Catholic Deanery of Eastbourne & St Leonards

Deanery Newsletter

Issue 5: Summer / Ordinary Time 2025

Contents:

New Parish Update: p2
New Deanery website: p3

A Summer rich in Faith: p4
Holy Days of Obligation: p5

Remembering Pope Francis: p6
Welcoming Pope Leo XIV: p7

Catholic Women's League: p8
Relics Tour: p9
Knights of St Columba: p9
Catenians: p9

Youth Focus: p10
Our deanery priests: p11

Directory: p12
Clergy contacts
Church addresses
Website links
Saturday Vigil/Sunday Mass times

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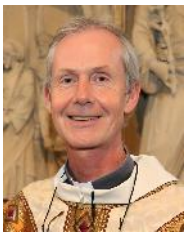
Regular news from our diocese can be found on the website at: https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/diocese/news

You can also sign up to the weekly email update.



Fr Kevin Dring, Single Parish Moderator

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the fifth issue of our Deanery Newsletter.

We now find ourselves in Ordinary Time—a season in the Church's year that gently invites us to continue growing in faith through the everyday moments of life. As we also move into the summer months, many will be looking forward to holidays and time away. Wherever you go, I warmly encourage you to carry your faith with you. Seek out the celebration of the Mass, especially on Holy Days of Obligation such as every Sunday and the Solemnity of the Annunciation on August 15th. While you travel whether on a Jubilee Pilgrimage, a holiday or visiting friends/family we invite you to share your travels with your parish. See page 4 to find out how.

In this edition, we also mark a deeply significant moment in the life of the Church. Our beloved Pope Francis passed away on Easter Monday, leaving behind a legacy of humility, compassion, and bold prophetic leadership. We entrust his soul to the Lord and give thanks for his faithful service. We also joyfully welcome Pope Leo XIV, a pope to who many diocesan clergy, including myself, hold a special connection, having also had the privilege of serving with him as missionary Priests in Peru. Reflections on Pope Francis's legacy and the hopes for Pope Leo XIV can be found on pages 6 and 7.

Our journey towards becoming a single parish continues to unfold—please see pages 2 and 3 for the latest updates. We are also pleased to announce the launch of our new Single Parish Deanery website at www.eastbourne-stleonards.org.uk, which will be your first point of reference for all things related to the formation of the Single Parish. We ask for your continued prayers for wisdom, unity, and openness to the Holy Spirit as we move forward as one.

We have been truly blessed by the renewed life in our Deanery, seen especially in the many new faithful who have joined or returned to us in recent months. We thank God for the quiet yet genuine revival taking place across our communities. A special word, too, for all the children who have recently celebrated their First Holy Communion and Confirmation—see page 10 for more.

May I gently encourage all parents and carers: if your child has received one of the Sacraments recently, please continue to support them by bringing them to Mass each Sunday. Faith is caught as much as it is taught, and your witness and presence make a profound difference in your child's growing relationship with Christ.

Let us conclude with this simple prayer:

God of all seasons, in the quiet of Ordinary Time, teach us to find You in our daily lives. May our summer days be full of Your presence, our travels mindful of Your grace, and our hearts always turned toward You. We entrust Pope Francis to Your eternal care and ask Your blessing upon Pope Leo XIV as he begins his ministry of service. Guide our parishes, schools and families in love, unity, and peace.
Amen.

New Parish Update

Update on the formation of Our New Parish Family

As we continue our journey towards becoming a single parish community across the deanery, we want to share an update on how this new structure is taking shape. On behalf of the clergy team, thank you for your openness, prayers, and commitment during this time of change and opportunity. We're especially grateful for your patience, as we have so far been working quietly behind the scenes — but are now ready to engage more directly with all of you in our church communities.

A New Parish Pastoral Plan (PPP)

A key part of growing together as one parish is developing a **Parish Pastoral Plan (PPP)** — a simple and evolving roadmap to guide us forward. Rooted in the Diocesan Pastoral Plan and building on action points already discussed in our Parish Leadership Group (PLG) meetings, the PPP will focus on three core values:

Prayer – Formation – Mission

This plan will not be imposed from above but will grow organically from our shared hopes and experiences. Through regular meetings of the **Moderated Priest Team (MPT)** and **Hub Teams (HTS),** we'll encourage wide participation and shared reflection — a truly synodal process.

The PPP will provide clarity and consistency where needed (e.g., parish-wide policies or sacramental programmes) while also giving space for each community to express its unique gifts.

How Will Decisions Be Made?

Moderated Priest Team (MPT)

The MPT, made up of priests serving across the parish, holds legal and canonical responsibility for care of the parish — similar to a single parish priest in the current model. The team works collaboratively, drawing on each priest's individual gifts, especially in the ministry of the sacraments, preaching, formation, and pastoral care. The MPT will sign off on major parish-wide decisions, guided by input from the Hub Teams. The Moderator, as team leader, ensures decisions are made when needed and coordinates with the Diocese. Administrative tasks (buildings, finance, safeguarding, etc.) will be appropriately shared, in close connection with the Parish Finance Committee and local support teams.

Hub Teams (HTS)

Each Hub Team brings together clergy and lay representatives from across our churches. These teams will shape and implement the PPP through:

- **Prayer and Discernment** – grounding each meeting in Scripture and the Holy Spirit.
- **Sharing and Reflection** – exchanging ideas and insights rooted in our mission.
- **Practical Action** – helping implement agreed plans suited to the local context, ensuring consistency across the parish.

Between meetings, small groups within the HTS will carry out specific tasks — for example, supporting catechists, liturgists, or school staff.

