

Pope Francis has taught me the value of humility, says new Bishop of East Anglia



Pope Francis has shown that it is vital for bishops to be humble, the new Bishop of East Anglia has said.

Bishop Alan Hopes said that “humility,” “simplicity” and “true pastoral love” were the three qualities needed for every bishop and were the qualities displayed by the new Pope.

He said: “Bishops have to remain humble, your example is so important for priests and society and beyond.”

The Pope appointed Bishop Hopes as the next Bishop of East Anglia on Tuesday.

Bishop Hopes, a former Anglican priest, said that ecumenism would be a priority in his new role.

He said: “There will be many priorities of course and ecumenism is so important. I always remember the pope who appointed me, Pope John Paul II, he said that the ecumenical road is a one-way street – we cannot turn around and come back. Ecumenism is terribly important.”

Bishop Hopes added that on the announcement of his appointment, the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Revd Graham James, sent him a “beautiful email” which “bodes well” for their work together.

Bishop Hopes also said that since his ordination as a Catholic priest the challenge of secularism had increased.

“I think secularism is a bigger challenge mainly because secularists have become rather more voluble and are listened to,” he said.

“I think it means that we have got to become more creative in the way we talk about the Gospel and how we get our teaching across. Our teaching is beautiful and we should be proud of it. We shouldn’t be afraid to tell people what we believe. We mustn’t be afraid.”

Bishop Hopes said that he was “very, very sad indeed” to be leaving the Diocese of Westminster, where he has served as auxiliary bishop but “extremely excited” about his new role.

During his time in the Diocese of Westminster he participated in a prayer vigil outside an abortion clinic in central London. He said his participation was “very challenging, but it was very important to be there”. He added that the Gospel of Life was a “wonderful Gospel. We all have to witness to it.”

Madelene Teahan - Catholic Herald