

Stewarding the Mission of the Church in our Diocese

Annual Report on Stewardship - 2026

THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

www.abdiocese.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 252878

Stewarding the Mission of the Church in our Diocese

Annual Report on Stewardship 2026

As a registered charity formed to support the work of the Church, the Diocese is committed to using its resources carefully and responsibly. Our trustees must ensure that the income and reserves of the charity support activities that achieve its goal: to promote the Catholic faith and education in Surrey and Sussex.

This document provides an annual update on the work of the Diocese, highlighting some of the fruits of this work. We recognise that much of the funding available to support the mission of the Church in our Diocese comes from the generous gifts of parishioners, and that we are accountable to all members of our diocesan family for the stewardship of these gifts.



Prayer, Formation & Mission

"We are called to share in God's own holiness, but we carry this treasure in earthen vessels" (cf. 2 Cor 4:7)

The Diocese of Arundel & Brighton includes Catholic communities across Sussex and Surrey, in cities, towns and villages from Chichester to East Grinstead, and Lingfield to Camberley.

Our family of faith includes 123 churches and Mass centres offering sacred, prayerful spaces where people can join the celebration of Mass, deepen their faith, and participate in the sacraments, and 73 Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools providing an excellent, holistic education where children and young people learn the richness of our faith and the value and dignity of every person.

Diocesan churches and schools are places of daily prayer where the good news of the Gospel and the values of Catholic Social Teaching are shared, and where people of all ages and backgrounds bear active witness to their faith, working in a spirit of mission for the common good.

Celebrating the Holy Year

The "Pilgrims of Hope" Jubilee Year announced by Pope Francis in 2024 was celebrated in churches and schools throughout the Diocese, with **three churches in Sussex and Surrey designated as special places of pilgrimage:** Arundel Cathedral, Worth Abbey and St Joseph's, Guildford.

People across our family of faith journeyed in prayer with one another, with groups from our schools and churches travelling on pilgrimage locally, to the **National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady in Walsingham,** and abroad with parish pilgrimages to **Rome, Medjugorje and Lisieux.**

Our diocesan **Lourdes Pilgrimage** in July included more than 700 pilgrims, with people travelling to France by plane, train, coach, car and Jumbulance. Seven nursing students from The University of Brighton were offered the opportunity to join the Pilgrimage this year, delivering round-the-clock, person-centred care in an environment far removed from a typical hospital ward.

Reflecting on the experience, which counted towards students' professional practice hours, student nurse Anna said:

> "[Travelling to Lourdes was] one of the most personal, emotional, and spiritually significant experiences of my nursing journey so far... Leaving Lourdes, I carry with me not just clinical skills and experiences, but a renewed sense of the nurse I want to be, someone who prioritises compassion, respects individuality, and sees the person before the condition. Lourdes reminded me that nursing is, at its heart, a human and loving act, and that is something I will never take for granted."

The Jubilee Year coincided with the **60th anniversary of the Diocese** with our "Festival of Hope" anniversary celebration, which took place at Ardingly Showground, joined by more than 1,000 people.

Festival attendees of all ages explored journeying in mission on the path to holiness and were reminded that they "travel in the company of the saints". The festival included music from "One Hope Project", representatives from Catholic charities and groups including The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP), Catenians and diocesan Anti-Slavery Ambassadors, with speakers from the Sion Community, Bible Society, and CAFOD.







"Gospel hope is not wishful thinking; it is letting go and surrendering to the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within each of us."

Michelle Moran,
Sion Community,
Festival of Hope

The Word Who is Life

The diocesan Pastoral Plan, *The Word Who is Life: The Call to Mission (2024)*, articulates a compelling vision of prayer, formation and mission with members of clergy and lay people invited to create outward-looking: "communities of saints [and] strong, lively and welcoming schools of discipleship." The plan places prayer, the Eucharist, and a deepening relationship with Jesus at the heart of missionary renewal, focussing on the significant potential of diocesan church communities to celebrate and share their faith and act as "beacons of light…not in an era of change, but in a change of era."