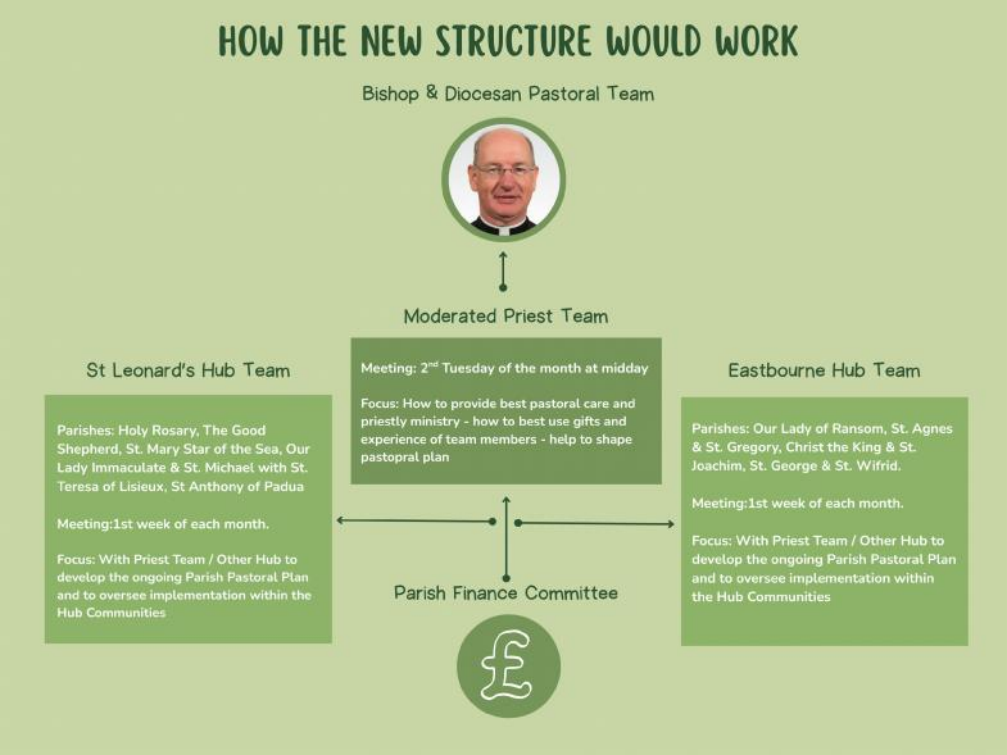
The Role of the Moderator

The Moderator will attend all MPT and HTS meetings, ensure good communication, and oversee the development of the PPP. He will liaise with the Diocese, support parish offices, and help ensure we have the communication and administrative resources we need.

Next Steps

In the coming months, we'll invite broader participation and deeper reflection as we shape our new parish identity together. Please continue to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit — and for one another — as we step into this new chapter with hope and faith.

Yours in Christ,
Fr Kevin Dring
on behalf of the Deanery Clergy Team



New Parish Update

The Pastoral Plan:

As a deanery we are not unique in becoming a single parish, it is all part of our Diocese Pastoral Plan. Here's more detail on the plan.

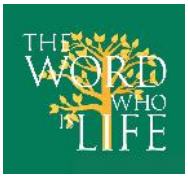
Bishop Richard issued his third Pastoral Plan for the Diocese, in January 2024, appointing Canon Kieron O'Brien as the Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Planning. In a reflection shared with Catholic churches in Epsom recently, Canon Kieron explored the progress of the Plan: "Over the past 17 months, across the Diocese, our eleven former deaneries have started the process of becoming eleven new parishes, served by a team of clergy, who — while retaining their particular connection to a specific community — will be working more closely with each other than before.

"Each of these new parishes is at a different stage, with the pace of change tailored to local circumstances, but it is hoped that by the end of this year (2025) all eleven new parishes will be formally established. This new model will hopefully facilitate some economies of scale and sharing of resources.

However, if we see this purely as a structural change to enable greater efficiency, we will be missing the whole point of the Pastoral Plan. To this end, we need to return to three key words: **Vision, Mission and Synodality.**

"It is essential that the leadership (clergy and laity) in our new parishes can unite around a shared vision of what the Catholic Church, in this time and place, can look like, and feel like. Bishop Richard shares his vision for the Diocese in the opening pages of the Pastoral Plan; that is a good place to start, but the vision also needs to set the direction of travel locally, so that the Parish can be truly mission focused…This can only be achieved in a spirit of *synodality*, which is 'church speak' for 'walking together and accompanying each other in faith.' Key to this are *conversations in the Spirit* (which can be one-to-one or in small groups) whereby we listen deeply to each other, to discover what is in our hearts *for our new parishes."*

You can read the reflection in full at https://tinyurl.com/ABPP-May-2025



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60 years

Update on Arundel & Brighton Festival of Hope – Celebrating 60 Years

This year, our Diocese marks a wonderful milestone—its **Sixtieth Anniversary!** To celebrate, the **Festival of Hope** will be held at Ardingly Showground, bringing together Catholics from across Arundel & Brighton for a day of faith, worship, and fellowship.

The event will be a joyous occasion for our Diocese, but due to limited capacity, **our clergy will invite representatives from each parish to attend.** This ensures everyone can share in the celebration while respecting the event's numbers and space restrictions.

Please keep the Festival of Hope and all those attending in your prayers. May it be a source of inspiration and renewal for our whole Diocese as we give thanks for sixty years of grace and look forward with hope.

More information will be shared with parish representatives in due course.

New Website: www.eastbourne-stleonards.org.uk

We are delighted to announce the launch of our **new temporary website** for the emerging **Single Parish of the Eastbourne & St Leonards Deanery!** This will be the go-to hub for everything from **Mass times and events,** to news, ministries, sacramental preparation, and more. Visit: www.eastbourne-stleonards.org.uk

The site provides information from all our current parishes and churches in one clear, up-to-date, and welcoming online space. Whether you're a regular parishioner, a visitor, or someone seeking a way back into the life of the Church, you'll find something here for you.

Please note: the website is still being updated, so not every section is fully populated yet. But it is your first stop for the latest information on the formation of the new Single Parish, including key developments and opportunities to be involved.

