, fulfilling their new liturgical role for the first time.



to the Diaconate



In his homily, Bishop Peter Collins spoke of the vital ministry of the permanent diaconate and expressed heartfelt gratitude to the wives and families of both men, acknowledging the support and sacrifices made throughout their formation. He also offered thanks to all those who had supported Jonathan C and Jonathan W on their vocational journey, including clergy, formators, and fellow parishioners.

The occasion was one of great joy and spiritual significance for the diocese, as the Church continues to grow in its mission through the dedication and witness of its ordained ministers. Please keep Deacons Jonathan Callejo and Jonathan Wright in your prayers as they begin their ministry of service, charity, and proclamation of the Gospel.

Bishop Peter's engagements

AUGUST

Aug 22 – 29, Fri – Fri
Bishop leading Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes.

SEPTEMBER

Sept 2, Tues
Bishop to attend The Charles Plater Trust Conference in Oxford.

Sept 6, Sat
Bishop to celebrate Mass at St Peter and All Souls, Peterborough at 10:00 before attending the Fund Raising International Cookout at 12:00.

Sept 7, Sun
Bishop to attend the Dowry Pilgrimage of Mary, Walsingham from 12:00 – 16:30.

Sept 8, Mon
Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at St Mary's, Ipswich at 19:00.

Sept 9, Tues
Bishop to attend Bishop's Council Meeting in Poringland from 11:00.

Sept 10, Wed
Bishop to attend Chapter of Canons 12 noon Capitular Mass [Cathedral] Meeting to start after lunch [Cathedral House Dining Room].

Sept 11, Thurs
Bishop to attend the Diocesan Schools Service Commission Meeting at 10:45.

Sept 11, Thurs
Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at St Michael the Archangel, Huntingdon at 19:00.

Sept 13, Sat
Bishop to attend the Commission for Dialogue and Unity Meetings in Poringland at 11:00.

Sept 14, Sun
Bishop to celebrate The Exaltation of the Cross (Feast) at the Cathedral at 11:00.

Sept 15, Mon
Bishop to celebrate a joint Confirmation Mass for St Laurence's, Cambridge and St Philip Howard, Cambridge at 19:00.

Sept 16, Tues
Bishop to attend the CBCEW Meeting in London.

Sept 17, Wed
Bishop to attend the opening of the new Music Block at St Bede's Inter-Church School, Cambridge at 14:00.

Sept 17, Wed
Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass for St Hugh of Lincoln, Buckden at 19:00.

Sept 18, Thurs
Bishop to celebrate the Annual Mass and Meeting of Retired Priests in Poringland at 11:30 followed by lunch.

Sept 18, Thurs
Bishop to attend Commission for Catechesis & Formation Meeting in Poringland at 18:30.

Sept 21, Sun
Bishop to preach at Evensong at Ely Cathedral at 16:00.

Sept 22, Mon
Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at Our Lady Immaculate and St Ethelreda, Newmarket at 19:00.

Sept 23, Tues
Bishop to attend the Department of Dialogue and Unity Meeting in London.

Sept 24, Wed
Bishop to attend the special Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham from 11:00.

Sept 25, Thurs
Bishop to Diocesan Board of Trustees Meeting at 10:30, Poringland.

Sept 25, Thurs
Bishop to celebrate Confirmation Mass at The Sacred Heart, North Walsham at 19:00.



The restored statue in the Precious Blood Chapel.

From destruction to restoration: a testament of faith

■ Approximately 18 months ago, a quiet evening at St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich took a dramatic turn.

As the cathedral was being closed for the night, a priest noticed someone deep in prayer in the Precious Blood Chapel. Upon gently approaching to inform her of closing time, the person was startled — leaping up and pushing over the large and ancient statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

The statue, long cherished by the cathedral community and a focus of prayer for many, fell heavily to the floor and shattered into countless fragments that scattered across the sanctuary. The sight of this sacred object, so central to the devotional life of the cathedral, broken and disfigured, was deeply distressing.