Lay people, priests, deacons, and consecrated women and men are invited to contribute their gifts and talents, with diocesan churches meeting their missionary mandate by evolving from deaneries into large parish communities, in the care of a Moderator and priests working closely together *in solidum:*

"Communities where the Lord is known and loved; where the liturgy is experienced as an encounter with the wonder of heaven; where daily prayer is a natural part of life; communities of healing, where all are welcomed, their dignity as children of God always recognised; where young people grow in deep love for the Gospel, for the sacramental life of the Church and for prayer; where all know the riches of the Faith and seek to share it with others."

Three deaneries were canonically formed as new Catholic parishes in 2025, with the 37 church communities of Guildford, Weybridge, and Brighton & Hove supporting the mission of the Church as part of new, larger parish families.

"[The new parish offers] more ways to serve the Lord. With all the churches coming together we can share resources, our love, and our joy of volunteering … I think Jesus wants all of us to work together, He is working with us and He is among us; this development offers us new hope."

Val, Christ the Prince of Peace, Weybridge





Our Beautiful Cathedral Church

Arundel Cathedral plays an important role in the spiritual life and mission of our Diocese, having served our community of faith both locally and nationally across three centuries. There has been a Catholic community in Arundel for at least 1,000 years with the present building, which was built in the Gothic Revival style and is Grade I listed, beginning life as a parish church.

Our beautiful mother church is open as a place of prayer and sanctuary across the year but incurs significant maintenance costs which are far beyond the means of its local parish community. Specialist repair and conservation work amounted to more than £232,000 in 2025, with the Diocese welcoming contributions of £15,580 from its parish communities, and a further £60,000 generously donated by The Friends of Arundel Cathedral.

The Cathedral sits at the heart of the bishop's ministry and the focal point of our Dioceses' liturgical life; 105 Catechumens preparing for adult baptism, and 105 Candidates for reception into the Church and confirmation, attended the Rite of Election in February, with more than 1,000 young people receiving the sacrament of confirmation at the Cathedral. Many more travelled to Arundel to mark the Feast of Corpus Christi, view the Cathedral's Carpet of Flowers, and celebrate Easter and Christmas liturgies.

Caring for our Churches

Our buildings are incredibly special places where faith is lived, celebrated and shared. Parishes spent £3.9 million on property maintenance in 2025: the biggest single driver of expenditure in our communities. The diocesan Property Team supported churches in this work providing detailed oversight of the most challenging projects, helping communities to identify the best contractors, and ensuring that they received value for money.

Our Diocese is home to the Historic Churches Committee which helps care for our listed churches in our Diocese and the Dioceses of Clifton, Plymouth, Portsmouth and Southwark.

The Committee gives permission for work to be carried out on historic churches and helps us meet our responsibilities under the Ecclesiastical Exemption from Listed Building Control. Above all, it helps to ensure that the special character and heritage of our churches is cared for and protected for generations to come.

"The stones of Arundel Cathedral stand where they are to raise our minds and hearts to God, and to call to us all across hills and valleys...They speak of faith and faithfulness, of joy, of hope and of persistence." website AC Friends (edited)

Safeguarding the Dignity of All

Ensuring that children and vulnerable adults are kept safe and know they are loved is at the core of the Church's ministry. In protecting the vulnerable and weak, the Church must *"act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with God."* (Micah 6:8).

The diocesan Safeguarding Team provides expert advice, support and training to churches across our community of faith and delivered thirty-six in-person Parish Safeguarding Audits this year, with **members of clergy and parish volunteers completing 699 safeguarding training sessions**, and the team processing 928 Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.

The Diocese is fully committed to safeguarding as an integral part of the life and ministry of the Church and actively promotes a culture where people of all ages are safe from harm, and where everyone is encouraged and enabled to enjoy the fullness of life in Jesus.







Communities of Saints & Schools of Discipleship

Friendship with Christ, which forms the basis of faith... is our guiding star." Pope Leo

Our parish communities had the joy of welcoming 1,952 people into the Church through baptism this year, with 221 weddings and 238 receptions into the Church.

