

Over 3,500 adults received into the Church in England and Wales



Members of the Croydon ordinariate group with Mgr John Broadhurst

More than 3,500 adults were received into the Catholic Church in England and Wales last week. They included 1,397 catechumens, who had prepared to be baptised, and 1,843 candidates, who had already baptised in another Christian tradition.

The largest numbers were in the dioceses of Westminster (734), Southwark (481), Brentwood (333), Birmingham (255) and Portsmouth (206). The total of 3,695 also included those who had joined the ordinariate. Easter is the traditional time for reception of new members of the Church through the Rite of the Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), the liturgical and catechetical process for adults joining the Church.

Bishop Kieran Conry of Arundel and Brighton, chairman of the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, said many of those who went through the RCIA said they first became interested in the Catholic Church through a family member or friend.

“So we should bear that in mind always in our dealings with people,” the bishop said. “We are all sowers of the seed. If we show ourselves to be happy, optimistic, humble and generous, then it’s more likely we will draw people to God and be signs of the Kingdom.”

The figures are down on last year, when 3,931 adults were received into the Church, in addition to the 795 who joined the then new Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham.

Last week around 250 former Anglicans were accepted into the ordinariate in a “second wave” of growth.

James Bradley, communications officer for the ordinariate, said: “There were about 200 receptions into new ordinariate groups with their pastors, and about 50 into existing groups.”

They bring the total membership of the ordinariate to around 1,200.

In Croydon, 65 former members of St Michael and All Angels Anglican Church, including the former vicar, the Rev Donald Minchew, were received into the ordinariate by former Anglican bishop Mgr John Broadhurst.

Over 50 were received into the ordinariate in Darlington by the Ordinary, Mgr Keith Newton; they included the Rev Ian Grieves, who hopes to be ordained in the ordinariate in the coming months.

In his homily Mgr Newton said: “The journey you embarked upon on Ash Wednesday through the days of Lent to your reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church this evening is a model of the whole of your Christian life.

“It has meant for each of you, in a particular way, leaving behind what has been comfortable and familiar and stepping out in faith, certain in the knowledge that we do so in company of Jesus who prayed the night before he died that his disciples might be one. It is a journey that must be total and complete. But like all journeys in the faith, it is one leading to joy and fulfilment.”

Other groups of former Anglicans were received into the ordinariate in Harlow, Essex, Portsmouth,

Hampshire, Maidstone, Kent, and Blackpool, Lancashire.

In the United States communities of former Anglicans in Philadelphia and Indianapolis were received into the Personal Ordinariate of the Chair of St Peter. In his Holy Week message the American Ordinary, Mgr Jeffrey Steenson, compared the journey to full communion for both individuals and groups of the ordinariate to the journey of Moses and the Chosen People from captivity to the Promised Land.

Nearly 40 former Anglican priests in America are currently studying to be ordained Catholic priests. The first ordinariate candidate was expected to be ordained to the diaconate today.

David V. Barrett - Catholic Herald