



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON



**Peter and Maria Booker from the diocesan Deaf Service received St Philip Howard Medals during 2023's diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. Fr Ian Byrnes, Director, and Chaplain of the diocesan Deaf Service writes:**

My dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I am writing with great joy about two people who have given, and continue to give, their time and energy in supporting the Diocese for so many years. They are Maria and Peter Booker.

[www.abdiocese.org.uk](http://www.abdiocese.org.uk)

The Diocese of Arundel & Brighton is a Registered Charity No. 252878

The story began in 1990, when I was a priest in the Diocese of the Chulucanas in Peru. Unexpectedly, Cardinal (then Bishop) Cormac rang to say I could not be given another year in Peru as he wanted me to become a parish priest, and to be Director and Chaplain of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community.

Bishop Cormac said that he was appointing me to the parish of St Paul's in Haywards Heath, little did he know that Maria and Peter were to be my new parishioners. I met them for the first time in Lourdes in the summer of 1991 – what a lovely welcome I had - the welcome grew when I told them the news of my appointments.

After 32 years, Bishop Richard was approached about awarding the Bookers one of the highest awards in the Diocese – the St Philip Howard Medal – he was really pleased to do so.

As the picture above - taken by Adam Simon - shows, the award was made during the recent diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes at the opening Mass on 29 July 2023. Such an appropriate location and time for the award!

May we pray for them, and their family, for such a long ministry in the Church.

Your brother in Christ,

Fr Ian