You are warmly invited to send parish news, event details, reflections, or photos for consideration—either for the site or this newsletter—to: news@eastbourne-stleonards.org.uk Let's grow together in faith and unity as we look ahead with hope and purpose.

Can You Help Share the Good News?

To make sure every parish and church in our deanery is represented, we are looking for **at least one person from each current parish**—and ideally from **each church**—to help with communications. This could involve anything in the next column, or indeed anything else you can think of…

- Sending news or event details
- Taking photos or writing short updates
- Helping us spot what's happening locally
- Assisting with website or newsletter content

Whether you're experienced or brand new to this kind of work, we'll support you! Please get in touch if you'd like to get involved and help strengthen our deanery communications.

Contact:
news@eastbourne-stleonards.org.uk

Together, we can keep our community informed, inspired, and connected.

A Summer Rich in Faith

Embrace a Pilgrimage Mindset

The Jubilee Year 2025, "*Pilgrims of Hope,*" invites us to carry our faith wherever we go. Whether you're crossing a Holy Door, joining the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes, or simply attending Mass while away, let your journey become a moment of grace.

Send a Postcard from Your Faith Adventure!

This summer, we're inviting everyone—especially families and children—to share their faith experiences by sending a postcard to your parish (addresses on page 12).

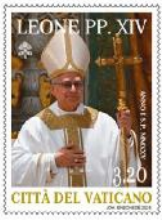
Tell us about attending Mass while on holiday, visiting a Holy Door or sacred site, celebrating a saint's feast day, or discovering a beautiful church or chapel along the way.

Pick one up or create your own using an app like **MyPostcard**—just upload your photo, write a message, and they'll send it for you!

God Travels With You

From beach breaks to city trips, the Church is there to welcome you. Let your travels become part of your faith story.

Postcards will be displayed in our churches this September—a vibrant collage of our shared journey of faith.



Visiting Rome? Look out for the new Vatican stamps featuring Pope Leo XIV—perfect for your postcard!

Join the 50th Anniversary Walking Pilgrimage – Finishing in Our Deanery at Eastbourne!

Since 1975, pilgrims from across our diocese have walked, prayed, and grown together in faith. From **Saturday 9 to Sunday 24 August 2025,** the **50th Arundel & Brighton Ecumenical Walking Pilgrimage** will visit all 11 new diocesan parishes—**finishing in our deanery at Eastbourne!**

Everyone is welcome to join part of the route—just a day, a weekend, or the final stretch. The **last walking day is Friday 22 August**, from **Seaford to Eastbourne** (14 miles), with a shorter, family-friendly 7-mile option from East Dean.

The walk will end with prayer at **Holywell,** followed by a final mile together to **Our Lady of Ransom Church.**

Gary O'Brien, a parishioner from St Wilfrid's in Hailsham, is leading the final day's walk—so let's turn out and support him!

Whether you're walking or welcoming, it's a chance to meet others, grow in faith, and take part in a joyful diocesan tradition.

All walkers—including those joining for a single day—must sign up at www.thepilgrims.org.uk, where you will also find more information and itinerary.

Let's walk—or welcome—together as a community of faith!

St Martha's Statue of Our Lady (above)

St Thomas' Our Lady's Chapel

St George's Statue of Our Lady (above)

Our Lady of Walsingham at Christ the King Church

Fr Eamonn Crowns Our Lady at Sacred Heart School (below)

May: A Joyful Time of Devotion to Our Blessed Mother

Throughout our deanery, the month of May blossomed once again with heartfelt devotion to Our Lady. From floral crowns to Marian processions, our parishes and schools honoured Mary with love and reverence.

At **St Thomas of Canterbury** in the Parish of the Good Shepherd, a beautiful new tradition was introduced—a stunning floral display created by Haz and Sheila, with flowers donated by parishioners. The display drew many to pause, pray, and admire. As one visitor shared: *"Simply beautiful. It is hoped it will become an annual tradition."*

St Martha's, Little Common, held a joyful Crowning of the Virgin. Children led a procession into church, scattering petals before crowning Mary's statue with fresh flowers.

At **St Wilfrid's Hailsham, St George's Polegate**, and **Christ the King Langney,** children made flower crowns and sang *Bring Flowers of the Rarest* as they honoured Our Lady.

At **Sacred Heart School, Hastings**, Fr Eamonn led the school's Mary procession and crowned the garden statue with flowers brought by the children —while wearing a handmade crown of his own!

These joyful acts of devotion remind us of Mary's enduring presence and love in our lives.

Corpus Christi Celebrations

Deanery Parishes Marked the Feast of Corpus Christi with Pilgrimage, Procession and Prayer

The Solemnity of Corpus Christi was celebrated with deep reverence and joy across our deanery this June, as parish communities honoured the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist through prayer, procession, and pilgrimage.

On Thursday 19 June 2025, pilgrims from the Parish of St George and St Wilfrid and the Parish of Christ the King and St Joachim joined a pilgrimage to the Carpet of Flowers at Arundel Cathedral. Forty-three pilgrims from across the Eastbourne Hub, accompanied by Fr Rory and Fr Charles, attended Mass, the Eucharistic procession, and Benediction amid the stunning floral display. As part of the Jubilee Year of Hope, pilgrims passed through the Cathedral's Diocesan Holy Door, with the opportunity to receive a Plenary Indulgence under the usual conditions. *Learn more about the Jubilee Plenary Indulgence at https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/jubilee*

On Saturday 21st June, a joyful Eucharistic Procession took place from St Joachim Church to Christ the King in Eastbourne, bringing the Blessed Sacrament through the streets and uniting the parish's two churches. First Communion children, dressed in their special attire, scattered rose petals along the route, symbolizing innocence and devotion. Many parishioners from across Eastbourne took part, concluding with Adoration, Benediction, and the Vigil Mass at Christ the King.

Meanwhile, processions also took place after Mass at **The Parish of the Good Shepherd, St Leonards,** and at **St Mary Star of the Sea Parish, Hastings.** These celebrations brought together parishioners in prayerful witness to the Eucharist, enriching the spiritual life of each community.

