



The FRIENDS of the
HOLY FATHER

ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2025

**THE FRIENDS OF THE HOLY FATHER
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Notice is hereby given that the forty second Annual General Meeting of The Friends of the Holy Father will be held on **Thursday, 10 April 2025 at 6.45pm** in Clergy House Library, 42 Francis Street, Westminster, London SW1P 1QW. The Annual General Meeting will be preceded by the 5.30pm Mass in Westminster Cathedral, which will be celebrated by His Excellency, Archbishop Miguel Maury Buendia, Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain, which members are encouraged to attend.

23a Vincent House
Vincent Square
LONDON SW1P 2NB

Mary Maxwell
Hon. Secretary

AGENDA

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the forty first Annual General Meeting held on 28 February 2024
- 3 To receive the Report of the Council for the year ending 31 December 2024
- 4 To receive and adopt the Annual Accounts for the year ending 31 December 2024
- 5 Presentation of the revised Constitution for approval by members
- 6 Election of Council:

Chairman	John Langan
Vice Chairman	Dr Michael Straiton
Hon. Secretary	Mary Maxwell
Hon. Treasurer	John Crilly
Ecclesiastical Adviser	Mgr Philip Whitmore
<i>Other Council Members retiring by rotation:</i>	
	John Scanlan
	Mary Maxwell

TIMETABLE

5.30 pm	Mass in the Cathedral concelebrated by Mgr Philip Whitmore
6.45 pm	Annual General Meeting in Clergy House Library, followed by light refreshments (Entrance through the Sacristy in the Cathedral)
8.30 pm (approx)	Ends

NB: *Please do make an effort to attend this meeting to ensure that we are quorate. It would also be very helpful if you could let the Secretary know whether or not you will be attending, either by email at marym@rcdow.org.uk, by telephone 020 7798 9181, or by post: Friends of the Holy Father, 23A Vincent House, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2NB.*

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

	2024	2023
Income		
Donations	1,980	865
Investment income – interest receivable	494	421
Charitable activities	8,955	2,495
Total income	11,429	3,781
Expenditure		
Expenses	(633)	(220)
Donations to support the Holy Father	(68,000)	
Total expenditure	(68,633)	(220)
Net income (expenditure)	(57,205)	3,561
Total funds brought forward	61,326	57,765
Total funds carried forward	4,121	61,326

BALANCE SHEET

Current assets		
Cash at bank	72,121	61,326
Current liabilities		
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(68,000)	
Net current assets	4,121	61,326
Represented by:		
Unrestricted funds		
General funds	4,121	61,326

CASH FLOW

Net movement in funds	(57,205)	3,561
Cashflow from investing activities – interest	(494)	(421)
Decrease (increase) in debtors		
Increase (decrease) in creditors	68,000	(6)
Net cash generated from operations	10,301	3,134
Cashflow from investing activities – interest	494	421
Change in cash in the year	10,795	3,555
Cash and cash equivalents b/fwd	61,326	57,771
Cash and cash equivalents c/fwd	72,121	61,326

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Chairman	John Langan
Vice Chairman	Dr Michael Straiton, KCSG, MB, BS
Hon. Secretary	Mary Maxwell, DSG, DGCHS
Hon. Treasurer	John Crilly, FCMA ACT
Membership Secretary	Fiona Murphy
Other Council Members	Brian Callaghan Mrs Mary Goodwin DCSG DGCHS John McCaffrey GCSG John Scanlan KCSG KGCHS Alan Warren KC*HS
Ecclesiastical Adviser	Mgr Philip Whitmore



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HOLY FATHER

23A Vincent House, Vincent Square, London SW1P 2NB
Website: www.friendsoftheholymother.org
Registered charity number 280489



JOURNEYING TOGETHER

Canon Chris Vipers

In October 2023, and again in 2024, Bishops and delegates of the worldwide Church gathered in Rome for a unique event, the ‘Synod on Synodality’. The path towards this Synod, ‘For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission’, began in October 2021, with a worldwide invitation from Pope Francis to all the faithful, to reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission; the path of synodality. The Synod of Bishops Office in Rome put it boldly: ‘The Church of God is convoked in Synod.’

