



# The Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham Coventry Group

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2024

## The Third Sunday after Epiphany



[www.ordinariate.org.uk/groups/coventry.php](http://www.ordinariate.org.uk/groups/coventry.php)

Scan to donate or  
visit <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/21076>

### Collect

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God: mercifully look upon our infirmities; and in all our dangers and necessities, stretch forth thy right hand to help and defend us; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

### First reading *Jonah: 3: 1-5, 10*

The word of the LORD came to Jonah saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he cried, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them; and he did not do it.

### Second reading *1 Corinthians 7: 29-31*

I mean, brethren, the appointed time has grown very short; from now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the form of this world is passing away.

### Gospel *Mark 1:14-20*

After John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel."

And passing along by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net in the sea; for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them,

"Follow me and I will make you become fishers of men." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and followed him.

## Sunday of the Word of God

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Ordinary Time is recently designated the Sunday of the Word of God. We know that the Bible is vitally important for Christians, but *how should we read it?*

### God's living Word

The Scriptures are not a one-dimensional book. They are not a mere repetition of history; they are more than the sharing of memories. **The Bible is God's Holy Word, living and true.**

By telling us about himself, God invites us into a dialogue with him. Pope Benedict XVI teaches,

*"The word of God draws each of us into a conversation with the Lord: the God who speaks teaches us how to speak to him."*

God wants us to know the deepest, most authentic love. By pouring over the Scriptures we begin to discover the fullness of who God is, and in doing so we illuminate the mystery of who we are.

Because the Bible is not flat, because the words of salvation on its holy pages are *living* words, we can not simply recite and pass over it. There is a richness to every verse, a harmony of meaning to be found. Our forebears knew this. Scripture has historical and spiritual meanings. A wealth of symbolism and meaning can be hidden in just a single verse.

### The Four Senses of Scripture

Our forebears had a little Latin rhyme which says,

*"Litera gesta docet, Quid credas allegoria, Moralis quid agas, Quo tendas anagogia."*

Translated poetically, it means:

*"The **literal** teaches what God and our ancestors did, The **allegory** is where our faith and belief is hid, The **moral** meaning gives us the rule of daily life, The **anagogy** shows us where we end our strife."*

These four dimensions of interpretation offer just one set of keys to help Catholics mine the hidden meaning of the sacred Scriptures.

### THE LITERAL MEANING

The literal meaning of a verse asks: what is the meaning of past events as reported in the sacred text. Here we can think of something like the *historical* meaning. **The literal meaning of a verse is more or less what happened.** Saint John Cassian (born around 360) says the literal meaning, or narrative record, relays "things past and visible."

### THE ALLEGORICAL MEANING

The allegorical meaning of scripture is sometimes called the 'Christological' or 'typological' meaning. The idea here is that **events and symbols in scripture can refer to Christ.** References to Jesus can even be found in the Old Testament. For example, when Moses places a golden serpent on a pole to cure the Israelites' snakebites (Numbers 21), Christians see it as a *type* for Christ (pointing forward to Christ) who saves us from our sins on the cross. St. Paul himself offers us this method of interpreting the Bible, when he writes, "The rock was Christ" in 1 Corinthians 10. In the story of a rock offering water to quench the thirst of the Israelites in the desert Saint Paul sees Christ, who gives living water (John 7:37-39).

### THE MORAL MEANING

The Bible also offers us **a way to live here and now.** Some verses expound moral codes familiar to us all (such as the Ten Commandments in Exodus or the Beatitudes in Matthew 5). But many of Jesus' parables also have a moral meaning. They instruct us on how to live. We can think too of the many words of wisdom of the prophets or of the advice given in books like Proverbs and Sirach in the Old Testament. The Bible offers a guide to life, offering us real courses of action to carry out in our own day.

### THE ANAGOGICAL MEANING

Finally, the Bible is also a book about **what is to come.** Not only does the Bible relay past events, but it speaks to us of God's promises for the future. These future things are as real in the story of Christian salvation as past events: death, judgment, purgatory, heaven, or hell. Jesus reveals to us that the Kingdom of heaven will be like a wedding feast (among other images) and that he is the key to arriving there.

