

**To all licensed clergy, clergy with PTO and licensed lay ministers**

Date: Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Our Ref: MJS/jrp-bp2028

Maundy Thursday 2023

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

Sonnet for Ash Wednesday by Malcolm Guite:

*Receive this cross of ash upon your brow,  
Brought from the burning of Palm Sunday's cross.  
The forests of the world are burning now  
And you make late repentance for the loss.  
But all the trees of God would clap their hands  
The very stones themselves would shout and sing  
If you could covenant to love these lands  
And recognise in Christ their Lord and king.  
  
He sees the slow destruction of those trees,  
He weeps to see the ancient places burn,  
And still you make what purchases you please,  
And still to dust and ashes you return.  
But Hope could rise from ashes even now  
Beginning with this sign upon your brow.*

Ash Wednesday has passed and we are now well into Lent, but Malcolm Guite's Sonnet is a reminder that repentance takes many forms. The renewal of the baptismal cross on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday is intended as a reminder that each day we are called to turn around and to face Christ. And each day we hear again the call to follow Christ, to live simply and to take nothing with us on the journey (Luke 9:3), and to not be anxious about where Christ is leading (Matthew 6:25). We hope that this Lent will be a time of deepening your trust in God as we walk together on this journey.

**Diocesan ('Chrism') Eucharist on Maundy Thursday 6 April 2023 at 11am at St James the Greater, London Road, Leicester LE2 1NE.**

We very much look forward to seeing you on Maundy Thursday as deacons, priests and bishops as we gather to renew our ordination vows. This service is open to anyone, so please do extend a warm welcome to others, including church officers and lay ministers.

This service provides the opportunity for us to express something of what it means to be 'The Diocese' as we come together before God as members of the body of Christ, and it is my expectation and hope that all licensed clergy will be present (while being aware that a midweek morning is not

an easy time for chaplains and those in secular employment). Clergy with PTO are also very welcome to attend.

In this service, we are affirming our relationship to one another as ordained ministers, so I would be glad if you would all robe, as we express our solidarity with one another. Robing will be in the Undercroft of St James the Greater. The 'dress code' is alb and white stole, but cassock, surplice and scarf are also acceptable. All Readers are welcome to attend and robe in cassock, surplice and blue scarf. Please make sure you are robed by 10.40am at the latest.

During this service, we will also bless the oils for use in ordination, initiation and healing. Oils will be available for collection in the church after the service so please bring empty, suitable containers with you.

In order to help with numbers, seating and catering, **would you please book** using the following Eventbrite link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/chrism-eucharist-on-maundy-thursday-tickets-564911995987>

When you register on Eventbrite, there are some details there about trains, buses and details of the Victoria Park car park nearby. If driving, do try and car share with others.

If you would like to sing with the scratch choir for this service (with a rehearsal on the day at 9.30am), please email Kez Leonard, the Cathedral Arts and Music Administrator, on [cathedral.music@leicestercofe.org](mailto:cathedral.music@leicestercofe.org), indicating which voice part you usually sing **by Friday 24<sup>th</sup> March 2023**.

The service will not be lived streamed but will hopefully be made available as a video afterwards for those who are unable to be there.

### **Bishops' Study Day – Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

What if evangelism was a ministry of the whole church, not just a few? What if it was central to the life of a church rather than something done on the margins? What if it was part of the 'way we do things round here'? Within the context of worship and prayer, the Bishops Study Day in May is an opportunity to gather to explore the theme of 'Nurturing a Faith-Sharing Culture' in our churches, chaplaincies, communities, schools, fresh expressions or church plants. We will host workshops in the afternoon as we explore themes of Faith-Sharing and Interculture, Faith-Sharing and Interfaith, and Faith-Sharing and Friendships.

Further details to follow including booking which will be via the new Learning Hub, which you'll be sent information about in the next few weeks.

### **Living in Love and Faith - Prayers and Pastoral Care**

Following the General Synod's recent vote in favour of proposals which, while not changing the church's doctrine of marriage, enable same-sex couples to come to church after a civil marriage or civil partnership for prayers of dedication, thanksgiving and for God's blessing, we want to assure you all of our ongoing prayers and pastoral care while the details of these proposals are worked out in the coming months.

**Bishop's Lodge, 12 Springfield Road, LE2 3BD**

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We know that there is a lot of hurt and pain in the church at this time, and we are continuing to have conversations with people across the diocese, aware that the decision of Synod has been welcomed by some but is a concern for others. In all these conversations, we continue to commend the use of the [Pastoral Principles](#) and to encourage you to make contact with those who have agreed to offer [chaplaincy support \(links on this webpage\)](#). And please pray for the College of Bishops which meets again on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March to continue the process of finalising the Prayers of Love and Faith, developing pastoral guidance, and putting in place support for those who, in all conscience, will not feel able to use the Prayers.

### **Finance Letter**

We want to thank all those who have written in response to our previous letter regarding the diocese's financial situation. Our Finance Director Simon Wilson is collating responses and will review these with members of the Board of Finance. We have been hugely encouraged by the generosity of a number of churches who have increased their giving in response to this letter. We know that this is not easy for many churches, but we hope the letter has sparked some good conversations among your PCCs and wider congregations.

### **Lent Prayer Pilgrimage, and Lent Appeal**

Finally, Bishop Martyn would very much like to encourage you to consider joining him on part of his [Lent prayer pilgrimage \(the website link includes details of the route\)](#). Each Saturday and Sunday during Lent he is walking around the diocese visiting churches (often those he has not visited before) and encouraging people in prayer and Christian discipleship. You can join for as much or as little as you like – just bring good boots, waterproofs and sustenance for the journey! For Bishop Martyn, this is also preparation for his sabbatical which starts in May until the end of July 2023.

In addition, the [Bishops' Lent Appeal this year is for the charity Home for Good](#). Please include this in your notice sheets and encourage people to give to support children in care who need a loving and safe home.

### **Clergy Partners Quiet Retreat Day**

All clergy partners within the Diocese of Leicester are invited to a Quiet Retreat Day at The Stable House, hosted by Jenny Worsfold & Lynn Snow. This day will be on Saturday 22nd April 2023, from 9.30am to 4.30pm, and it will involve a mixture of led content and free time, with lunch provided. The cost of the day is £15, please book your space [here](#).

Once again, this letter comes with our prayers and thanks. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Yours, in Christ,



The Rt Revd Martyn Snow  
Bishop of Leicester



The Rt Revd Saju Muthalaly  
Bishop of Loughborough

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