The Holy Spirit continues to draw people closer to Christ through the Church, with many hundreds of people volunteering their time and talents in the service of others. Fourteen parishioners joined our Ministry of Consolation volunteer bereavement support network in June, attending a special Commissioning Mass at St Bernadette's Church, Crawley. The group completed 28 hours of training with Kathy Quint, BACP Counsellor and Cruse National Trainer, and Deacon Simon South, Our Marriage & Family Life Adviser and join a network of more than 140 bereavement befrienders, offering help and support to those who have lost a loved one.

Catechesis and formation within our parishes is supported by teams at our diocesan central office, The St Philip Howard Centre in Crawley. More than 3,250 attendees registered for diocesan courses and events led by our Formation, Lourdes, Safeguarding and Finance teams, with 550 young people, many of whom are pupils at diocesan secondary schools, travelling to CYMFed's Flame Congress to enjoy a packed programme of praise and worship at the Ovo Arena in Wembley.

By being open to walking with others, people across our faith community are encouraging friendships to grow, the Holy Spirit to move, and our faith to flourish.

Supporting the mission of our schools

Catholic schools are vital to the Church's mission to place Jesus, and the teaching of the Church, at the heart of people's lives. The diocesan Education Service works in close partnership with school leaders, teachers, education trusts, and parish communities to deliver the bishop's vision for education and ensure that every child understands that they are known and loved.

Diocesan schools have care of more than 37,000 children and young people, with the knowledge, dedication and commitment of 4,400 teachers and support staff across 73 Primary and Secondary schools, supported by 721 school governors, and many more volunteers, parents and carers.

Jesus is at the heart of our prayer and liturgy and at the centre of every Catholic school.

The Education Service provides leadership, expert guidance, and formation to schools, with more than 3,500 attendees taking part in Continuing Professional Development courses and events run by the team this year, including the "Leading in Faith" Postgraduate Certificate in RE, which is offered in partnership with St Mary's University, Twickenham.

In May, RE Advisers from the Education Service published the final branch of "Day by Day", a canonically approved, Catholic Education Service endorsed, free resource for teachers and students intended to support the delivery of the RE Directory, which is used across Catholic schools in England & Wales.

> ***[The new approach to RE offered by Day by Day] has impacted my class learning enormously, but also my own faith and my understanding of it."*** Surrey teacher.

St Mary's University use Day by Day as part of their RE teacher training course, with the materials also in use in the Catholic Dioceses of Clifton, Northampton, Plymouth and Westminster.

Rooted in Scripture, the impact of Catholic Social Teaching across our schools continues to grow, with the Education Service working in close collaboration with members of the diocesan Formation Team to support thirty-one schools to achieve the Oscar Romero Award, and twenty-one schools to participate in CYMFed's Faith in Action programme.

Our Schools Singing Programme, which launched in 2023 is also expanding, delivering outstanding singing tuition, music education and performance opportunities to children and young people attending state primary schools in Sussex and Surrey. The family of schools involved in the programme will increase by six in the coming year, bringing the total number of schools taking part in the initiative to twenty-five.

The mission of our schools extends far beyond the classroom, with last summer's Arundel Cathedral "Mass of Thanksgiving" for teachers and support staff celebrating more than 600 years of service. It is through the dedication and commitment of school leaders, teachers and all those supporting the mission of Catholic schools in our Diocese, that our young people continue to grow in faith and service, and are equipped to make a positive contribution to their communities and to the common good.



Stewarding the Mission

The diocesan Finance Team supports the work and mission of our parish communities, ensuring that the funds entrusted to our churches are stewarded diligently in accordance with the doctrine of the Church on human dignity, war, economic justice, and care for the environment.

Diocesan Trustees made the decision to divest from Fossil Fuels in 2020, with our first Environment Policy launching in 2021. The Diocese follows policies which safeguard the planet and preserve the earth's resources, with diocesan energy contracts sourced through Inter-Diocesan Fuel Management Ltd (IFM), the single largest purchaser of renewable energy and "green gas".