### A prayer before reading the Bible

One way to change our way of reading the Bible is to say a short prayer beforehand. An ancient prayer that is commonly attributed to St. John Chrysostom is perfect for this, and can be prayed each time you open up the Bible. It can help prepare the ground so that your soul is ready to receive exactly what God wants to communicate to you.

*O Lord Jesus Christ, open the eyes of my heart that I may hear your Word, and understand and do your will, for I am a sojourner upon the earth. Hide not your commandments from me, but open my eyes, that I may perceive the wonders of your Law. Speak unto me the hidden and secret things of your wisdom. On you do I set my hope, O my God, that you shall enlighten my mind and understanding with the light of your knowledge; not only to cherish those things which are written, but to do them; For you are the enlightenment of those who lie in darkness, and from you comes every good deed and every gift. Amen.*

(St. John Chrysostom)

### **Prayers for the Holy Land**

Lord Jesus Christ, you know the anguish of the sorrowful, you are attentive to the prayers of those who seek you. Hear your people who today cry out for peace in the land your footprints made holy. Take away the people's fears and still their troubled hearts, heal the wounded and comfort the bereaved, gather into your arms the souls of the dead. You once calmed the storm to take away your disciples' fears; calm now the storm of violence that rages across your Holy Land that brings fear and terror into innocent hearts so that all people may seek the ways of true justice, love and peace together. Amen

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace, Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

*Saint Francis of Assisi*

O God of love, compassion, and healing, look on us, who gather today, in a world of incredible violence and pain. We ask you, in your compassion to bring healing to those who suffer from injuries and illness... God of peace, bring your peace to our violent world; peace in the hearts of all men and women and peace among the nations of the earth. Turn to your way of love those whose hearts and minds are consumed with hatred. God of understanding, overwhelmed by the magnitude of tragedy, we seek your light and guidance as we confront terrible events in our society.

Comfort and console us, strengthen us in hope, and give us the wisdom and courage to work tirelessly for a world where true peace and love reign among nations and in the hearts of all.  
*Pope Benedict XVI*

Almighty Father, Faithful God, bless our brothers and sisters in the land of the Holy One. Grant peace in that land, peace in their homes and peace in their hearts. Inspire all men and women to build on your foundations of justice, mercy and peace. Keep the cries of this land in our hearts. This we pray in the power of the Spirit and in union with Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace proceed: kindle, we pray, in the hearts of all, the true love of peace and guide with your pure and peaceable wisdom those who take counsel for the nations of the earth that in tranquillity your kingdom may go forward, till the earth is filled with the knowledge of your love; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

O God, who have revealed that peacemakers are to be called your children, grant, we pray, that we may work without ceasing to establish that justice which alone ensures true and lasting peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

O God, who show a father's care for all, grant, in your mercy, that the members of the human race, to whom you have given a single origin, may form in peace a single family and always be united by a fraternal spirit. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

O God of peace, who are peace itself and whom a spirit of discord cannot grasp, nor a violent mind receive, grant that those who are one in heart may persevere in what is good and that those in conflict may forget evil and so be healed. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.  
*Ephesians 3:20-21*

## The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 18<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> January

This Sunday falls in the middle of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity, when we pray earnestly for the full and visible unity of Christians. **This is very much in the DNA of the Ordinariate, so please don't flag in praying and aspiring for an authentic unity of the Body of Christ.**

Copied below is some information about the Ordinariate and Ecumenism, which is available to all parishioners.

**O GOD, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace; give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from Godly Union and Concord: that, as there is but one Body, and one Spirit, and one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of Truth and Peace, of faith and Charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**O GOD, who dost restore them that have gone astray, gather together them that are scattered abroad, and preserve them that thou hast gathered: we beseech thee of thy mercy to pour out upon all Christian people the grace of thy communion; that, divisions being done away, they may be one flock, in one fold, under one Shepherd, and do thee worthy service; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Notices and news

