



Bishop of Portsmouth

Rt. Rev. Philip A. Egan BA, STL, PhD

Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church

Bishop's House
Bishop Crispian Way
Portsmouth
Hampshire PO1 3HG

Tel. 023 94216511
bishop@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Marian Franciscans

After a long period of prayerful discernment and having carefully considered their circumstances, the Priests of the Association of the Family of Mary Immaculate and St Francis, known as the Marian Franciscans, have asked me formally to dissolve the Association. I have agreed to this request after serious and careful consideration, and the appropriate canonical and practical steps are now being taken. The dissolution takes effect from 1st June 2026. From that date, the Marian Franciscans will no longer exist as an Association of the Faithful, and members may not continue to act publicly in the name of the Marian Franciscans. It is the intention of the Friars to join another Association with a similar charism and in the coming months to relocate.

During the past eleven years, members of the community have lived and ministered not only in the Diocese of Portsmouth but, more recently, in the Diocese of Dunkeld in Scotland. The Diocese of Portsmouth will work with Bishop Andrew McKenzie, the Bishop of Dunkeld and those directly involved, to address the practical arrangements now required, and the pastoral needs of the lay friars and the community in Dunkeld. Further details will be provided once arrangements have been finalised.

I know this news will cause sadness and concern for the many people who have valued the ministry, prayer and pastoral presence of the Friars. During this period of transition, I have permitted those Friars who are priests in the Diocese of Portsmouth, to wear a different Franciscan habit. Until further arrangements are confirmed, I have also granted the priests permission to continue the Masses, sacraments and devotions celebrated at St Agnes's in Portsmouth, St Joseph's in Copnor, and St Thomas More's, Iford. The Diocese recognises with gratitude the

ministry of the Marian Franciscans, and the prayer, generosity and friendship offered to them by the lay faithful and others who have supported the community over the years. Please pray for the members of the community as they discern the next steps, and for all those who have been supported by their ministry.

In Corde Iesu

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Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

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