More photos of these beautiful processions and celebrations will be available on our website. These moments of devotion reflect the deep love for the Eucharist alive throughout our deanery.

Holy Days

Holy Days of Obligation: Special Moments to Nourish Our Faith

Throughout the Church year, **Holy Days of Obligation** invite us to gather, and celebrate key moments of our faith through Mass. These days offer a chance to step away from daily routines and reconnect with God and our Church family.

We all know Sundays are Holy Days of Obligation—the heart of our weekly worship. But there are also important feast days, such as Christmas, the Epiphany*, the Ascension, Saints Peter and Paul*, the Assumption*, and All Saints' Day*. * When these fall on a Saturday or Monday, the celebration moves to the nearest Sunday to keep our parish rhythm.

At the centre of these celebrations is the Eucharist—Jesus truly present, offering grace and unity. Attending Mass on these days is not just fulfilling a rule; it's accepting a loving invitation to be renewed in faith and community.

Supporting Our Young People

For families, Holy Days are a wonderful chance to nurture a habit of coming to Mass and living the faith together. Your presence and encouragement plant seeds of reverence and joy that last a lifetime. Whether it's attending Mass on a feast day or sharing a special meal at home, these simple traditions help shape a life grounded in faith.

Let's embrace these days not as duties but as joyful invitations—to grace, to growth, and to walking together as the Body of Christ.

Remembering Pope Francis

Light Has Found Him

The death of Pope Francis on Easter Monday has stirred a global wave of affection, reflection, and mourning. That he died the day after the Church proclaims the triumph of life over death has not gone unnoticed. It felt like divine timing—that the Pope who sought always to bring the Church closer to the people be called home during the celebration of Easter.
Since the death of Pope Francis, countless reflections and tributes have been shared across the globe. Here, we share the experience and reflections of two priests from our own deanery: **Fr Charles**, Assistant Parish Priest of the Eastbourne Churches—Our Lady of Ransom, St Agnes, and St Gregory—and **Fr Eamonn, SAC**, Parish Priest of St Mary Star of the Sea, Hastings.

Fr Charles, wrote movingly of his own feelings surrounding his encounter of the Pope just the day before his death:

"My first Easter celebration in the United Kingdom was a beautiful event… the climax of the Easter Sunday morning celebration was to watch, at that time, our ailing Holy Father, Pope Francis, come out on the balcony of St Peter's Square to give the Easter Blessing… Despite the Pope's failing health, he not only imparted his blessings on the waiting crowd but also got on the Popemobile and was driven around the square to greet pilgrims."

While in Italy during that first week of Pope Francis' Passing, Fr Charles also did what many priests do while on holiday, he concelebrated mass with his friend and Parish Priest of Mary Immaculate in Verona

Fr Charles writes that he was struck with *"profound amazement"* by the Pope's determination to carry out his duty, even in such evident frailty. That very next morning, after landing in Rome for what was to be a joyful visit, he received the news that Pope Francis had died:

"The message was received with mixed feelings. I had just seen the Pope yesterday, and today he is gone! His death was sudden, but not surprising. May God rest his soul."

In a particularly powerful detail, Fr Charles recounts how he queued *"like all other mourners—no special treatment"* to pay his respects as Pope Francis lay in state in St Peter's Basilica. He describes this as *"a rare moment… a great privilege to pray before the corpse of 'the people's Pope'—a man who was all things to all people."*

You can read Fr Charles's full reflection on the new deanery website. His account offers a heartfelt, firsthand glimpse into those historic final moments.

Meanwhile, Fr Eamonn, writing from a quieter setting in Mervue, shared a deeply personal reflection on his blog. His piece, filled with memory, reverence, and spiritual insight, opens with the words of Jesus:

"Do not judge and you will not be judged."

Fr Eamonn reflects:

"Mostly I have thought of this in terms of not judging others negatively. But it also means not judging others at all. Who am I to judge someone to be good or bad, right or wrong?… Even in the positive comments, you get the sense that experts are judging him to have done a fairly good job. But who are we to say even that?"

Instead, Fr Eamonn invites us to remember Pope Francis not as a figure to be graded, but as someone who deeply *touched* the lives of many.
He shares a memory of the day of Francis's election in 2013—rushing home to share the joy with his parish priest, who had known the Cardinal from Buenos Aires. That priest later met Pope Francis and received a zucchetto from him, which Fr Eamonn briefly wore:

"Feeling it like a blessing on top of me… It was the closest physical contact I ever had with Pope Francis."

His one and only time seeing Pope Francis live was at Pope Benedict XVI's funeral. He describes how the Pope's voice—frail, soft, gentle—left a lasting impression:

"It is the sound of God's voice that I sensed, heard in Pope Francis… Even though I understood some of what he said, it was the presence of God that I felt in the sound of his servant's voice."

And in a moment that felt charged with grace:

"The sunlight broke through the fog and rested on him as he gave his homily. It was like a transfiguration."

You can read Fr Eamonn's full reflection on his blog at https://tinyurl.com/eamonn202504, which we highly recommend for its spiritual richness and depth.

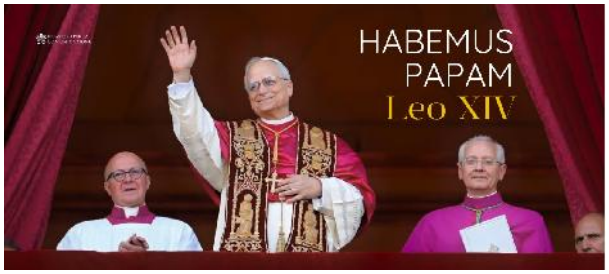
Perhaps Pope Francis inspired most by who he *was*: not just what he said or did, but how he made others feel seen, known, and loved. His attention to the overlooked—the woman with yellow flowers at Gemelli Hospital, the daily phone call to a priest in Gaza, his childlike wave through a screen—touched something deep in the human heart.