In the aftermath, the fragments were carefully gathered and placed into three large shopping bags, seemingly destined for disposal. But providence had other plans. A parishioner, upon hearing of the statue's fate, approached with an extraordinary offer. Moved by a profound sense of calling, he expressed his desire to restore the statue to its former glory. His offer, while inspiring, was met with understandable scepticism. The scale of the damage seemed beyond repair.

Then, as if divinely coordinated, a second parishioner came forward. He pledged to craft a bespoke stand for the statue once it was restored. These offers brought not only a flicker of hope but also a profound sense of encouragement and gratitude.

Over a year passed. Then, quietly and with no fanfare, the statue was returned — fully restored. The craftsmanship was breathtaking. Every detail had been lovingly and expertly recon-

structed with astonishing skill and reverence. What had once seemed irreparably lost had been made whole again.

Shortly after, the promised stand was completed and installed. This too was an exceptional piece of work — beautifully engineered and perfectly suited to the restored statue. Both of these remarkable individuals gave their time, talent, and labour freely, offering their gifts in service to the Church and to the honour of Our Lady.

The story of this restoration is more than just the recovery of a statue. It is a testament to the power of community, to the hidden gifts within our parishioners, and to the grace that can arise from even the darkest moments. From destruction came hope, beauty, and renewed devotion.

To the two craftsmen who gave so selflessly: thank you. Your work now stands in the cathedral as a lasting symbol of faith, generosity, and the quiet miracles that happen when people say “yes” to the call to serve.



Statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.



Dr Ian Watson meeting Pope Francis at the NWCT pilgrimage to Rome. Courtesy of Vatican Media – January 2025.

Unity Corner with Dr Ian Watson

Unity Corner is a regular feature on Christian Unity by Dr Ian Watson, County Ecumenical Officer for Norfolk and Waveney. His first report highlights the inspiration he draws from Cardinal Walter Kasper.

■ As County Ecumenical Officer, my work is focused on encouraging collaboration among different Christian denominations. I'm also privileged to be a Catholic member of the Parish of Walsingham and to sit on Bishop Peter's Commission for Dialogue and Unity. In my ecumenical efforts, I draw inspiration from the insights of Walter Kasper who emphasises that bridging the divide between Christian traditions requires a commitment to dialogue, prayer, reconciled diversity, and above all, the unifying love of Christ.

While it's true that Christian denominations hold different doctrinal positions, he reminds us not to lose sight of what ultimately binds us together: the unifying love of Christ. At the heart of our faith lies a shared devotion to Jesus, and that, he believes, must always take precedence. His perspective has helped me approach my own role with renewed hope. Rather than being overwhelmed by what divides us, I'm encouraged to focus on what unites us; namely, our commitment to Christ and the values that flow from Him (love, compassion, hope, and service). That's not to dismiss the importance of our theological differences, they matter, of course, but for me they are secondary.

A wonderful example of this in

action is the annual gathering of senior leaders from Churches Together in Norfolk and Waveney. Each year, on the Feast of Christ the King, they come together for fellowship and a public act of ecumenical worship. The next celebration will take place at St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich on Sunday 23 November 2025 at 3.30pm – all are warmly invited to attend.

To centre on the unifying love of Christ there are several things Kasper says we need. He highlights the first in *Harvesting the Fruits* (2009), where he writes: “Dialogue is the path to unity and the heart of ecumenical engagement.” That insight underpins everything I do to encourage collaboration across the different Christian traditions in Norfolk and Waveney. In a region so rich in denominational diversity, dialogue is essential if we are to overcome division and misunderstanding.

Kasper emphasises the importance of prayer as the second thing we need. In *That They May All Be One* (2004), he warns: “Without prayer, ecumenical dialogue can become merely an intellectual exercise, devoid of the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.” This idea of spiritual ecumenism (joining together in prayer led by the Spirit) is central to my work. In my experience, ecumenical prayer gatherings help Christians not only grow in unity but also deepen their spiritual lives through shared encounter with God.