### Recently departed

Ian O'Hara  
Fr Brian Gill  
Fr John Lungley  
Fr Peter Peterken

*O ALMIGHTY God, the God of the spirits of all flesh: multiply, we beseech thee, to those who rest in Jesus, the manifold blessings of thy love, that the good work which thou didst begin in them may be perfected unto the day of Jesus Christ. And of thy mercy, O heavenly Father, vouchsafe that we, who now serve thee here on earth, may at the last, together with them, be found meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; for the sake of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Amen.*


### Anniversaries of death

21<sup>st</sup> Frank Forman  
23<sup>rd</sup> Harry James Earle

**O GOD, the Father of mercies: grant unto the souls of thy servants a place of refreshment, the blessedness of rest, and the brightness of light; through Jesus Christ thy Son our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.**

The Precious Blood & All Souls Coventry

## SOLEMN EVENSONG & BENEDECTION



Monthly at 7pm  
Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December  
Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January  
Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February  
Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March

Kingsland Avenue, Coventry CV5 8DX 02476674161

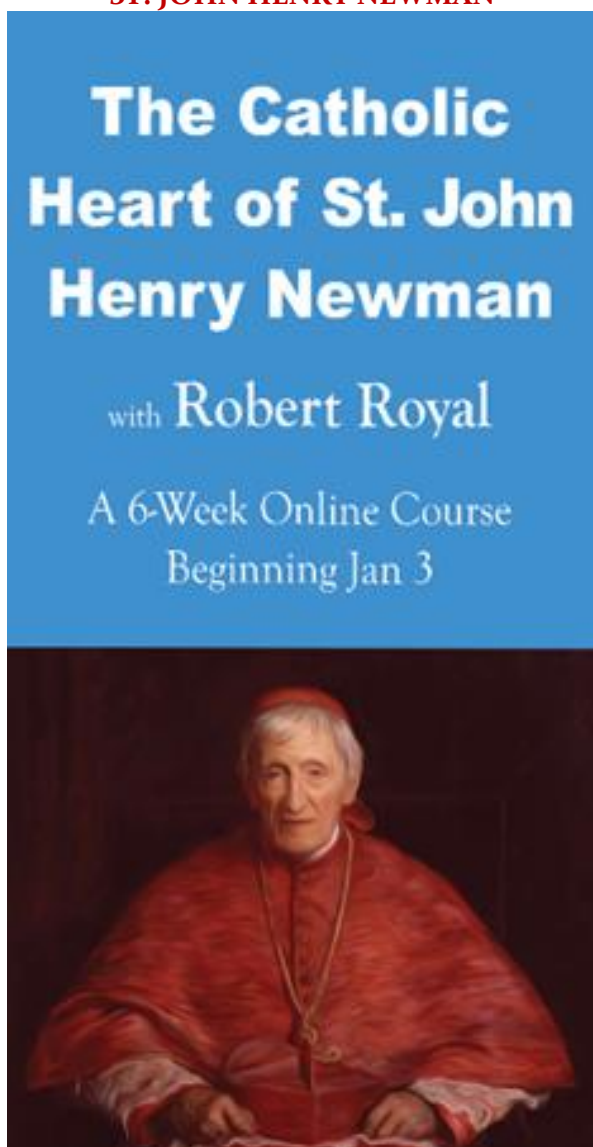
**Our next Solemn Evensong and Benediction is THIS WEDNESDAY 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at 7pm.** Please try your very best to be there, so that we can

effectively do what as members of the Ordinariate we are asked to do: share with our brothers and sisters in the Church the worthy Anglican patrimony that has been welcomed into the Church.

Evensong will be for the Eve of the Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle.

*O HOLY Ghost the Lord, who on Pentecost gavest the Church the gift of tongues that Christ might be known, loved and served by peoples of divers nations and customs: watch over the Anglican heritage within thy Church, we pray thee, that, led by thy guidance and strengthened by thy grace, this worthy patrimony may find such favour in thy sight that the people formed therein may increase both in holiness and number, and so show forth thy glory; who livest and reignest with the Father and the Son, one God, world without end. Amen.*

### THE CATHOLIC HEART OF ST. JOHN HENRY NEWMAN



John Henry Newman was a prolific writer. His thinking has been so influential on the life of the

