

26th May 2026

As a community, we have decided that we wish our worship of the Mass to be offered *ad orientem*, meaning 'towards the East', in keeping with both the longstanding practice of the Church and the principles of Christ-centred worship.

The Second Vatican Council renewed our understanding of the faithful as the pilgrim 'people of God' (*Lumen Gentium* 11). This vision of the Church makes clear the radical equality between the baptised faithful and the ministerial priests, who journey together as one family towards our heavenly homeland. When Mass is offered with both priest and people facing in the same direction, towards the East, our belief in the shared baptismal dignity of the People of God is lived out visibly and concretely in our worship. This is also in keeping with the Council's vision of a renewed and reformed liturgy in which the faithful are 'led to that fully conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy' (*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 14) and in which the Eucharist is clearly perceived as the sacrament of 'the unity of the people of God' (*Lumen Gentium* 11).

When we all face East together in our worship, we are reminded of the ultimate goal of that worship: union with the Father in, through and with His Son Jesus Christ, the 'dawn from on high' (Luke 1:78). As Cardinal Ratzinger wrote convincingly in his book *The Spirit of the Liturgy*, 'just as the congregation in the synagogue looked together toward Jerusalem, so in the Christian liturgy the congregation looked together 'toward the Lord'... they did not close themselves into a circle; they did not gaze at one another; but as the pilgrim People of God they set off for the *Oriens*, for the Christ who comes to meet us.'

We hope that sharing together a common direction in our worship, in keeping with our shared baptismal dignity and our vocation to holiness, will help you experience a renewed sense of community at Holy Mass as we look together towards the Lord.