It is important to remember that this is not a call for uniformity. In *The Church: A Mystery* (2003), Kasper reminds us that the Church is not merely a structure but a “dynamic community called to unity in diversity.” This insight affirms that Christian unity does not mean we should be the same.

We must resist the temptation to water down our treasured traditions. Instead, we should embrace ‘reconciled diversity,’ an idea also held by the late and dear Pope Francis who said: “True unity is reconciled diversity – not sameness, but solidarity rooted in a rich diversity and love.” In other words, we are ‘One but not the Same.’

To achieve this, Kasper champions humility and openness in our ecumenical efforts. He calls us to listen attentively and to learn from each other's traditions – a practice sometimes referred to as Receptive Ecumenism. I've seen this in action through local Churches Together groups where mutual respect allows differences to be seen not as obstacles, but as gifts to be received and appreciated. Indeed, in my case I can honestly say that the extensive exposure to other traditions has enriched my own Catholic faith not diluted it.

Finally, Kasper's commitment to social justice is also a part of his vision for unity. He teaches that Christians working together in service offer a living witness to Christ's love. This resonates deeply. Indeed, the most impactful ecumenical work I've encountered involves Christians of different traditions serving side by side to address poverty, injustice and the needs of the marginalised.

Cardinal Walter Kasper continues to be a powerful influence on my ecumenical ministry. His call to put Jesus at the centre through dialogue, prayer, humility, and joint service inspires how I encourage unity among Christians. I sincerely believe that if we all take his teaching to heart, we can move together in love and hope toward the unity that Christ prayed for; a unity that truly reflects His heart for His Church and for the world.

St Ives: Faith in every flavour

On Saturday 7 June 2025, Sacred Heart Church in St Ives was filled with the warmth of community spirit and the vibrant richness of global cultures during a joyful Parish Diversity Mass, followed by a lively International Food Extravaganza.

■ The altar was beautifully adorned with flags from 14 nations — ranging from Poland to the Philippines, Nigeria to Sri Lanka — each one a striking symbol of the many cultures that make up the Sacred Heart parish family. This colourful display reflected the heart of the occasion: one Church, many peoples, united in faith and thanksgiving.

After Mass, more than 75 parishioners gathered for a joyful “bring and share” supper, featuring over 30 homemade dishes from across the globe. A culinary highlight of the evening was a fragrant Goan fish curry, lovingly prepared by Fr Trindade, who also led the gathering in grace, offering thanks for the blessings of fellowship and food.

The parish hall rang with laughter, conversation, and the sounds of shared celebration as parishioners exchanged stories, smiles, and flavours. It was an evening to remember — one that honoured the rich cultural diversity of the parish while celebrating the unity of faith, friendship, and community that lies at its heart.



The “bring and share” supper, featuring over 30 homemade dishes from across the globe.

Celebrating Christian unity with young hearts

Dr Ian Watson, The County Ecumenical Officer for Churches Together in Norfolk and Waveney visited St Augustine's Catholic Primary School in Costessey, Norwich, to inspire pupils about Christian unity.

■ Through engaging talks, stories, and lively discussions, children learned that Christians of all traditions can work together as one family in Christ. The pupils showed remarkable understanding and empathy, sharing thoughtful ideas on inclusion and kindness. Their enthusiasm demonstrated that the seeds of ecumenism are already taking root among the young.

Dr Watson, who also sits on Bishop Peter Collins' Commission for Unity, reports on the day.

It was a joy and privilege to visit St August-

tine's Catholic Primary School in Costessey, Norwich, to speak with three classes of bright, thoughtful, and enthusiastic pupils about the meaning and importance of Christian unity.