‘Synod’ is a word with a rich history in the Universal Church, and in our own island story (think Whitby and the great St Hilda, for one), and its meaning draws on the deepest themes of our faith. It comes from two Greek words: *συν* (‘with’) and *ὁδός* (‘path’), thereby indicating the path along which the People of God walk together. The Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35) is the path’s guiding light. Synodality is the process of ‘journeying together’, a way of being the Church as envisaged by the Second Vatican Council (cf *Lumen Gentium* 12), journeying forward in mission, together in communion, where everybody has a part to play.

‘First and foremost, synodality denotes the particular style that qualifies the life and mission of the Church, expressing her nature as the People of God journeying together and gathering in assembly, summoned by the Lord Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit to proclaim the Gospel. Synodality ought to be expressed in the Church’s ordinary way of living and working.’

Vademecum for the Synod on Synodality.

Pope Francis added:

‘A synodal Church is a Church which listens... the faithful People, the College of Bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other, and all listening to the Holy Spirit... It is precisely this path of synodality which God expects of the Church of the third millennium.’

on the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops by Pope St Paul VI.

This synodal journey is happening at a time of unprecedented global challenge. While the pandemic has in so many ways exacerbated already existing inequalities, ‘... this global crisis has revived our sense that we are all in the same boat, and that one person’s problems are the problems of all.’ (*Vademecum*). The Synod calls us in this generation, as urged by the Second Vatican Council, to ‘scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel’ (cf *Lumen Gentium* 4). It is a time of attentive listening, described by Pope Francis as the ‘dynamism of mutual listening’. It is a ‘listening with the heart’, and listening as we hear each other speaking ‘from the heart’. We listen to one another, including those on the margins and those who have drifted away from the Church. We listen to voices outside the Church, paying special attention to the cry of the poor and excluded ones in our world, and the cry of the exploited earth. Ultimately, all our listening leads to personal and communal discernment, a sifting through what we are hearing to detect the voice of the Spirit indicating the way ahead and forming a harmony in which diversity is not divisive but enriching as we respond to our common baptismal call to be missionary disciples.

In my own Diocese of Westminster, in parishes, primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, young adult communities, social justice and peace networks, LGBTQ+ communities, communities of those with learning disabilities, our Deaf Community Chaplaincy, in prisons, in group and one to one conversations, and in wider ecumenical listening events, we have shared our experience of travelling together in a time of profound challenge and change, and our wider experience of journeying together as members of the Church, alongside others journeying in the world. We have spoken and listened with the conviction that each one, each voice, has something to contribute and something to learn from others. We have shared openly and honestly, not ideas or theories, but our lived experience of Church life and mission; the joys and sorrows, the hopes and fears, the successes and failures. As I write this I can report that the number of participants in this sharing and listening has been mind-blowing, and the insights both humbling and inspiring. The course set at the outset – ‘If listening is the method, and discerning is the aim, then participation is the path’ (*Vademecum*) – is already bearing rich fruit, and suggests bold, creative and fresh expressions to come. In reality this synodal journey is only just beginning, and the final document of the Synod – *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission* – now declared by Pope Francis to be magisterial teaching of the Church, is the roadmap to a future full of hope and full promise. So we finish where we started:

‘The purpose of the Synod... is intended to inspire people to dream about the Church we are called to be, to make hopes flourish, to stimulate trust, to bind up wounds, to weave new and deeper relationships, to learn from one another, to build bridges, to enlighten minds, warm hearts and restore strength to our hands for our common mission.’

Vademecum.

Canon Chris Vipers is Parish Priest of St Mary Moorfields in the City of London and St Joseph’s, Bunhill Row. He is also the Director of the Diocese of Westminster’s Agency for Evangelisation.

www.rcdow.org.uk/synod