Church that the Bishops of England & Wales have called on the Holy See to declare him a 'Doctor of the Church'. This 6-week online course, beginning on 3<sup>rd</sup> January, is designed to give a brief but serious introduction to the words Newman wrote and the truths he laboured to defend, despite attempts by some to make him seem to say things he would actually reject, and did in his lifetime. In his writings Newman asserts that as believers asked questions over the centuries about practices and beliefs, Church teaching answered those questions, not by departures from her foundation - what Newman called "corruptions" - but by making explicit what had earlier only been implicit. Developments, unlike corruptions, were in living continuity with what came before. Corruptions deviated or contradicted earlier teaching. I encourage you to take the time to be inspired and guided by Newman's calm and reasoned thinking in these challenging and confusing times. Register at <https://courses.thecatholicthing.org/product/the-catholic-heart-of-st-john-henry-newman/> Father Paul

### BIBLE IN A YEAR

This runs along the same lines as Catechism in a Year. In The Bible in a Year podcasts, Fr. Mike Schmitz guides you through the entire Bible in 365 episodes. Using an exclusive reading plan rooted in The Bible Timeline (a ground-breaking approach to understanding salvation history developed by Biblical scholar Jeff Cavins) you won't just read the Bible ... you'll finally understand how all the pieces fit together to tell an amazing story that continues in your life today. Each of the daily episodes is about 20-25 minutes long, making it easy to listen for your own personal listening, with your family, or with a small group. Pick up a flyer from the back of church for more information. The first meeting of those who wish to meet throughout the year to discuss the podcasts is at 7pm on **Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> January** in the parish room.

Read and Understand the Bible  
with *The Bible in a Year* Podcast  
with Fr. Mike Schmitz!



"As cradle Catholics, we hear Scripture at Mass and occasionally in self study but never like this. *The Bible in a Year* brings it all together."  
—Ignacio G.

Join over 1 million Catholics listening to this podcast!

Listen free on the Ascension App!

Scan this QR code with your phone to download the Ascension App — the best place to listen to *The Bible in a Year*.



### Livestreamed Evensong Sunday to Thursday

Evening Prayer is prayed publicly in church **Sunday to Thursday at 5.30pm**, using Divine Worship Daily Office. If you are able, please join me either in person or via the livestream.

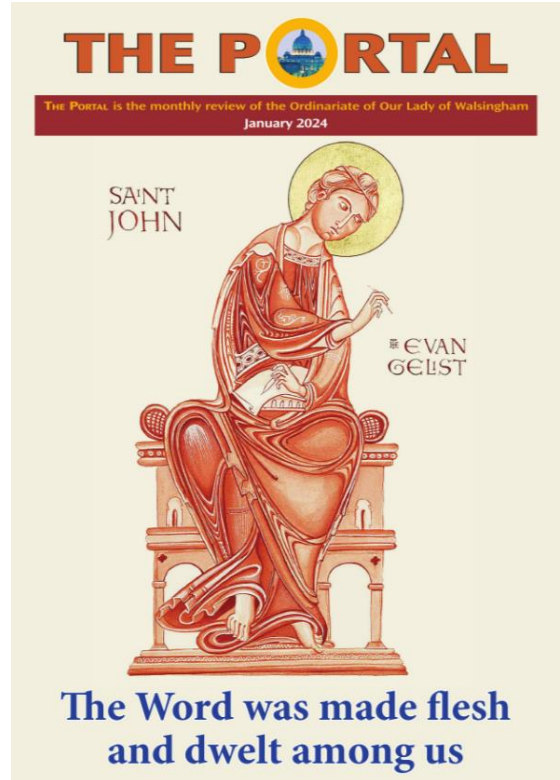
### Thursday evening Mass

Please do attend Thursday evening Mass if you are able, which is celebrated according to Divine Worship.

### Ordinariate monthly e-newsletter

If you're subscribed, you should have received the latest newsletter in your inbox this last week To subscribe go to <https://www.ordinariate.org.uk/news/newsletter.php>

### The Portal for January and podcast



Visit <https://www.ordinariate.org.uk/news/portal.php> to read the monthly online review and to listen to the weekly podcast.