The visit was centred around an interactive talk designed to explore why Christians from different traditions should walk, pray, and work together as one big family in Christ — even when we are not all the same.

The theme of the presentation was “Christian Unity: One but Not the Same.” Through colourful slides, questions, and stories, the children were introduced to the idea of ecumenism. A big word, as the presentation acknowledged, but one that simply means Christians from different churches working together because of their shared love for Jesus.

We began by unpacking what “ecumenical” means, explaining that it refers to Christians of various traditions — whether Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Orthodox, and so on, who all follow Jesus and read the Bible, coming together to support each other and share God's love.

I explained my role as County Ecumenical Officer, and the kind of work I do across Norfolk to encourage cooperation between churches. From there we went deeper into the meaning of Christian unity itself: not about everyone becoming the same, but about recognising we are part of one family united in our love for Jesus.

The heart of the talk focused on why Jesus wanted unity. The children were told how Jesus prayed that all His followers would be one, not for His sake but so that

the world would see God's love through our togetherness.

Drawing on examples from the life of Jesus and the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) who are always united in love, we explored how unity helps us shine a light in the world, bring us strength, and helps us better share the Gospel.

I was so impressed with the children. The school has done a fantastic job in educating them in the faith. The children responded to my presentation and questions with intelligence, empathy, and warmth.

They grasped difficult concepts with ease, giving thoughtful responses and offering their own reflections.

Many of the children shared examples of how they themselves show kindness and inclusion, from playing with new children in the playground to giving money to charity, helping others in need, especially their classmates when they are feeling sad and lonely.

We also discussed why unity is important today. The children quickly understood that if Christians argue or stay apart, it can confuse or even put off those looking for faith. But when we are seen to love one another, help each other, and act as one, despite our differences we become a witness to the love of Jesus.

I used the image of a rainbow to explain how our different church traditions are like different colours where all are unique but together form something beautiful. That metaphor sparked lively conversation with pupils.

A particularly engaging part of the presentation involved practical ways the children

could help with unity in their own lives. Their suggestions went far beyond what might have been expected from children so young. “Pray for people in other churches,” one said. “Don't just invite your friends to play, include people you don't know too well” added another. Others talked about being kind not just to Christians, but to everyone. Their natural inclusivity and sense of social justice was inspiring.

We concluded by summarising that Christian unity means loving and respecting each other, listening and learning from others, and remembering that even though we are different, we can still be one.

The pupils were reminded that Jesus smiles when we choose to love, forgive, and work together for the good of others — what Christians call the “Common Good.”

As a visitor, I was moved and uplifted by the quality of engagement shown by all three classes. The children at St Augustine's demonstrated that the seeds of Christian faith are already growing strong in their hearts.

They listen politely and deeply. They reflected generously and responded with the kind of openness and hope that often (I have to observe) eludes adults. Their teachers deserve great credit for nurturing an environment where such rich spiritual and moral dialogue can flourish.

If Christian unity is to grow in our communities, it must start with conversations like these rooted in love and embraced by the youngest among us. Judging by the extraordinary response at St Augustine's, the future of ecumenism in Norfolk is in good hands.



Dr Watson's presentation at St Augustine's primary school.

Twenty years of care home ministry in Wisbech

This year marks a remarkable milestone in ecumenical ministry in Wisbech as *Churches Together* celebrates twenty years of faithful service to the town's care homes.

■ It all began in May 2005 when an elderly parishioner from the local Catholic Church was admitted to Dove Court care home. Michael Owen, the home's activities organiser, approached Sean Finlay with the idea of establishing a regular service for residents. What started as a modest proposal has blossomed into a thriving, deeply cherished ministry spanning five care homes in the area.

Michael and Sean, the only remaining members of the original team, have watched this pastoral outreach grow steadily over the years. Each service now regularly draws around twenty-five residents, with a simple yet uplifting format of light-hearted singing combined with prayerful reflection. The joy and peace it brings have made the services a highlight in the homes' calendars.