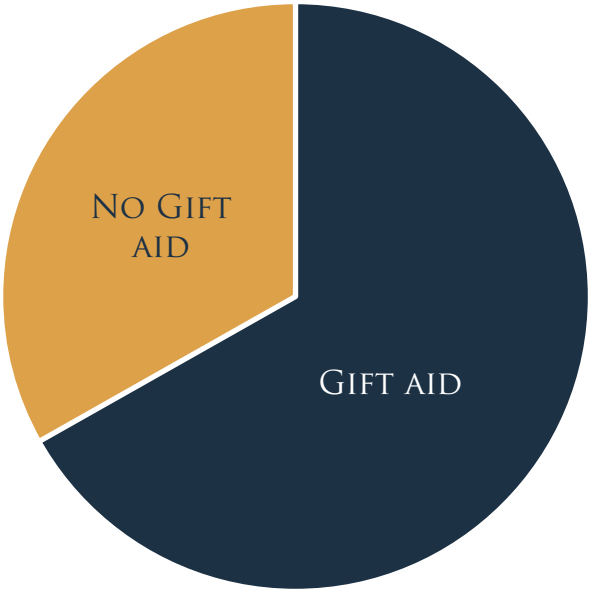
The Finance Team works diligently to protect the funds entrusted to its care, with the Dioceses' ethical investment policy aligned with Papal Encyclicals Mensuram Bonam, Laudate Si', and Fratelli Tutti, and parish savings and investments, placed in a Multi Asset ethical Investment Fund overseen by Evelyn Partners.

Our Finance Team supports 157 parish bank accounts, trains parish staff on Accounts AIQ, and provides payroll, Human Resources and onboarding for 260 members of staff working centrally and across our many churches. The team also supports Gift Aid, with parishioners who are UK taxpayers able to sign a simple one-off declaration at their local church (also available on contactless machines) and increase the value of their gift by 25% at no cost to them. Our Gift Aid Organiser was able to claim more than £1.4 million in Gift Aid from HMRC this year, directly benefitting the work and mission of our church communities.

"You can pray while you work; work doesn't stop prayer and prayer doesn't stop work."

