



THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF  
ARUNDEL & BRIGHTON

## A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM FR IAN BYRNES

### **Director of the Deaf Service**

Dear sisters and brothers,

Before I begin to share a few thoughts with you, I would like to wish you, your families, and friends a fruitful and peaceful New Year in the Lord.

In the month of February (2024), I will be doing my British Sign Language course (BSL) mock exam - I will be doing the final exam in the summer; please pray for me. I am very pleased that the Diocese has sponsored me in taking the course, and that the Government is covering the cost of my learning support tutor.

I'm delighted to welcome Bishop Richard to celebrate Signed Mass with the Deaf community in Horsham on 2 March 2024 at 1pm. Bishop Richard has been a great support for the Deaf and hard of hearing community since he arrived in the diocese in 2015. Please continue to pray for him.

I also want to mention The Word Who is Life Pastoral Plan: *The Call to Mission*.

I am delighted that Bishop Richard has moved our diocesan family from "Maintenance to Mission". I had a great experience of maintenance to mission in Peru when I was out there - up on the Andes Mountains. Fr Hugh Dutton, Fr Benny O'Shea, and I had great joy in Peru over many years.

The Peruvian diocese we lived in was called "Chulucanas" and was five times bigger than our Diocese; we learned a lot and I have much to share with you all. The laity who volunteered played a very big part in leading parishes in Peru, supporting the bishop and the clergy in the Mission of the Church. It would be great to see this grow in our Diocese.

Please pray for our bishop Richard, the clergy, and laity on the matter.

Pope Francis is central to Austen Ivereigh's new book, *First Belong to God*, which is out next month. The Pope has declared 2024 a Year of Prayer in advance of the 2025 Jubilee, it all feels quite *fin du pontificat*, end of his pontificate. But the Pope is alive, alert, calm and very much in charge. He never stops working and never loses his joy. For as long as God gives Him strength and the astuteness to carry on, he will work to lay sound foundations for the synodal, pastoral, missionary Church capable of carrying us through this change of era. He knows that God's time, *the Kairos* – which doesn't map neatly onto *Chronos* of our time – is where he needs to keep his focus.

May we all pray for each other, our families, friends, and our enemies in the Lord.

Your brother in Christ.

Ian

**Fr Ian Byrnes**