



**A MESSAGE TO THE CLERGY, RELIGIOUS AND LAY FAITHFUL
OF THE DIOCESES OF MIDDLESBROUGH AND LEEDS**

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Following acceptance of the resignation, in accordance with Canon 401 §1ⁱ, of the Rt Rev Terence Drainey as Bishop of Middlesbrough, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has appointed me as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Middlesbrough, whilst retaining my current office as Bishop of Leeds.

Placing all my faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and the prayers of His Blessed Mother, I will do my utmost to fulfil the mission which His Holiness Pope Leo XIV has entrusted to me as Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Middlesbrough in addition to my ministry as the Bishop of Leeds. It is a comfort to know that in his retirement Bishop Drainey will continue to reside in the Diocese and that I shall be able to call on his knowledge, wisdom and advice to assist me.

It is the Holy Father's wish that I explore with the clergy, lay faithful and religious of our two historic sister Dioceses of Middlesbrough and Leeds how we might journey together in mission, work in close collaboration and gain from each other's strengths in order to secure the future of the Church's witness to Christ across the regions we serve.

I look forward to meeting and getting to know the Priests, Deacons and Religious of the Diocese of Middlesbrough, and to serving both them and the Lay Faithful now entrusted to my care as Apostolic Administrator.

Both Middlesbrough and Leeds Dioceses share not only the saints and sacred places of the ancient Kingdom of Northumbria, but also the post-industrial heritage of Yorkshire's historic North, East and West Ridings. We also share a common origin from 1878, when the Diocese of Beverley was divided into the current two sister Dioceses by Pope Leo XIII.

Trusting in God's providence, I pray that the divine graces we have received in this Holy Year of Jubilee will guide us and shape us on our journey of hope and discover together the future that God wills for us.

I humbly ask all those I am now called to serve, to pray for me; that Almighty God will grant me the spiritual fortitude I will need to undertake this new role. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Unfailing Help and St Wilfrid, Patrons of both the Middlesbrough and Leeds Dioceses, may Christ our Lord be our Way, our Truth and our Life.

With every blessing, as we prepare to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,


✠ Marcus

Bishop of Leeds

22 December 2025

ⁱ Can. 401 §1: A diocesan bishop who has completed the seventy-fifth year of age is requested to present his resignation from office to the Supreme Pontiff, who will make provision after he has examined all the circumstances.