### QR code for donations to Coventry Ordinariate Mission

This method of donating is powered by CAF (Charities Aid Foundation) and is being promoted by the Ordinariate Finance Officer as something all groups might use to boost their income. CAF helps charities get the most from their fundraising by providing online donation processing services. It is a registered charity (Charity Commission of England and Wales number 268369). For more information about CAF visit <https://www.cafonline.org/> Donations can be made either by scanning the QR code above or going directly to the CAF Coventry Ordinariate Mission webpage at <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/21076> Both the QR code and URL will be displayed on the Ordinariate weekly newsletter, Facebook page, noticeboard etc. There are the options to make just one donation or to give regularly (see below). If you give to the group already by standing order, you could make a single occasional donation via CAF anytime too. There is also an option for you to **gift aid** your donation.



### Praying the Daily Office this week

**Evening Prayer is recited publicly in church Sunday to Thursday at 5.30pm and is livestreamed (see the parish website). Please join in.**

If you intend to pray daily **Morning Prayer** and **Evening Prayer**, the table below gives you the page numbers for each of the parts of the Office for each day this week. Placing the markers in the correct pages, as indicated in the table below, takes a few minutes each time, but once done, actually praying the Office is quite straight-forward.

The Order of Morning Prayer (MP) (Matins) begins on page 375

The Order of Evening Prayer (EP) (Evensong) begins on page 421

All numbers below refer to *page numbers* in Divine Worship: Daily Office (DWDO), unless otherwise indicated.

Note: the Office hymn is always optional, but encouraged.

Day	Morning Prayer (Matins)				Evening Prayer (Evensong)				Notes
	Psalmody	Readings	Hymn	Collect	Psalmody	Readings	Hymn	Collect	
<b>Sunday 21st</b> <b>THIRD SUNDAY AFTER</b> <b>EPIPHANY</b>	573	794	216	78	575	796	216	78	Readings for year II
Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> Feria	578	798	216	78	581	800	216	78	
Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup> Feria	584	801	216	78	586	803	216	78	
Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> <b>St. Frances de Sales,</b> <b>Bishop, Doctor of the</b> <b>Church</b>	588	805	216	109	590	1900	256	109	EP1 of The Conversion of St Paul
<b>Thursday 25<sup>th</sup></b> <b>THE CONVERSION OF ST.</b> <b>PAUL</b> <i>The Octave of Prayer for</i> <i>Chrisian Unity ends</i>	592	1901	256	109	595	1901	256	109	
Friday 26 <sup>th</sup> <b>Sts Timothy &amp; Titus,</b> <b>Bishops</b>	597	810	216	109	599	811	216	109	
Saturday 27 <sup>th</sup> Feria	601	813	216	78	604	814	200	79	EPI of Septuagesima
<b>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup></b> <b>SEPTUAGESIMA</b> <b>(3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday before Lent)</b>	606	881	200	79	609	883	201	79	From today the <i>Benedicite</i> is said in place of the <i>Te Deum</i> at Morning Prayer on all ferias and Sundays until Easter

For those who are looking initially for something a little simpler, the **Office of Prime** (page 397) is a shorter form of prayer for the morning, and the **Office of Compline** (page 427) is a shorter form of prayer for the evening. These will take about 10 minutes each to pray.

## Christian Unity and the Ordinariate

### 'That they may be one.'

*Jesus prayed, Holy Father, keep those you have given me in your name, that they may be one, even as we are one...May they all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. (John 17:11,21)*

Christ calls all Christians to be one, and the Creed declares that the Church is one, yet Christians are far from united. Christian disunity is both a reality and a key challenge of our time. Vatican II (1960s) calls Christian disunity a scandal that impedes the Church's mission and witness to the world. Christian churches today, including the Catholic Church, consider the quest for unity to be an imperative, not an add-on. The call of the Second Vatican Council was for all Catholics to reach out to other Christians with a love that desires and works actively to overcome in truth whatever divides them from one another.