In recent years, there has been a heartening increase in participation from residents' relatives, many of whom are moved by the positive impact the ministry has on their loved ones. The team has also seen a rise in requests for end-of-life visits, offering spiritual comfort and gentle farewells during

life's final chapter.

The ministry has grown in both scope and diversity, now drawing on volunteers from most of Wisbech's Christian communities. A notable enhancement has been the involvement of tech-savvy team members such as Rev. Robin and Alan, whose audio-visual support has added a professional and engaging element to the services.

To mark this significant anniversary, a celebratory afternoon tea was held at Just Jades Tea Room in nearby Walpole St Andrew. The event was generously funded by *Churches Together*, with additional support from Johan and Rachael, owners of Tamar Nurseries, a local business located on the A47 just before Wisbech from the east. Their ultra-modern facility, powered by its own water and electricity supply, not only champions sustainability but also provides fulfilling employ-

ment opportunities for young people in the community.

Looking to the future, *Churches Together* is now exploring a leadership succession plan to ensure this much-loved ministry continues to flourish. Sean Finlay, whose faithful commitment has been instrumental, is beginning to turn his attention to other commu-

nity endeavours — including the promotion of cycling in Wisbech. He and a colleague have successfully persuaded the town council to establish a cycling working group. Whether it becomes more than just a "talking shop" remains to be seen — but if Sean's past record is anything to go by, wheels are sure to turn.



Celebratory afternoon tea to mark the *Churches Together* 20 year anniversary.

Call for survivor input to review

■ The Catholic Safeguarding Standards Agency (CSSA) will shortly be carrying out a Survivor Thematic Review Audit, which may begin as early as September.

This review will focus on the experiences of survivors of abuse within the Catholic Church and how their voices are heard, respected, and acted upon.

As part of this important process, the CSSA is inviting anyone who has experience, insights, or information regarding survivor engagement in the Church to share their views. This could include survivors themselves, those who have supported survivors, or anyone with relevant knowledge.

Full details are available via the CSSA website: catholicsafeguarding.org.uk

For those ready to contribute, the CSSA has provided an online form where you can share your experiences and perspectives directly.

The Diocese is encouraging all parishes to help promote this important opportunity to contribute to safeguarding improvement. By sharing these links and encouraging participation, we can ensure that the voices of survivors are heard and help the Church continue to strengthen its safeguarding culture.



Joyful First Holy Communion in Brandon & Mildenhall

On Saturday 21 June 2025, a joyous celebration took place in the Parish of Brandon and Mildenhall, as 11 young parishioners received the Eucharist for the first time. Catechist Jo Leveridge reports.

■ The First Holy Communion Masses were held at St Thomas of Canterbury Church, Brandon, and St John the Evangelist Church, Mildenhall, with both churches filled with the warmth and support of family, friends, and the wider parish community.

Fr Anil Zachary presided over both celebrations, which were marked by reverence, joy, and a spirit of unity. Many family members had travelled from near and far — including from Poland and Lithuania — to witness this deeply significant milestone in the spiritual lives of the children.

The young First Communicants looked radiant and carried out their roles during the Mass with confidence and grace. Their reverent reception of the Eucharist was a moving moment for all present, reflecting the care and dedication that had gone into their preparation.

This special occasion marked the culmination of

months of formation led by committed catechists and supported by the children's parents. The aim throughout was to nurture a deeper understanding of the Eucharist and to prepare the children to welcome Jesus into their hearts with love and reverence. The catechists expressed their gratitude for the children's enthusiasm and willingness to learn, noting that they had been a joy to teach.

The liturgy was beautifully enriched by the contributions of parish organists, choir members, readers, and altar servers from both churches, all of whom helped make the day especially memorable.