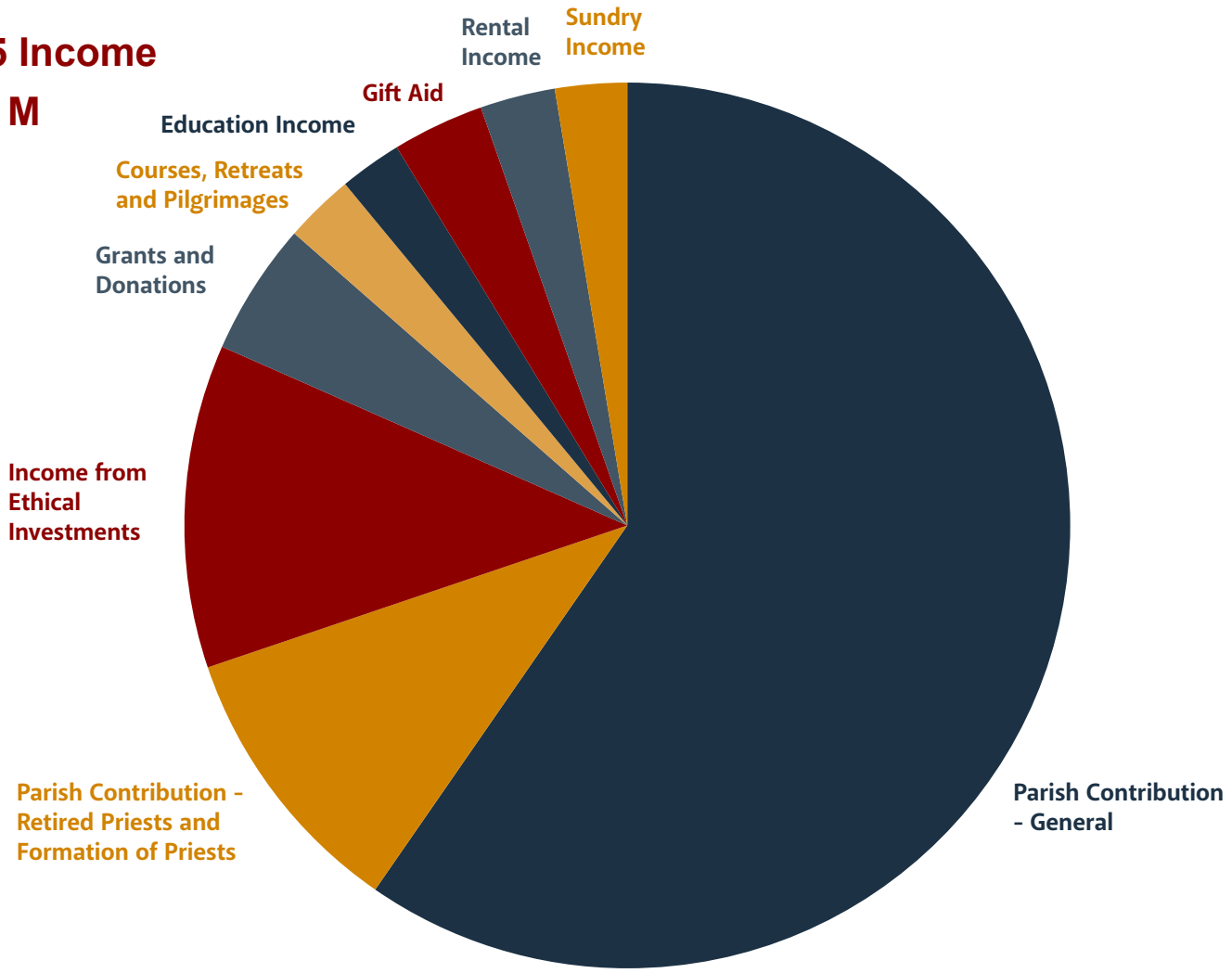
St Teresa of Calcutta

Offertory and Donations
£8.5 million



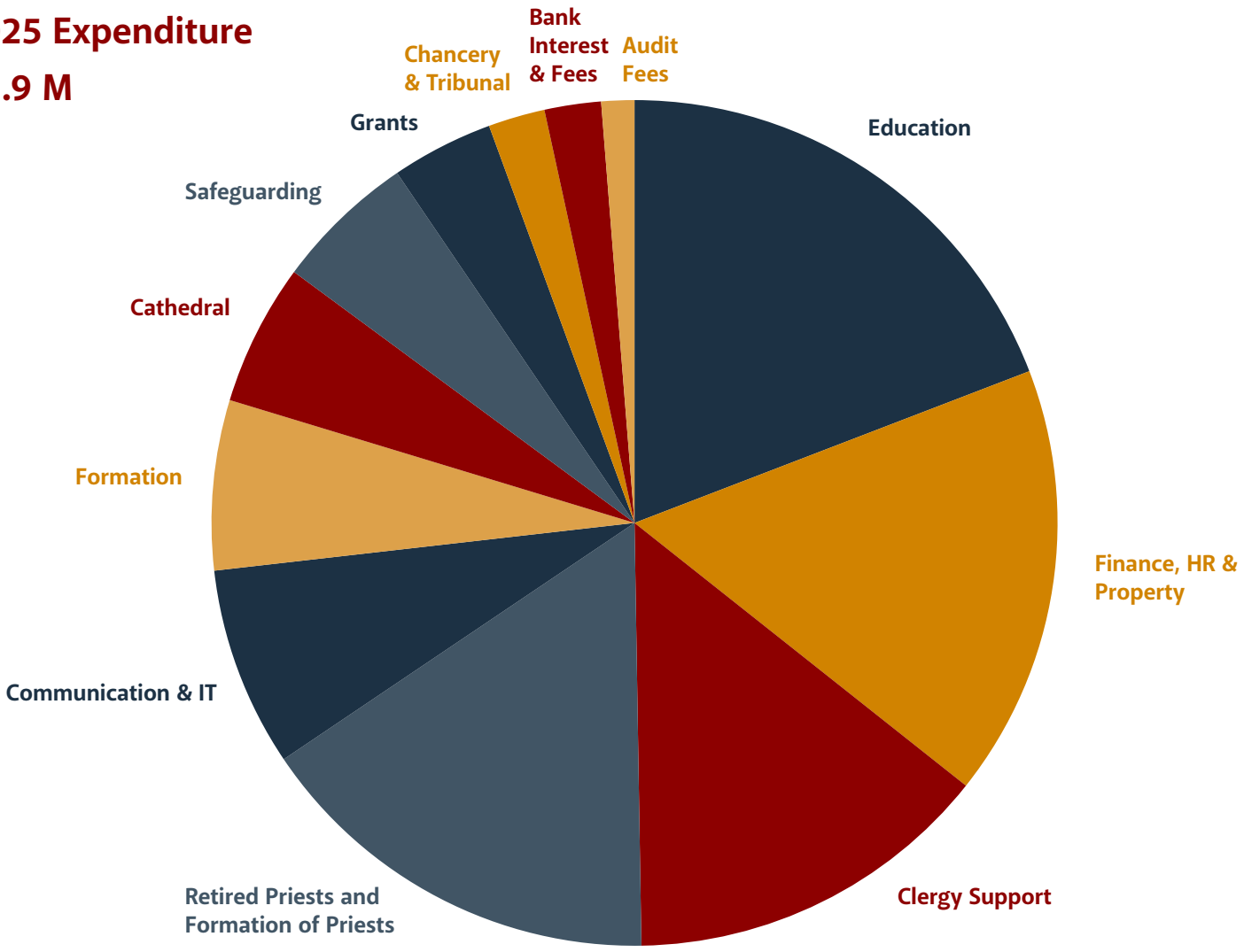
2025 Income

£3.4 M



2025 Expenditure

£4.9 M



Bringing Dignity and Hope

"The right to life is the very foundation of every other human right. For this reason, only when a society safeguards the sanctity of human life will it flourish and prosper." Pope Leo XIV

The Church operates in an increasingly secular environment where the value of human life and the dignity of every person is not always recognised. The Diocese gave more than £80,000 to support people and groups in need last year, with donations awarded to a number of charities and organisations including 11 hospices, homeless charities, the Ukrainian Eparchy, Caritas Jerusalem, and the Catholic Deaf Association.

Donations to the diocesan Refugee Fund continue to make the lives of vulnerable refugees living in our Diocese more hopeful, with funds from generous donors, our church communities and a grant from The Sisters of St Joseph of Peace CIO, enabling us to provide grants of more than £4,000 over the last 12 months.

The Fund is able to provide help and support quickly, with each grant application carefully assessed by the diocesan Grant Making Committee which includes members of clergy, diocesan staff, and dedicated volunteers working in this vital area of social justice.

In November 2025, the Diocese gave a grant of £500 to a pregnant mother with three young children, who fled Bahrain as a result of persecution and violence. The contribution enabled the family to buy much-needed furniture, school equipment, and school uniform.

