

## Letter from Fr Charles

Dear Friends,

I have important news to share with you.

Early in the New Year, I will be leaving Storrington and moving to a new appointment. It's going to be a huge wrench leaving you and leaving Storrington. But deep down I think it's probably the right thing for me, for you, and for the diocese.

In a recent letter to me Bishop Richard writes that he will speak to you after Christmas with more details about what is happening. He also writes that "a new priest will be arriving."

In a long-standing arrangement I have holiday and supply cover booked for two weeks in mid-January. It so happens that this will coincide with the time of the move. Consequently, I expect that my last weekend in the parish will be the Feast of the Epiphany on 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> January and I will make my thanks and farewells then.

I would like to issue a few apologies. I have known about this move since Bishop Richard proposed it to me just before the beginning of this term, but have been unable to share it with you until now which I have found very hard. Apologies for any times recently when I have been distant, out-of-sorts, rather vacant, and evasive in answer to questions about any plans for next year. Also, apologies that I'm not able to share with you the full details of what is happening. Bishop Richard will do that with you after Christmas.

I would urge you to pay close attention this weekend (25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> Nov) to Bishop Richard's pastoral letter to the whole diocese. The letter includes an introduction to the third edition of the pastoral plan for the diocese. This plan, which I haven't yet seen, is due for publication on 2<sup>nd</sup> January. It promises to be much more radical than the previous two versions. It will likely mean major changes for many parishes across the diocese, including this one. It will be the duty of the incoming priest to implement the plan here, just as it will be my duty in my new parish. To those who have been alert and listening over the past few years, many of the changes that are coming should not be a surprise.

Until then, let us commit ourselves to doing Advent, Christmas and Epiphany with as much flair and verve as we can muster. Our world has great need of our prayer, our intercession, and our action as peacemakers in a fragmented and fragmenting society. Whatever our own parochial concerns and uncertainties may be, our vocation is still to be the presence of Christ in the world. And in a few short weeks we will proclaim once again the coming of Christ, the Prince of Peace; and cry from the heart 'O hush the noise, ye men of strife, and hear the angels sing.'

With much love and prayers, *Fr Charles*

***(Announced verbally on 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> November 2023,  
text updated for newsletter 25<sup>th</sup>/26<sup>th</sup> November 2023)***