Fr Anil shared his joy, saying: "Taste and see that the Lord is good. The parish family is extremely happy to announce that our little angels at St Thomas' and St John's received the Lord through the Sacrament. They have experienced the sweetness of the heavenly manna — the delicious bread of Holy Angels. A big congratulations to our children. We are all so very proud of you. May the good Lord fill your hearts with wisdom and love."

We give thanks for this wonderful celebration in our parish and pray that these children continue to grow in faith, always walking closely with God and His Church.



Fr Anil with young parishioners making their First Holy Communion.

Faith in the Home

Celebrating Name Days

■ In this edition of Faith in the Home, Monica Underwood from St Etheldreda's Church in Ely, explores the Catholic tradition of celebrating our Name Day – a meaningful way to honour the saint whose name we bear and who walks with us on our journey through life.

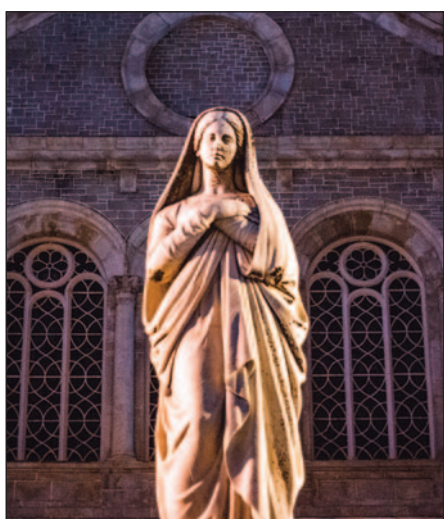
I was fortunate to receive from my parents the name of a great saint, despite growing up in an evangelical Christian home in which the communion of saints was not emphasised. It was my Catholic friends at university who first drew my attention to the patronage of St Augustine's holy mother, whose prayers for her son's conversion bore such precious fruit. And it was only on meeting my future husband's devout family that I saw this link to our heavenly helpers being celebrated in concrete ways.

In anticipation of our first child, while discussing name choices we factored in the significance of the saint who would become her patron, alongside names which sounded beautiful or had a family connection. A name is a rich gift, full of meaning, and we settled on St Elizabeth Ann Seton, an American convert who founded schools. Each year on 4th January, we celebrate Lizzie and her saint together, and she looks forward to this date with excitement, like another birthday.

Name day celebrations can take many forms but often they include a cake or other sweet treat and a small religious gift of some kind – perhaps a book, icon, or rosary. A trip to daily mass or visit to the Blessed Sacrament is ideal, as well as prayers in the home. Families can choose the food, gifts, and decorations which fit their own saints and cultural heritage. And whether these celebrations are simple or more elaborate, it's important to make them manageable. Feast days should be special, but not burdensome!

Such infusions of joyful devotion into the home make our beliefs real for our children.

O Saint Monica, lover of Christ and His Church, pray for us and for our children, that we may acquire heaven, joining with you, there, in offering constant and thankful praise to God. Amen.



Cathedral Café gets top marks in hygiene inspection

■ The Cathedral Café at St John the Baptist Cathedral in Norwich has once again demonstrated its commitment to excellence, having recently been awarded a five-star hygiene rating following its latest inspection.

This top rating is a testament to the hard work, high standards, and dedication of Catering Manager Becci Roberts and her exceptional team.

Becci leads the café with energy and care, ensuring that all staff receive the proper training and have a thorough understanding of the food and drink they prepare and serve. From the kitchen to the counter, her leadership has helped shape the café into a warm, welcoming, and professionally run hub for both the Cathedral community and the wider public.

The café is open six days a week, serving delicious breakfasts and wholesome lunches made with fresh ingredients – many of which come directly from the Cathedral gardens, thanks to the efforts of our own Cathedral Gardener. These home-grown fruits and vegetables are used to create seasonal favourites such as soups, salads, cakes, and crumbles.

No visit would be complete without sampling the café's freshly baked scones – widely regarded as the best in Norwich – alongside their renowned home-made sausage rolls and generously sized round cakes.