### A Catholic understanding of ecumenism

The shortest route to a proper Catholic understanding of ecumenism is to read Vatican II's *Decree on Ecumenism (Unitatis Redintegratio) (1964)*, which is a relatively brief and very clear document. Its opening paragraph reads:

*The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the Second Vatican Council. Christ the Lord founded one Church and one Church only. However, many Christian communions present themselves to men as the true inheritors of Jesus Christ; all indeed profess to be followers of the Lord but differ in mind and go their different ways, as if Christ Himself were divided.<sup>1</sup> Such division openly contradicts the will of Christ, scandalizes the world, and damages the holy cause of preaching the Gospel to every creature. (Unitatis Redintegratio, Introduction opening paragraph)*

### Catholic principles of ecumenism

3 main principles for ecumenism were formulated by the Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council in 1964.

1. **Christ established the Church on the Apostles** and their episcopal successors, whose visible head and principle of unity was Peter and his successor, the Bishop of Rome. It follows from this that the Church described in the New Testament is always fully present in the Roman Catholic Church, that by its sacraments and bishops and pope, the oneness Jesus prayed for in John 17 is never absent from it (see also *Unitatis Redintegratio*, 4).

2. Since the first century there have been divisions in Christianity, but many people now separated from visible unity with the successors of the Apostles under Peter are nevertheless Christians who possess **"many elements of sanctification"** and also many gifts belonging to the one Church of Christ, all of which are innately "forces impelling toward catholic unity"



(Lumen Gentium 2.8). Those gifts found in the other churches "derive from that fullness of grace and of truth which has been entrusted to the Catholic Church," and properly belong to her.

**3. Catholics are to do everything possible to foster the ecumenical movement**, all "the initiatives and activities, planned and undertaken to promote Christian unity, according to the Church's various needs and as opportunities offer" (Decree on Ecumenism, I, 4).

Those who fail to maintain these principles fall into one of two errors:

1. either they reject ecumenism altogether because they believe it is wrong to recognise saving gifts outside the Catholic Church, or
2. they pursue a false ecumenism which seeks unity at the expense of truth (by side-stepping or compromising on key matters of doctrine, including playing down the claim of the Catholic Church to be the fullest expression of the Church founded by Christ himself).

### **Ut Unum Sint (Pope John Paul II)**

For the 30 years from the Second Vatican Council to the publication of St. John Paul's encyclical May 25, 1995, official ecumenical dialogues tended to focus on comparing and contrasting Catholic teachings or practices with the teachings or practices of its dialogue partners.

The search for what Christians held in common was a necessary first step in recognizing each other as Christians, called by Jesus to be one. But in "Ut Unum Sint" (Latin for "that they may be one"), St. John Paul said that dialogue is more than "comparing things." Dialogue, St. John Paul said, is "an exchange of gifts." The search for Christian unity, which needs theological reflection, cannot stop there. It is not simply an intellectual exercise.

In the new approach, which has become known as "receptive ecumenism," Christians say to each other, "What I have is a gift to you and what you have is a gift to me," recognising that other Christians have gifts and being willing to accept them as something that could help one's own community grow in faith. For Catholics, crucially one of the gifts it wants to offer to other Christians is the ministry of the bishop of Rome - the papacy.

### **The Ordinariate: An example of 'receptive ecumenism'**

The Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham was established in 2011 by Pope Benedict XVI to allow Anglicans to enter into the full communion of the Catholic Church, whilst retaining much of their heritage and traditions (only those elements of the Anglican tradition which are consonant with the Catholic Faith).

The Holy Father stated, when he published *Anglicanorum coetibus*, that as 'the successor of Peter, mandated by the Lord Jesus to guarantee the unity of the episcopate and to preside over and safeguard the universal communion of all the Churches, [he] could not fail to make available the means necessary to bring this holy desire to realization'. This was in response to groups of Anglicans 'repeatedly and insistently' petitioning 'to be received into full Catholic communion individually as well as corporately'.

One of the principal aims of the Apostolic Constitution *Anglicanorum coetibus* is "to maintain the liturgical, spiritual and pastoral traditions of the Anglican Communion within the Catholic Church, as a precious gift nourishing the faith of the members of the Ordinariate and as a treasure to be shared".

The Ordinariate is an ecumenical gesture which demonstrates to Christians everywhere how wide the Catholic Church is prepared to open its arms to show that there can be *unity with diversity*, diverse expressions of one faith joined together in the Church. It points to the possibilities of the future, when other Christian traditions might also enter the full communion of the Catholic Church, bringing aspects of their heritage and traditions with them.

