

Announcement of Resignation

Dear Friends,

I notify my resignation as Bishop of Sodor and Man, to take effect on 28 October 2023.

There is rarely a good time for a bishop to step down from the ministry of care for a diocese, but, continuing to discern my vocation in the light of God's will, I believe that now is the right moment.

The past few years have been a time of huge change in the life of the world and of our Island. This has been characterised particularly by the pandemic of COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdowns, out of which has arisen a less confident society, challenges to social cohesion, and an acutely steep rise in the cost of living. The pandemic has accelerated the development of technology by perhaps five years. Our Island has been immune to none of this, nor to the effects of the war in Ukraine. In addition to those global influences, we have engaged here with a number of moral and spiritual issues in public life, and indeed continue to do so.

As I look to enter my seventh year as Bishop, I see that God's task for me has been to navigate these challenges, to maintain our ministry and faithfulness in the gospel, and, quite simply, to support our clergy, people and parishes. It is not for me to say whether I have done that; but I believe we are in as strong and healthy a place as we can be, and that we have remained faithful and generous in God's service. Looking to the future, I believe too that a series of appointments – clergy and lay – over the past few years has given us an increased capacity, resilience and confidence. I take no credit for those appointments: rather, God has called a number of outstanding people to this diocese, and for that I can only be thankful.

I can only be thankful, too, for anything that God's grace may have achieved through my ministry. If I have been at all open to that grace, I can ask no more. Now, mindful of my own areas of limitation, I see that it is time for another bishop to bring a new set of gifts that will lead this diocese into the next phase of its holy and venerable life.

I give thanks too for Gail's ministry here: as Diocesan President of the Mothers' Union, in pastoral care of clergy spouses, as a selector for Bishops Advisory Panels at national level, and in hospitality. Perhaps arising out of all of this, Gail and I now look to enter into a relationship with God that is more contemplative, and that is rooted particularly in a deeper life of devotion to the Lord through the patronage and intercession of Our Lady, His most Holy Mother. We will keep this Diocese in our hearts and minds and souls within our life of renewed prayer, holding it constantly before God, and that is what we offer to you as our enduring gift.

I understand that another diocesan Bishop of Sodor and Man will be appointed, and our Vacancy-in-See Committee will need to be convened in order to prepare the Statement of Needs for the Crown Nominations Commission. I cannot say how long that process will

take, but we can be assured that delegation of episcopal authority will provide episcopal care for our diocese during the vacancy.

For now, I look forward to sharing with you for another seven months in the work of God on our Island and in His Church. There is still much that we can achieve between now and the end of October, and I pray that God will continue to bless us in all that we do to build His Kingdom.

In Christ, and in prayer and thanksgiving to Almighty God

✠ *Peter Sodor as Mannin*

**The Rt Revd PA Eagles
Bishop of Sodor and Man**

09 March 2023