As one anonymous tribute beautifully put it:

"Light has found him. And Love has brought him home."

Let us now pray that Pope Francis, the humble servant who bowed before the world before blessing it, may receive the fullness of God's blessing and rest in His eternal peace.

Welcoming Pope Leo XIV



Welcoming Pope Leo XIV

Since the announcement of the election of Pope Leo XIV, there has been a wave of joy and curiosity across the Catholic world. As we begin this new chapter in the life of the Church, we are especially blessed in our deanery and diocese to count among us priests who have known, worked with, or encountered the new Pope personally. Their reflections give us a deeply human and spiritual perspective on the man who now carries the mantle of Peter.

Here we share the thoughts of three priests from our own deanery who served in the Diocese of Chulucanas, Peru as part of the Arundel and Brighton diocesan mission group : **Fr Kevin; Fr Hugh Dutton,** now retired and living in Eastbourne; and **Fr Ian Byrnes,** formerly parish priest of St Leonards and now retired in Horsham.

***Habemus Papam* – A Local Meaning**

Fr Ian Byrnes recalls the words *Habemus Papam* taking on a new resonance when the man stepping out onto the balcony in St Peter's Square was someone he had known and worked alongside.

Fr Ian first met Fr Robert Prevost, now Pope Leo XIV, in Peru he remembers:

"I found, being deaf in my left ear, his body language was very welcoming, and I felt very much at ease with him. He was a great listener with a smooth sense of humour, and yet I felt there was a 'four-wheel drive under the bonnet,' so to speak... It was great to listen to him with such advice to give me for my good and others. He was very clear in his thinking and living."

Later, Fr Ian shared a moving prayer from Rome earlier this year:

"When I was in St Peter's Square, I said to Jesus as I took a photo of the window where we would see the new pope, 'When you open the window, please let "Bob" come out and lead us on your behalf.' Glad to say that I was not shocked, like others, but deeply moved with the Lord's peace and joy."

The Gentle Strength of a Leader

Fr Hugh Dutton also worked closely with Pope Leo in Peru during his time as Chancellor of the Diocese of Chulucanas. He fondly remembers him from those early years up until Fr Prevost's call to Rome in 2001:

"My main memory of him was in the staff meetings where he was very supportive of me when things could sometimes get a bit tense. He was great to work with: kind, understanding and very patient and it was great to have him as my 'boss'."

Fr Hugh further remembers the seminarians being sent to Trujillo, where Pope Leo was then Dean of Studies:

"He had an understanding of the Church not only as institution but as living community, and that came through in the way he led and supported others."

Fr Kevin served in Peru between 2005 and 2008 and met the future Pope Leo on a few occasions in the Diocese of Chulucanas, when he was visiting, and also met him in Rome in his role as Prior General of the Augustinians:

"Though I cannot claim to have a personal close relationship with the Pope, I grew to 'know him' by his wonderful reputation in Peru as a gifted and truly pastoral priest and then Bishop. I am really excited with his appointment and all that he will bring as universal shepherd of the Church!"

As we begin this papacy, it is striking to note how many people have encountered Pope Leo as a man of calm, humility, and strength—firm in his faith and grounded in service, especially to the poor. As Fr Ian notes:

"He has grown beautifully into this ministry of showing the Father's Faith, Hope, and Love to each of us and all of us together in the world. He continues to be a servant of God and His children."

Let us keep Pope Leo XIV in our prayers. May he lead the Church in peace and wisdom, and may we, as Pope Francis once urged, become ever more missionary disciples, witnesses of the joy of the Gospel in our own communities.

These and more reflections are available online at www.abdiocese.org/news/pope-leo-memories

A Prayer for Pope Leo XIV

Heavenly Father,
we thank you for Pope Leo XIV,
chosen to lead your Church
in love and truth.
Bless him with strength,
with wisdom and with peace.
From our deanery,
we offer our prayers and service,
renewing our commitment
to mission and unity.
May we, like him, follow Christ
with courage and compassion.
Amen.

Travel by mule in Peru: Pope Leo, (then Fr Robert Provost), left Fr Kevin travels with a Peruvian family (right)

Catholic Women's League

Some of the Members of the Eastbourne Churches CWL

CWL Reborn

Since its founding in 1906, the Catholic Women's League (CWL) has been a vibrant part of Catholic life across England and Wales—and a strong presence in our Arundel & Brighton Diocese. While some sections have closed in recent years due to age-related challenges, fresh energy is breathing new life into the League. The CWL continues to be a space where Catholic women gather to live out their faith, support one another, and serve the Church and wider community.

One exciting sign of this renewal is the launch of a new CWL Section in Eastbourne. On Sunday 25 May, the new Section gathered for its inaugural Mass, where Section Officers were formally inducted by Fr Neil, a key supporter of this new beginning. **Brenda Hilliam, Diocesan Branch President,** was present to warmly welcome the team and the first group of members forming the core of this local initiative.

Their first major event—a fundraising quiz night on Friday 27 June—was a great success. Over £500 was raised to support the Deanery's youth pilgrimage to Flame. The evening was led by 18-year-old quizmasters Maria and Lilia, who delivered a fun and varied quiz, complete with tricky questions and a lively sing-along in the "finish the lyric" round.

Congratulations to the winning team, *Martin's Manic Mechanics*—which included none other than Parish Priest **Fr Neil,** proving our clergy have a wealth of knowledge under their hats! The team was crowned CWL Quiz Champions and awarded the trophy, a selection of delicious goodies, and a £50 prize—which they generously donated back to the cause.

With such a strong and joy-filled start, the Eastbourne CWL Section is already building momentum. They meet at 7pm on the first Wednesday of each month in the Christ the King Parish Rooms and warmly welcome new members to join them in faith, friendship, and service.