The Ordinariate may have taken ecumenists by surprise, but the Ordinariate is arguably an ecumenical initiative which expresses the vision held out in the Second Vatican Council Decree on Ecumenism: that the one Church of Jesus Christ can be found in the Catholic Church and that elements of it are to be found elsewhere, in other churches. Members of the Ordinariate experienced those elements in the Anglican Communion and have brought them into full communion, so that this teaching is now expressed in a very tangible way.

Pope Francis has widened the scope of the Ordinariate. The updated "norms" state that the Ordinariate is not only for former Anglicans and their families. Any validly baptised Protestant coming into the Catholic Church can become a member. Also eligible for membership are people who have been evangelised and brought into the Catholic Church through the Ordinariate's mission and ministry. Fallen-away Catholics who have not completed the sacraments of initiation and who come back to the practice of the faith through the evangelising mission of the Ordinariate can also become members of the Ordinariate. So the Ordinariates are looking beyond welcoming just Anglicans (often unfairly and simplistically described as 'disaffected Anglicans') toward actively evangelising others, as the whole Church is called to do.

### **The Ordinariate: A prophetic gesture and 'realised ecumenism'**

During his address to the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales at St Mary's College, Oscott, in September 2010, Pope Benedict was keen to stress that the Ordinariate "should be seen as a prophetic gesture that can contribute positively to the developing relations between Anglicans and Catholics". He went on to state that,

*"[The Ordinariate] helps us to set our sights on the ultimate goal of all ecumenical activity: the restoration of full ecclesial communion in the context of which the mutual exchange of gifts from our respective spiritual patrimonies serves as an enrichment to us all".*

In this way, the establishment of the Ordinariate is clearly intended to serve the wider and unchanging aim of the full visible unity between the Catholic Church and the members of the Anglican Communion.

Monsignor Mark Langham, who was the Secretary to the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in Rome 2008-2013, and at the time of his death in 2021 Catholic chaplain to Cambridge University, reflecting on the Ordinariate in 2015 at a gathering of priests of the Ordinariate said,

*The presence of the Ordinariate within the Church is prophetic and exhortative; a reminder both to Catholics and to other Christians that co-existence, even with a communion in which historically the Catholic Church could see a great deal of itself, is not enough. Living in impaired communion is not the will of Christ. For sure, we can collaborate in a great number of things - but collaboration is not journeying. Faithfulness to the prayer of our Lord is to commit ourselves to his agenda, his journey, his prayer; however unlikely or difficult that may seem to us. True ecumenism is not only about sustaining the present bonds of charity; it must direct itself forward, towards its goal, a goal that will be visible in sharing Eucharistic fellowship. The Ordinariate not only represents a realisation of that goal, but an*

*insistence to the Church that where we are is not good enough; not merely untidy – it does not accomplish the will of Christ, and thereby weakens our witness to him in the world. For ecumenism, there is a journey to be made. Your own personal journeys which brought you to the Ordinariate, the sacrifices you made to move forward, re-emphasise the urgency and the cost of the ecumenical imperative - the obligation to make the journey; the need once more to see ecumenism not as an abstract notion, but a reality that makes demands upon us. The Ordinariate, in the end, underlines that in staying where we are, divided as we are, we are lacking in witness to him whose name we claim to bear.*

*If the Ordinariate restores the sense of movement towards unity, it also models what that unity can look like. We need to be very careful about what we mean by the unity of Christians. What would be its characteristics? What would be its room for manoeuvre? In the first place, unity must look solid. Solid in the sense of truthful. Ecumenism can only be truthful. It is not, and never can be, compromise. Our unity must be, in the words of Vatican II, “constituted by the bonds of the profession of faith, the sacraments and hierarchical communion.” We cannot found our unity on anything less, glossing over difficult bits, on watering down formulae. “You go light on scripture and we won’t mention Purgatory...”*