Behind the scenes, a dedicated team of volunteers plays a vital role in the café's daily operations. From

washing up and clearing tables to making drinks and serving cakes, their cheerful hospitality and helpfulness make the café experience all the more enjoyable.

We are incredibly proud of this five-star achievement and of Becci and her whole team. Their efforts not only reflect the high



Fr Alvan Ibeh will be the guest speaker at the event.

standards we strive for but also contribute to the warm and friendly atmosphere that so many visitors comment on.

Whether you're a regular or have never visited before, you are very welcome at the Cathedral Café – come and see (and taste!) for yourself.

Fr Alvan Ibeh: We are like babies in God's hands



In his regular column Fr Alvan Ibeh reflects on a tender encounter with a sleeping baby after Mass to illustrate how God invites us to rest in His loving hands with the same complete trust, peace, and dependence as a child in a parent's arms.

■ "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!" — Isaiah 49:15

Something beautiful happened recently after one of our weekday Masses, and I

would like to share it with you, as it inspired the reflection you are now reading.

On that particular morning, after I had finished celebrating Mass and was tidying up, a couple approached me to arrange their baby's baptism. After we spoke, I asked where the baby was, and they told me she was with her grandmother, who had also attended Mass. I asked if they could bring her so I could meet her and offer a blessing. They gladly agreed and returned with the little one, who was fast asleep in her grandmother's arms.

Much like Simeon in Luke 2:28, I gently took the child into my arms, closed my eyes, and prayed for her and her family. When I opened my eyes, I noticed that she was still sleeping peacefully — completely undisturbed, totally at rest. She hadn't stirred once. And in that quiet moment, I sensed the Holy Spirit whispering a message to me: "This is exactly how I want you to be in My hands."

I turned to the family and said, "You see how calm and relaxed your baby is in our arms? This is how we are in the hands of God when we trust Him completely."

There is something profoundly comforting and deeply humbling about realising that, before God, we are like infants — helpless, dependent, and entirely in need of His care. Just as a baby relies entirely on a parent for nourishment, protection, warmth, and love, so too do we rely on God for every breath, every moment, every step.

Babies do not worry about the future. They are not anxious about the present.

They simply rest, they cry, they trust — and yet they are always cared for. This is the kind of posture God desires from each of us: not childishness or ignorance, but childlike trust. Trust that is total and unwavering. Confidence not in ourselves, but in His unwavering love.

Jesus reminded us of this when He said, "Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). In His hands, we are safe. In His arms, we find peace — just as that baby did in mine. Even when life feels uncertain, God holds us like a loving Father, and He never lets go: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

The hands of God are both strong and tender. They formed us (Psalm 139:13), carry us (Isaiah 46:4), and hold us securely (John 10:28). As babies in His hands, we are constantly being shaped, guided, and loved — even when we don't understand what He is doing or why.

So, like that peacefully sleeping child, may we rest today in the assurance that we are not in control — and we don't need to be. We are held in the hands of the One who not only holds the universe but also knows and loves each one of us personally.

Let us pray together:

Heavenly Father, teach me to rest in You like a baby in Your arms. Remind me daily that I am not forgotten, but cherished, nurtured, and carried by Your love. Help me to trust even when I do not understand, and to walk with You in simple, childlike faith. Amen.

Picture gallery from parishes around the Diocese



■ On Wednesday 18 June, Matthew Allen, a seminarian from the Diocese of East Anglia, was ordained to the Diaconate in Rome. Representing the Diocese of East Anglia at the ordination was Fr Peter Wygnanski, Private Secretary to Bishop Peter Collins, who travelled to Rome for the occasion. Fellow East Anglian seminarian Peter Ho was also present to support his brother in Christ on this significant day.

■ On 13 July Bishop Peter Collins celebrated Confirmation Mass at Our Lady of the Assumption & the English Martyrs, Cambridge.

