

## BELONG & BELIEVE

How our Celtic past can help us today  
Refreshing our communities and renewing our mission

The CaFE (faithcafe.org) are offering the BELONG & BELIEVE course to our parishes. The course is free and downloadable and is a way of helping to refresh our communities and renew our mission.

Fr Mark Hogan will be hosting an introductory online session on Zoom, for parish catechists and others in parishes wishing to lead this course on Monday 13 February from 7.30 – 9.00 pm. (The zoom will open at 7.15 pm for introductions etc).

### The training will:

- give an overview of elements of the course
- provide an opportunity to listen to feedback from those who have seen the material
- confirm what the CaFE offer is and
- also help us see how the course can fit alongside the synodal process.

To register, please email Anna Pardoe at [evangelisationadmin@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:evangelisationadmin@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk). Anna will confirm your registration and send over the Zoom link before the session.

### Focus for Lent



If you're looking for a **focus for Lent**, the Dominican Sisters are running 6 online sessions explaining the sacrament of Reconciliation to adults through scripture and art, which will also serve as a Lenten retreat, every Tuesday evening during Lent. The details are here: <https://www.lightoftruth.uk/event-details/reconciliation-anchoring-you-in-happiness-2023-02-28-19-30>.

Sr Hyacinthe Defos du Rau

### The Blessed Path

In the readings since Christmas, Jesus has been revealed as the new royal son of David and Son of God. He is sent to lead a new exodus that brings Israel out of captivity to the nations and brings all the nations to God.



As Moses led Israel from Egypt through the sea to give them God's law on Mount Sinai, Jesus too has passed through the waters in baptism. Now, in today's Gospel, He goes to the mountain to proclaim a new law—the law of His Kingdom.

The Beatitudes mark the fulfillment of God's covenant promise to Abraham—that through his descendants all the nations of the world would receive God's blessings (see Genesis 12:3; 22:18).

Jesus is the son of Abraham (see Matthew 1:1). And through the wisdom He speaks today, He bestows the Father's blessings upon "the poor in spirit."

God has chosen to bless the weak and lowly, those foolish and despised in the eyes of the world, Paul says in today's Epistle. The poor in spirit are those who know that nothing they do can merit God's mercy and grace. These are the humble remnant in today's First Reading, taught to seek refuge in the name of the Lord.

The Beatitudes reveal the divine path and purpose for our lives. All our striving should be for these virtues—to be poor in spirit; meek and clean of heart; merciful and makers of peace; seekers of the righteousness that comes from living by the law of Kingdom.

The path the Lord sets before us today is one of trials and persecution. But He promises comfort in our mourning and a great reward.

The Kingdom we have inherited is no earthly territory but the promised land of heaven. It is Zion where the Lord reigns forever. And, as we sing in today's Psalm, its blessings are for those whose hope is in the Lord.

By Scott Hahn



English Martyrs  
Vale of White Horse  
Pastoral Area

PARISHES OF  
**THE ENGLISH MARTYRS, Didcot**  
**ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, Wallingford**  
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### FOURTH SUNDAY OF YEAR A (Psalter WK IV)

**Entrance Antiphon** Cf Ps 105:47

Save us, O Lord our God! And gather us from the nations, to give thanks to your holy name, and make it our glory to praise you.

**First Reading:** Prophet Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

**Responsorial Psalm:** Ps 145

How happy are the poor in spirit:  
theirs is the kingdom of heaven

**Second Reading:** Corinthians 1:26-31

**Gospel Acclamation:** Cf. Lk3:4.6

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

Rejoice and be glad;  
for your reward will be great in heaven.

**Alleluia**

**Gospel:** Mtt:5:1–12a

**Communion Antiphon:** Cf. Ba. 5:5.4:38

Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your merciful love. O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call on you.

#### **SATURDAY 28th January Our Lady**

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot, Marie Simon (RIP)

Rosary for Peace and confessions at English Martyrs, Didcot

4:30pm Adoration & Confessions will take place prior to the Vigil Mass at St John's Wallingford

5:00pm Vigil Mass St John's—Marie Simon (RIP)

5:50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot

6:30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot— Marie Simon (RIP)

#### **SUNDAY 29th January Fourth Sunday of Year A**

9:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot— Marie Simon (RIP)

11:00noon Mass St John's, Wallingford— Marie Simon (RIP)

#### **MONDAY 30th January—No Public Mass**

#### **TUESDAY 31st January St John Bosco**

11:30am St John's, Wallingford, Rosary for peace

12:00noon Mass St John's, Wallingford, Marie Simon (RIP)

#### **WEDNESDAY 1st February**

9:30am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot— Marie Simon (RIP) and Family

#### **THURSDAY 2nd February, The Presentation of the Lord**

9:30am Mass at St John's Wallingford, - Consecrated Men and Women

#### **FRIDAY 3rd February, St Blaise, St Ansgar**

9:30am Mass, English Martyrs, Didcot— Marie Simon (RIP).....Adoration 3p.m—4p.m

#### **SATURDAY 4th February, Our Lady**

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot, Housebound

Rosary for Peace and confessions at English Martyrs, Didcot

4:30pm Adoration & Confessions will take place prior to the Vigil Mass at St John's Wallingford

5:00pm Vigil Mass St John's— The Sick

5:50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot

6:30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot— All Pregnant Women

#### **SUNDAY 5th February Fifth Sunday of Year A**

9:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot

11:00noon Mass St John's, Wallingford

In your prayers, please remember: Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, Maureen & John Logan Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Terry Appleyard, Joan Russell, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Jidechi Ejiofor, Pat McLoughlin, Margaret Healy, Barry Molloy, David Woodley, Gladys Marr and all the sick and housebound of our churches.