*A unity which is truthful, also needs to do justice to the diversity of traditions within Christianity. Unity, as Cardinal Mueller said in 2012, is not achieved by the elimination of distinctiveness – the requirement that diverse liturgies, customs and spirituality should be replaced by one, Roman, model. Pope Benedict himself usefully distinguished Tradition (with a capital T), from traditions. Pope Francis during his recent visit to the Orthodox Patriarch in Constantinople, significantly said to his hosts, that, in the search for unity, the Catholic Church “does not intend to impose any conditions except that of the shared profession of faith.” It is a simple, but, as ever with Pope Francis, profound statement. It does not mean that we will ignore central doctrines, sit light to Church authority. It does mean that we will be sensitive to the concerns and fears of our ecumenical partners, and not ask of them anything that violates their own traditions. Vatican II recognised ‘elements of sanctification and truth’ in other Christian communities, and it is important to honour and respect these elements; and even to learn from them.*

*Here the Ordinariate has much to offer the wider Church. It holds out a successful and viable model of diversity in unity, a visible sign that proclaims that shared Communion does not mean uniformity of worship, traditions, or even of government. This is a point that has been well made within the Anglican - Roman Catholic dialogue, but it is also a point that needs to be broadcast in wider ecumenical circles: an assurance to other ecumenical partners that the price of unity is not too high, that their fears need not be realised.*

*The Ordinariate, particularly in the preparation of its texts and liturgies, shows that within the Catholic church all our identities have space to grow. This is not some concession, some little enclave that has been conceded; it is part of what being Catholic is. The Ordinariate is drawing upon the traditions and resources of its Anglican liturgical and spiritual life, in order (and this is the point) to play a fuller part in the life of the Catholic Church. And that is a lesson for us all. Ecumenism is not afraid of diversity; rather, it thrives upon it. The search for unity renders the Church strengthened, more Catholic, in having available within it a richness of Christian heritage. For other Catholics, it is a challenge so see their own cherished traditions, their way of doing things in parishes and dioceses, as more than a state of affairs, but rather as a resource to celebrate, strengthen, draw upon, even re-discover, in the search for unity.*

## **The Ordinariate: a challenge and an opportunity**

The establishment of the Ordinariate is a challenge to the Catholic Church because, as Pope Benedict said in 2010 (see above), it sets our sights on the ecumenical goal of full ecclesial communion, which as the years go by is proving increasingly difficult, such that the temptation is to lower our sights and settle for something less. The Ordinariate is a particular challenge and opportunity for parishes, like ours, where there is an Ordinariate community present – where ‘the rubber hits the road’. It challenges our acceptance of the *status quo* of a divided Church; it challenges us to welcome and accept and celebrate legitimate difference and diversity within the Catholic Church; it challenges us to love each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. Are our words and actions promoting unity or seeking to divide?

### **No ecumenism without a change of heart**

The Second Vatican Council insisted that “there can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart” (UR n.7). An appropriately humble attitude enables Catholics to appreciate “what God is bringing about in the members of other Churches and Ecclesial Communities” (UUS n.48), which in turn opens the way for us to learn and receive gifts from these brothers and sisters. Humility is again necessary when, through encounter with other Christians, truth comes to light “which might require a review of assertions and attitudes” (UUS n.36)

### **Closing prayer**

Lord Jesus, on the night before you died for us,  
you prayed that all your disciples may be perfectly one,  
as you are in your Father and your Father is in you.  
Make us painfully aware of our lack of faith in not being united.  
Give us the faithfulness to acknowledge,  
and the courage to reject,  
our hidden indifference, distrust and even enmity towards one another.  
Grant that we all may meet one another in you,  
so that from our souls and our lips  
there may ever arise your prayer for the unity of Christians  
as you will it  
and by the means that you desire.  
In you, who are perfect Love,  
grant us to find the way that leads to unity,  
in obedience to your love and your truth.  
Amen.

**Read and Understand the Bible  
with *The Bible in a Year* Podcast  
with Fr. Mike Schmitz!**



“As cradle Catholics, we hear Scripture at Mass and occasionally in self study but never like this. *The Bible in a Year* brings it all together.”

—Ignacio G.

Join over 1 million Catholics listening to this podcast!

**Listen free on the Ascension App!**

Scan this QR code with your phone to download the Ascension App – the best place to listen to *The Bible in a Year*.