A Model of Fellowship: The Bexhill Section

The nearby Bexhill Section of the CWL was relaunched 14 years ago and is now thriving with around 30 active members. Their lively calendar includes a mix of spiritual enrichment, parish support, fundraising, guest speakers, and community involvement. From rosary gatherings, Lenten reflections, and May Processions, to strawberry teas, sausage sizzles, and ploughman's lunches, they demonstrate the heart and hands of Catholic service.

They meet at 7:30pm on the first Monday of each month, and their activities are open to women of all ages. Friendships are formed, faith is deepened, and community is strengthened.

An Invitation to All Catholic Women

The CWL is a national and international organisation, working with groups like CAFOD, PACT, Fairtrade, and many others, supporting causes from women's refuges to foodbanks, hospices, and children's charities. Many CWL members are also active in their parishes as Eucharistic Ministers, flower arrangers, catechists, and more.

Whether you are a young mum, a grandmother, recently retired or just feeling called to connect your faith with service and friendship, the CWL welcomes you.

To find out more, visit www.catholicwomensleagueCIO.org.uk or contact our A&B Diocesan representative at margaretvonspeyr@gmail.com.

Quiz Champions Martin's Manic Mechanics *with quiz masters Maria and Lilia*

Catenians

Who are the Catenians?

Back in 1908. the then Bishop of Salford wanted a club formed of like-minded Catholic men to offer each other friendship within their faith, to support each other in these friendships and thus to strengthen their group commitment to each other and to the Church. This initiative quickly gained traction in Salford and then Manchester. It kept growing. Soon there were Catenian groups in Hastings, Eastbourne and throughout East and West Sussex. Thousands of Catholic men across Great Britain formed similar local groups and involved their wives and families. Each man soon realised the value of Catenian membership. A century later, the Catenian Association has spread to other parts of the globe and, whilst adapting to our modern world it continues to foster friendship and support among its members. New members have always been welcomed. If you would like to make new like-minded friends do call or email.

Getting together

Local Catenians from some ten miles or so around Hastings & Bexhill meet monthly and another group meets in Eastbourne. Meetings are for Catenians but are then followed by an informal, very social gathering or dinner which many wives and visitors also attend. Wives and the widows of Catenians are always welcome at our social gatherings and dinners, as are our families.

Friendship in Faith

The Catenians are not political and in no way a pressure group. We are a group of Catholic social friends. The twin purposes of Catenians are simply friendship and to lend support to each other in the practise of our faith. Fund raising is not our primary purpose but we do support charities and last year alone we social Catenians raised and donated over £250,000 for good causes.

We do wonderful things for Catholic Young People

The Catenian Bursary Fund gives financial support to young Catholics from all over Great Britain who volunteer to do something wonderful and help those less fortunate than themselves. Whether on an acceptable individual project, or an organised scheme with others or even if they are planning to travel to Lourdes to help an assisted pilgrim – Catenians like to help young people to achieve their aims.

The Catenian Association sponsors FLAME, bringing together Catholic young people at Wembley every two years. It is filled with inspiring speakers, incredible live music, prayer, adoration and the chance to be at church with 10,000 other young Catholics each experiencing something they can experience nowhere else.

The Catenian Association National Public Speaking Competition is an annual event where students aged 16-18 from Catholic schools compete in public speaking. The competition aims to develop students' confidence and presentational skills. It features regional heats within each of the 18 Catenian Provinces, culminating in a national final in Manchester.

Contact us: Email: chat@hasbex.org.
Call: 07840 372375.
Website: https://hasbex.org

Relic Tour

Carfin's Reliquary of Scottish Saints

Carfin Scottish Saints Relics to visit St Wilfrid's, Hailsham — 27 August

We're excited to announce that St Wilfrid's is the only East Sussex parish hosting **a special reliquary from Carfin Grotto, Scotland,** as part of the National Relic Tour organised by the **Knights of St Columba.**

The reliquary holds relics of **St Andrew,** Apostle and Patron of Scotland and ropemakers (a nod to Hailsham's rope-making heritage), **St Columba of Iona,** and **St Margaret of Scotland.**

Join us on **Wednesday 27th August**, beginning with the **10am Mass to welcome the relics,** followed by veneration throughout the day until the 7pm Evening Mass.

The day will also include **talks on the three saints,** sharing their inspiring lives and significance to our faith.

A **family-friendly event** in the church garden later in the afternoon will offer creative activities and storytelling about the saints to engage all ages. More details will be shared soon in newsletters and on the deanery website.

If you'd like to help with planning or running activities, your support would be very welcome. Please contact Bob Waters – 07752 043009
rhwaters@hotmail.com

About the Knights of St Columba

The Knights of St Columba are a Catholic service organisation supporting the Church at parish, diocesan, and national levels. All Catholic men are welcome to join and take part in charitable projects, faith activities, and events like the National Relic Tour. New members are usually welcomed during Mass.

For those in East Sussex, contact:
Council 433 (Eastbourne & District):
Bob Waters – 07752 043009
rhwaters@hotmail.com
Council 630 (Hastings & Rother): Sean Harkins – 07874 061235
judesean@hotmail.com

Subscriptions vary by council; for example, Council 433 is currently £5 per month.

Youth Focus

Celebrating First Communion, Confirmation, and New Beginnings

Since Easter, our deanery has been truly blessed. Across our parishes, over 150 children received their First Holy Communion, and several older youths were Baptised, having made the courageous decision to come to the faith of their own accord. These celebrations are powerful signs of God's grace at work and a joyful reflection of our own quiet revival in our deanery.

The First Holy Communion celebrations took place in our deanery parishes between Sunday 11 May and Sunday 21st June, filling our churches with joy, reverence and the wonder of children encountering Christ in the Eucharist for the very first time.

Further, over 80 young people were Confirmed—the majority at a beautiful service led by our Bishop in Arundel Cathedral on Saturday 3 May, and a handful receiving the Sacrament locally. These young people, supported by their families and catechists, have taken a bold step in owning their faith and opening their hearts more fully to the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Please continue to pray for these young people, their families, and the catechists who have faithfully journeyed with them. Their spiritual growth and continued formation remain vital as they deepen their relationship with Christ and His Church.

