News
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Former Anglican Bishop Peter Forster of Chester, England, is pictured at the Anglican Cathedral in January 2012. (CNS/Simon Caldwell)

Simon Caldwell

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Former Anglican Bishop Peter Forster of Chester, England, is pictured at the Anglican Cathedral in January 2012. (CNS/Simon Caldwell)

MANCHESTER, England — The former Anglican bishop of Chester, England, has joined the Catholic Church.

Peter Forster, 71, is the fourth Anglican bishop to be received into the Catholic faith in less than a year and the fifth to become a Catholic in the past two years.

He served as bishop of Chester for 22 years until his retirement in 2019 and was received into the Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of St. Andrews and Edinburgh, Scotland, where he now lives with his wife, Elizabeth. The private ceremony was

understood to have taken place late last year, but Forster did not wish to make his move public.

The Church Times, a London-based Anglican newspaper, learned about his decision and ran a story Feb. 4. Forster, when approached by Catholic News Service Feb. 6, declined to comment.

Gavin Ashenden, a former traditionalist Anglican bishop and chaplain to Queen Elizabeth II, said Forster's reception was significant.

Writing in the Catholic Herald, he said that a decade ago, "people would have laughed" at the suggestion that high-profile Evangelical Anglican bishops would be joining the Catholic Church. Most bishops joining the Catholic Church have come from members of the Anglo-Catholic wing of the Church of England.

But an "entirely new reconfiguration of spiritual and theological fault lines is developing," Ashenden said in his Feb. 5 article. He said many other Anglicans are recognizing that "the power and vivacity of lived Catholic tradition has become the antidote to the perversity of progressive political ambition."

"The flow of Anglican refugees has only just begun," said Ashenden, who became a Catholic in 2019.

Although Forster was a supporter of women's ordination, he strongly opposed the redefinition of marriage to include same-sex couples.

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