Successful grant applications from trusted local schools, partner organisations, and charities usually receive their grant award within 7 days, making sure that those in need don't have to wait weeks or months for help.

Beacons of Hope Centred on Jesus

"We are all called to the service of one another and to the service of those people beyond the walls of the Church." Canon Jonathan Martin

Diocesan schools raised £6,362 for Missio, the Pope's charity for mission this year, with parishes contributing £8,400 through second collections. Further donations to charities including CAFOD and The St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) were enabled through the efforts and generosity of those within our communities. Our schools and churches share the good news of the Gospel with people of all faiths and none through the values of Catholic Social Teaching and their commitment to care for people and the planet.

There are more than thirty SVP groups, called "Conferences" based at diocesan churches, with SVP members providing practical help to people and families in need by running food collections, operating furniture stores, supporting prisoners, and offering one-on-one befriending.

SVP Conferences from St Michael's Worthing, St Peter's, Shoreham-on-Sea and St Catherine's, Littlehampton presented 164 food hampers to families in need last Christmas, also providing 1,194 items of furniture including beds, white goods, and kitchen equipment to vulnerable people living in the local area.

To help support their work, eighty students from St Oscar Romero school in Worthing raised £15,000 for the charity in October, following an overnight "South Downs Walk" and a Year 10 "Mountain Challenge" along the Cambrian Way, with donations also received from pupils at St Wilfrid's, Angmering; St Mary's, Worthing; and English Martyrs, Goring.