Applications to receive the Sacraments including Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation in 2026 will open in Autumn. More details will be available in parish newsletters and on parish websites from September.

Urgent Call for Catechists

All deanery churches urgently need new catechists to support our sacramental preparations. This is a powerful way to share your faith and help young people encounter Christ. **Please speak to your parish priest or a current catechist today**—your "yes" could change a life.

Looking Back: FLAME 2025—A Day of Faith, Joy, and Inspiration

Over eighty young people and their leaders from our deanery joined ten thousand others at Wembley Arena on March 15 for **FLAME 2025**, the largest Catholic youth event in the UK. This biennial gathering was a powerful celebration of faith, filled with energy, music, and deep moments of prayer.

Our young pilgrims had a truly wonderful day. Highlights included performances by **One Hope Project** and **Adenike**, alongside stirring testimonies and worship. The keynote speaker, **Bear Grylls**, inspired the arena with his personal witness to faith, courage, and resilience. He also generously gave every attendee a copy of his new book, *The Greatest Story Ever Told*—a gesture that was warmly received by all.

This experience was more than just an event—it was a vibrant reminder of the strength and beauty of our Catholic faith lived out in community.

CYMFED Flame 2027

Save the Date: FLAME 2027!
We hope to bring an even bigger group of young people from across our deanery to the next Flame gathering on **6 March 2027.** Let's keep the momentum going!

Let us **continue to pray for our young people**—those who have received the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, and Confirmation, and those who joined the vibrant pilgrimage to **FLAME 2025.** May the joy and grace they encountered, whether in the quiet of parish life or in the energy of Wembley Arena, remain with them, encouraging them to grow ever deeper in love and service of Christ.

Pictured Top to Bottom:
1. St Mary Star of the Sea, Hastings, a mural of this year's First Communion Candidates named on fish
2. Some of our Youth who attended Flame 2025 with their spiritual leader Fr Ian Byrnes
3. First Communion children receiving certificates at St Joachim in Hampden Park, Eastbourne
4. The Our Lady of the Holy Rosary , Bexhill, Confirmation Candidates with Bishop Richard at Arundel
5. The Lumen Christi , Eastbourne Churches Confirmation Candidates with Bishop Richard at Arundel

Our Deanery Priests

Over the coming issues of the Deanery Newsletter, we'll be introducing the nine priests who faithfully serve our communities. It's a chance to get to know them a little better:

We begin with Fr Kevin.

Hello, I'm Father Kevin Dring. I currently serve as the Moderator-to-be for the new Single Parish of Eastbourne & St Leonards, as well as the Parish Priest of Our Lady of Ransom, St Gregory, and St Agnes in Eastbourne.

I grew up in a loving Catholic family in Brighton, where faith was an important part of life. From an early age, I felt drawn to serving God, though it took time and reflection before I fully understood that priesthood was my calling. I had quite a dramatic "Damascus Road" experience at the end of my law degree studies, and with the encouragement of my family and mentors, I began my formal preparation at the English College in Rome. Six very happy years! I was ordained in 1993, and since then, my journey of ministry has been rich and varied, including parishes, Bishop's Secretary, a few years of national vocations work in London working for the Bishops' Conference, and time spent teaching and helping train future priests in the Seminary.

One of the most formative chapters of my priesthood was the time I spent in Peru, serving in a rural parish high in the Andes. Life there was simple and often challenging, but the faith of the people was remarkable. I remember travelling on foot or by mule to celebrate Mass in tiny mountain chapels, surrounded by communities that had very little materially but shared so much spiritually. During my time in Peru, I was privileged to encounter the now Pope Leo XIV (see reflection on page 7) .

In my current role, I have the privilege of walking alongside our eight Deanery parish communities as we come together to form a single parish family. It's a role that requires patience, listening, and collaboration. My "day job" is care of some of the churches in Eastbourne, with my excellent new colleague from Nigeria, Fr Charles. Each parish day is different — celebrating Mass, visiting those who are sick or lonely, supporting our schools and volunteers, and working with lay leaders to help try to build a vibrant and welcoming parish. What I love most is meeting people, sharing their stories, and witnessing how faith can bring hope and joy.

My family live in the Brighton area which is great for access, and I have a lovely two-year-old dog, Lilly, who ensures lots of walks in our beautiful local surroundings.

Two saints who inspire me deeply are St. Oscar Romero, for his courage and commitment to justice, and St. Francis of Assisi, for his joyful simplicity and love for all creatures. A passage of Scripture that speaks to my heart is Micah 6:8: "Act justly, love tenderly, and walk humbly with your God." It's a simple but profound reminder of how we're called to live.

Looking forward, I pray that our parish communities will continue to grow in faith, hope, and love, welcoming everyone as part of God's family and boldly sharing the Gospel with the world around us.

Thank you for taking the time to get to know me a little better. I look forward to walking this journey of faith together with you all in the weeks and months (and years!) ahead.

Our other eight deanery priests:

While we prepare the full profiles, of our other deanery priests, you can discover more about them and their current parishes by attending Mass in their churches , tune into livestreams where available, connect through their parish social media pages—and in one case, read a personal blog offering regular insights of ministry and reflections.

