

A Pastoral Letter to the Diocese of Liverpool from the Rt Revd Beverley A Mason  
3rd September 2025

My dear sisters and brothers,

On 30th September 2025 I shall formally leave my post as the Bishop of Warrington. It has now been over two years since I was advised to take 'extended study leave' on the understanding that the causative matter would be resolved soon thereafter. Although resolution was out of my hands, I am profoundly sorry that it has taken so long.

There is much learning the Church might take from the past two and a half years, but only if we have: (a) the humility to lay down defensiveness, (b) the grace to listen – especially to those who have been most affected by this story, and (c) the courage to review and engage in honest conversations about what has happened. The fact remains: people have been significantly affected and two bishops are now no longer exercising an episcopal ministry.

In my letters to the College of Bishops and to the General Synod (Feb 2025) I expressed my hope that this might be a *kairos* moment for our Church – for which we are all responsible - whereby we prayerfully and with humility examine our processes and behaviours. Only self-examination will lead to contrition, repentance, amendment and the blessing we long for. After a long time of personal self-examination this remains my hope and prayer.

When systems or processes unintentionally lead to distress or difficulty for individuals, whether lay or ordained, it is important to pause, reflect and address the root causes. As a church, with pastoral responsibility at the heart of who we are and what we do, we can do better and we can model something better for a bemused world.

As I look back upon my time with you in Liverpool, I thank God for you and for our shared ministry in the Gospel. It has been a joy to witness a faithful and confident Christianity among our churches – even in spite of sometimes profoundly distressing and utterly tragic circumstances. When things have seemed hopeless, your faith has shone like the stars, (re)orienting those without hope to the God who gives us a sure hope. I am so thankful for your faith and your ministry.

I am deeply grateful for the friendship and partnership in the Gospel with our ecumenical brothers and sisters, and for the strong bonds between the two cathedrals - linked by Hope and united in love. I have appreciated our friendship with other faith leaders, with local councillors and politicians, those from within the public and business sectors, the excellent BBC Radio Merseyside – and indeed with all who have partnered with us, working for the good of Liverpool - especially among the most deprived and vulnerable.

I remain deeply proud of the Christ-light in you that is shining across the diocese - of your

courage to try something new for the sake of the Gospel, and of your resolve to think and re-think as you listen to the stirrings of the Spirit. Please never lose this!

Under the new leadership of Bishop Ruth, I am so encouraged and hopeful for the diocese of Liverpool after what has been a bruising time.

At my licensing service in November 2018 it was important to me that my ministry among you should begin with footwashing. Had a service of ending been appropriate and timely, I would have wanted to repeat this. Footwashing is first and foremost a declaration of love and service to the One to whom our life is dedicated and of following His example. Simultaneously it is an honouring of the dignity of the other – to whom our Lord has given His life. Footwashing is a visible attempt at laying down one's ego, status and hubris. It is a reminder that we all need a saviour and there is but one Saviour who, even before his death on the Cross, stooped to wash the feet of His friends.

Dear friends, as I now look forward, I do not know what my future holds, but I am confident that I shall remain in God's presence and under his grace and kindness. For the moment, this is enough. Thank you for your friendship and for your prayers. Please know that you shall remain in my prayers.

With my love and blessing.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bew' with a stylized flourish at the beginning.

The Rt Revd Beverley A Mason