Partnering with CAFOD

CAFOD's LiveSimply award centres on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and Pope Francis' Encyclical Letter on the environment, Laudato Si', with Catholics of all ages invited to live sustainably with creation and in solidarity with the poor.

Catholic churches St Dunstan's Woking and St Hugh's, Knaphill, were presented with LiveSimply awards this year, with pupils from St Edmund's Primary School, Godalming, and Worth School, Turners Hill, also receiving the award.

Thirty diocesan parishes took part in CAFOD's "Cancel Debt, Choose Hope" campaign in 2025 including St Mary of the Angels, Worthing, with parishioners raising awareness of ethical lending and debt relief for our sisters and brothers living in low and middle-income countries by lobbying their MPs and signing petitions.

Many others joined CAFOD's Big Lent Walk fundraiser, running, rolling or walking 200 km during the 40 days of Lent to raise money for communities across the world facing extreme poverty and the impact of the climate crisis.

Supporting Priestly Vocations

Pope Leo describes vocation as "[something beautiful] shaped by fidelity and trust." Priests are a great gift to the Church and are essential to the sacramental life of the Church and the holy sacrifice of the Mass.

It costs £250,000 to train a seminarian through to priestly ordination, with formation taking place over seven years. Our parish communities contributed £300,000 towards the cost of training new priests and caring for retired priests last year, with the Diocese presently supporting three seminarians; Barnabas at The Venerable English College in Rome, Anthony at Allen Hall, Chelsea, and Luke at The Royal English College, Valladolid. Two new seminarians are due to join their number in 2026.

Two priests were ordained for our Diocese in 2025, with Fr Gary Carter (Epsom) and Fr Scott Coleman (Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill and Keymer) ordained at Arundel Cathedral in July. Fr Scott and Fr Gary join a brotherhood of ninety-two active and twenty-nine retired priests, with forty active and thirteen retried permanent deacons.

The Diocese spends around £40,000 each year on the training and formation of Permanent Deacons, with their ministry of altar, word and charity a great gift to the Church. We currently have seven deacons in training, along with three aspirants who are in the early stages of formal discernment and preparation.

Dedication, Faith & Service

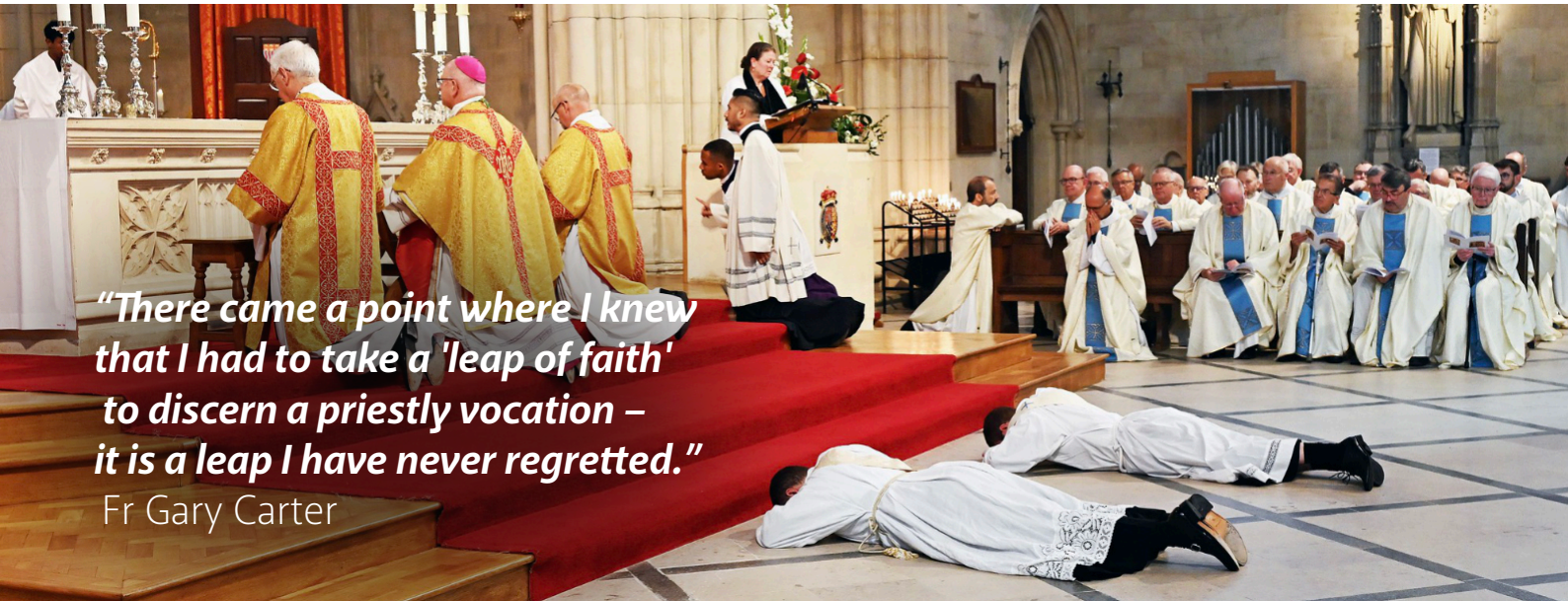
"The priest who has an upright, simple and pure heart can be contemplative in the midst of action, merciful and faithful in times of trial, and joyful in the gift of himself." Pope Leo