Fr Mićeál Beatty
Parish of the Good Shepherd
https://www.facebook.com/GoodShepherdStLeonards

Fr Richard Blythen
Parish of Our Lady Immaculate & St Michael with St Teresa of Lisieux
(A picture of Fr Richard is awaited)

Fr Neil Chatfield
Parish of Christ the King and St Joachim
Livestream Sunday 11.30am
https://tinyurl.com/CTKLangney

Fr Kevin Dring & Fr Charles Ezejide
Parish of Our Lady of Ransom, St Gregory, and St Agnes
Livestream Sunday 10.15am
http://tinyurl.com/EastbourneCatholicChurches-YT

Fr Rory Kelly
Parish of St George & St Wilfrid
Livestream Sunday 10.30am
https://saintsgeorgeandwilfrid.co.uk/online-masses-and-recordings/

Fr Maximillian McKeown
Parish of St Anthony of Padua

Fr Eamonn Monson
Parish of St Mary Star of the Sea
https://www.facebook.com/stmarystaroftheseahastings/

Follow his blog at https://eamonnmonson.blogspot.com/

Fr Stephen O'Brien
Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary
https://www.facebook.com/stmmbexhill

Fr Mićeál Beatty

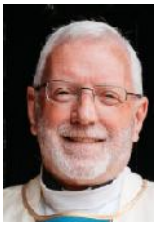
Fr Neil Chatfield

Fr Kevin Dring

Fr Charles Ezejide

Fr Rory Kelly

Fr Maximillian McKeown


Fr Eamonn Monson

Fr Stephen O'Brien

Deanery Parishes Directory

Parish of Our Lady of Ransom, St Gregory & St Agnes (Eastbourne)
Parish Priest: Fr Kevin Dring
Assistant Priest: Fr Charles Ezejide
Parish office 01323 723222
eastbourneolor@abdiocese.org.uk
http://ourladyofransom.org.uk/

Churches:
Our Lady of Ransom, 2–4 Grange Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4EU
St Gregory, Victoria Drive, Eastbourne BN20 8QY
St Agnes, 10 Whitley Rd, Eastbourne BN22 8NJ

Weekend Masses:
Saturday: 6.00pm at Our Lady of Ransom
Sunday: 9.00am at St Gregory
Sunday 10.15am at Our Lady of Ransom
Sunday 11.30am at St Agnes
Sunday 5.30pm at Our Lady of Ransom
Polish Mass (P) is held at St Agnes—every 2nd and 3rd Sunday 6.00 pm

Parish of St George & St Wilfrid (Polegate/Hailsham)
Parish Priest: Father Rory
Parish Deacon: Deacon John Truman
Parish office 01323 841504
hailsham@abdiocese.org.uk
https://saintsgeorgeandwilfrid.co.uk/

Churches:
St George, 110 Eastbourne Rd, Polegate BN26 5DF
St Wilfrid, South Road, Hailsham BN27 3JG

Weekend Masses:
Sunday 9.00am at St George
Sunday 10.30am at St Wilfrid

Parish of Our Lady of the Rosary (Bexhill/Little Common)
Parish Priest: Fr Stephen O'Brien
Parish Deacon: Deacon Simon Kirkdale
Parish office: 01424 210 263 opt 4
bexhill@abdiocese.org.uk
https://stmmbexhill.co.uk/

Churches:
St Mary Magdalene, Sea Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 1RH
St Martha's, Little Common, Cooden Sea Road, TN39 4SL

Weekend Masses:
Saturday 6.00pm at St Mary Magdalene:
Sunday 9.00am at St Martha
Sunday 11.00am at St Mary Magdelene
Sunday 11.00am at St Martha (S)

Parish of St Mary Star of the Sea (Hastings)
Parish Priest: Fr Eamonn Monson
Parish Deacon: Deacon Duncan Brown
Parish office 01424 421263
hastings@abdiocese.org.uk
http://www.stmarystarofthesea.net/

Church:
Our Lady Star of the Sea, 1 High St, Hastings TN34 3EY

Weekend Masses:
Saturday: 6.00pm
Sunday: 10.00am & 11:30am

Parish of the Good Shepherd (St Leonards)
Parish Priest: Fr Mićeál Beatty
Parish Deacon: Deacon Ian Moon
Parish Office: 01424 602077
stleonards@abdiocese.org.uk
https://parishofthegoodshepherd.net/

Churches:
St. Thomas of Canterbury, 31c Magdalen Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 6ET
Holy Redeemer, 24 Upper Church Road, St. Leonards on Sea, TN37 7AS

Weekend Masses:
Saturday 6.00pm at St Thomas of Canterbury
Sunday 9.00am at Holy Redeemer
Sunday 11.00am at St Thomas of Canterbury

Parish of Christ the King and St Joachim (Langney/Hampden Park)
Parish Priest: Fr Neil Chatfield
Parish Deacon: Deacon Eugene Adams
Parish office: 01323 760048
eastbournectk@abdiocese.org.uk
https://christthekingeastbourne.org/
https://eastbourneordinariate.org.uk/

Churches:
Christ the King, 3 Princes Road, Eastbourne, BN23 6HT
St Joachim 106, Brodrick Road, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, BN22 9NY

Weekend Masses:
Saturday 5.00pm at Christ the King
Sunday 9.30am at St Joachim
Sunday 11.30am at Christ the King (D)

Parish of Our Lady Immaculate & St Michael with St Teresa of Lisieux (Battle/Northiam)
Parish Priest: Fr Richard Blythen
Parish office: 01424 773125
battle@abdiocese.org.uk
https://battlewithnorthiam.parishportal.net/

Churches:
Our Lady Immaculate & St Michael, 14 Mount St, Battle TN33 0EG
St Teresa of Lisieux, Horns Cross, Northiam TN31 6JQ

Weekend Masses:
Saturday 6.00pm at Our Lady Immaculate & St Michael
Sunday 9.00am at St Teresa of Lisieux
Sunday 11.00am at Our Lady Immaculate & St Michael

Parish of St Anthony of Padua (Rye)
Parish Priest: Fr Maximillian McKeown
Parish Deacon: Deacon Simon South
Parish office: 01797 222173
rye@abdiocese.org.uk
https://stanthonyrye.com/

Church:
St Anthony of Padua, Watchbell Street, Rye TN31 7HB

Weekend Masses:
Saturday: 6.00pm
Sunday: 8.00am & 10.45am

(S) Syro-Malabar liturgy
(D) Divine Worship
(P) Polish liturgy