## Develop Six Holy Habits

In October, Bishop Philip wrote a Pastoral Letter to all. In it, he wrote... "this Christmas, I am going to send you a prayer book. I will also write again, because I want us all to engage in a diocesan Year of Prayer to the Holy Spirit, asking God the Holy Spirit to energise us and to lead us.

Indeed, I am going to ask you to establish or pledge to develop six holy habits:

- \*to keep Sunday special, a family day, by attending Mass;
- \*to spend 5 minutes a day in prayer using the Scriptures;
- \*to do penance on Fridays, and to serve the poor and needy; every fortnight to make a Holy Half Hour before the Blessed Sacrament;
- \*to go to Confession once a month; and
- \*to join a small group for formation, prayer and fellowship.



## Home Group Is Up and Running

Home Group started in January 2023, on the first and third Wednesdays of each month, 7.30 – 9.30pm. We will worship, share our journey in faith and support one another in prayer, love and friendship. We will be watching "The Chosen" together, a marvellous series about Jesus and his followers; it will give us much to reflect on about our own journeys with Jesus. We meet in Carolyn Fishwick's home. If you would like to join us speak to Carolyn or contact the parish office.



## Pilgrimage to Knock, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Escorted Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, Ireland, 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023. £699.00 per person sharing. Price includes flight, all transfers, 4 nights' in Knock House Hotel with full board. All entertainment and excursions included. Day trips to Westport, Ballintubber Abbey, Croagh Patrick, Fr. Peyton Centre & National Museum. Special St. Patrick's Day Celebrations. Single supplement £150.00. Contact Patricia on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email [knockpilgrimages@gmail.com](mailto:knockpilgrimages@gmail.com). Or visit [www.knockpilgrimages.com](http://www.knockpilgrimages.com)

## We Are Working With New Cases

St Vincent de Paul Society. Your generous support in the autumn has already helped another ten families. We are working with new cases all the time—helping people to heat their homes, buying cookers to feed their families, getting them back on their feet after floods, domestic abuse and ill health. Our group is growing all the time, but we would still welcome more volunteers. And please continue to keep an eye out for needy neighbors and friends and talk to us if you yourself are struggling. Our number remains 07516 701917. Dominic Knight."



**Our Church, the English Martyrs Didcot will be open daily for private prayers between 8am and 5pm.**

## We Mourn: Marie Simon Passed

Our own Marie Simon is passed. Marie was our Parish Administrator who served with all her heart until her health failed her late last year. In the early hours of January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023, Marie passed surrounded by her family and friends. Marie was fortified with the last sacrament. Marie will be sadly missed by our parish community, the Pastoral Area, the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth and her wonderful family. Our loss is heaven's gain. A card is available at the church entrance for us to sign. Individual cards to Peter Roberts her husband and mass intentions envelopes can be left in the Presbytery. Funeral arrangements would be announced in due course.



## Racial Justice: Sunday 5th February



Racial Justice Sunday is the day the church focuses on the need to oppose racism and pursue racial justice with renewed vigour. The theme for Racial Justice Sunday is: "All are included in the mission of Christ and His Church. Let us walk together, pray together and work together"

It reflects the role each of us must play in promoting the mission of Christ and His Church. This was inspired by conversations

around last year's Racial Justice Sunday and Pope Francis' visit to Canada in July 2022 when he spoke about looking towards a future of 'Justice, healing and reconciliation'. <https://>

## Freedom of Religion is a vital human right

Speaking on behalf of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, Bishop John Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues, has reaffirmed a resolution passed by the Bishops at their November 2022 plenary highlighting concerns with current and proposed legislation on the issue of 'Buffer Zones' around abortion clinics. On 30 January the Government's Public Order Bill will be entering the report stage in the House of Lords. Clause 9, which was an amendment to the Bill in the House of Commons last autumn, introduces the 'offence of interference with access to or provision of abortion services'. To read more about this, visit... <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/freedom-of-religion-is-a-vital-human-right/>



## February 2<sup>nd</sup> World Day for Consecrated Life

In 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for women and men in consecrated life. This celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd. This Feast is also known as Candlemas Day; the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples. **Please pray for all those who have made commitments in the consecrated life.**

## Adoration, Every First Fridays

Consider spending some deep spiritual quiet time with Lord every **First Friday** of every month. Our Lord will be exposed in English Martyrs Church, Didcot from 3p.m to 4p.m. Note in your diary Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup>, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, April 7<sup>th</sup>, May 5<sup>th</sup>, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, July 7<sup>th</sup>, Aug 4<sup>th</sup>, Sept 1<sup>st</sup>, Oct 6<sup>th</sup>, Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> and Dec 1<sup>st</sup>. Consider inviting a friend, a family or a neighbour to come along. The Lord loves company. Come witness the power of being in His presence.



## Parish Safeguarding Rep

Our Safety Officer for all adult and child safeguarding issues is Stefania Harford, please contact Stefania via the parish office on 01235 812338, if there is no response and in an emergency then dial 999.