Our Jubilarian priests marked more than 370 years of combined, faithful service in June, with Fr Chris Benyon, Fr Graham Bamford, Canon Paul Jennings, Fr John Allen, Mgr Tony Barry, Fr Tony Bridson, Fr Hugh Flower, Fr Charles Howell and Fr Paul Wilkinson celebrating significant anniversaries of ordination at Arundel Cathedral.

Our foremost task as members of the Church is to love God and to be holy, with the call to sainthood *described by Pope Francis as "a vocation for everyone."* The Diocese continues to care for priests who have given their lives to the service of the Church long after they retire, employing two qualified nurses in the diocesan Clergy Welfare Team and meeting care home and support costs, which amounted to more than £530,000 in 2025.

Priests are essential to the sacramental life of the Church, with the pastoral care, spiritual guidance, and support offered by priests, deacons and religious enabling people of all faiths and none to find meaning, hope and belonging.

"The call to be missionary disciples is a consequence of our Baptism. It is a responsibility that is placed on every Christian. They are called, each according to his or her particular condition, to exercise the mission which God entrusted to the Church to fulfil in the world. All are called to build up the Body of Christ, lead a holy life and promote the growth of the Church. All have a share in the Church's mission."
The Word Who is Life, 2004



2025

123 churches and Mass centres

3 DEANERIES were canonically formed as new Catholic parishes in 2025

Our diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage in July included more than **700 PILGRIMS**

"Festival of Hope" joined by more than **1,000 PEOPLE**

73 Catholic Primary and Secondary Schools

Our Diocesan schools:

37,000+ CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE,

4,400 TEACHERS & SUPPORT STAFF

721 SCHOOL GOVERNORS, and many more volunteers, parents and carers.

105 Catechumens preparing for adult baptism, and 105 Candidates for reception into the Church and confirmation, attended the Rite of Election in February

Our churches welcomed **1,952** people into the church.

221 weddings were celebrated across the Diocese

Diocesan schools raised **£6,362** for Missio, the Pope's charity for mission this year, with parishes contributing **£8,400** through second collections.

The Diocese gave more than **£80,000** to support people and groups in need last year

3,250+ attendees registered for diocesan courses and events

550 young people, many of whom are pupils at diocesan secondary schools, travelled to CYMFed's Flame Congress

2 priests were ordained for our Diocese in 2025

£250,000 to train a seminarian

Our parish communities contributed **£300,000** towards the cost of training new priests and caring for retired priests

Our Jubilarian priests marked more than **370 YEARS** of combined, faithful service in June

Parishes spent £3.9 MILLION on property maintenance in 2025

Members of clergy and parish volunteers completed 699 safeguarding training sessions in 2025

Our Gift Aid Organiser was able to claim more than **£1.4 MILLION** in Gift Aid from HMRC