

Bishop commends “ordinary heroism of married love”

Bishop Bosco MacDonald, Bishop of Clifton and Lead Bishop for Marriage and Family Life for the Bishops' Conference, has praised the “ordinary heroism of married love, and the strength of family life” in a message to mark [Marriage Week](#) that runs from 7-14 February 2026.



“Love has a purpose,” says Bishop MacDonald. “Love is sustained by choice as well as by affection. It is a promise lived again each day, sometimes at a cost, often in quiet, hidden ways. Mercy keeps love alive when people are disappointed in one another. Discernment helps couples face the realities in front of them without bitterness. Mission reminds every family that their home is meant to become a place where others can glimpse the kindness of God.”

National Marriage Week, 7 – 14 February 2026, gives us a welcome chance to pause and recognise something we can easily take for granted: the ordinary heroism of married love, and the strength of family life. This year we are extending that reflection beyond the week itself, from 7 February through to the Feast of St Joseph on 19 March 2026 – the tenth anniversary of Pope Francis’ Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (“On Love in the Family”), signed on the Solemnity of St Joseph.

“The joy of love experienced by families is also the joy of the Church,” Pope Francis writes at the opening of *Amoris Laetitia*. That sentence is simple and it is demanding. It reminds us that the Church’s life is shaped in homes as well as in churches: at kitchen tables, in the forgiving of small hurts, in the patience required by tiredness, money worries, changing health, teenagers, elderly parents, and all the rest of life’s very real furniture. Joy in the Christian sense often comes quietly, with the humility of love that keeps its promises. St Joseph is a fitting patron for this season of reflection. The Gospels give us none of his words, yet they show us his faithful presence: steady, protective, attentive to God, and committed to Mary and to Jesus. Many marriages and families live in that same key, with a fidelity that speaks for itself.

To support this time of prayer and reflection, I warmly commend three resources for you to read, share, and use in homes, parishes, and schools. They can be found on the [Bishops’ Conference website](#).

First, *The Joy of Love: On Marriage and Family Life* (2022), produced by the Bishops’ Conference Committee for Marriage and Family Life. It explores five themes drawn from *Amoris Laetitia*: Joy, Love, Mercy, Realities and Discernment, and Mission, with reflections and questions that work well for family conversations, small groups, and parish settings.

Second, the National Marriage Week Novena ... To read more: [Bishop commends “ordinary heroism of married love” - Catholic Bishops’ Conference](#)

Light Breaking Forth



Jesus came among us as light to scatter the darkness of a fallen world.

As His disciples, we too are called to be “the light of the world.” He tells us in the Gospel this Sunday (see John 1:4–4, 9; 8:12; 9:5).

All three images that Jesus uses to describe the Church are associated with the identity and vocation of Israel.

God forever aligned His kingdom with the kingdom of David and his sons by a “covenant of salt,” salt being a sign of permanence and purity (see 2 Chronicles 13:5, 8; Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43:24).

Jerusalem was to be a city set on a hill, high above all others, drawing all nations toward the glorious light streaming from her Temple (see Isaiah 2:2; 60:1–3).

And Israel was given the mission of being a light to the nations, that God’s salvation would reach to the ends of the earth (see Isaiah 42:6; 49:6).

The liturgy shows us this week that the Church, and every Christian, is called to fulfill Israel’s mission.

By our faith and good works we are to make the light of God’s life break forth in the darkness, as we sing in this week’s Psalm.

This week’s readings remind us that our faith can never be a private affair, something we can hide as if under a basket.

We are to pour ourselves out for the afflicted, as Isaiah tells us in the First Reading. Our light must shine as a ray of God’s mercy for all who are poor, hungry, naked, and enslaved.

There must be a transparent quality to our lives. Our friends and family, our neighbors and fellow citizens, should see reflected in us the light of Christ and through us be attracted to the saving truths of the Gospel.

So let us pray that we, like St. Paul in the Epistle, might proclaim with our whole lives “Christ, and him crucified.”

Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

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5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

Entrance Antiphon:

O Come, let us worship God and bow low before the God who made us, for he is the Lord our God.

First Reading: Isaiah 58:6-10

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 112

A light rises in the darkness for the upright.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia.

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Alleluia.

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

Communion Antiphon: Ps 106:8-9

Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, his wonders for the children of men for he satisfies the thirsty soul, and the hungry he fills with good things.

SATURDAY 7th February ... Our Lady on Saturday

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... **Confession after Mass**

4:30 pm Adoration and confession before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... Our Pastoral Area

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Weronika Szymanska’s RIP (Aleksandra Ola)

SUNDAY 8th February

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Jim Gidding’s Health (Joshua Gidding);

Logan’s 10th birthday (Izabella & Keira)

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Eva Carbonari’s Intention (Parishioners of Wallingford)

2:00 pm Baptism English Martyrs Didcot ... Reed McCann

5:00 pm Baptism English Martyrs Didcot ... Annalise Williams

MONDAY 9th February ... NO MASS

TUESDAY 10th February ... St Scholastica

12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... Canon Peter’s Health

WEDNESDAY 11th February ... Our Lady of Lourdes

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Married Couples

THURSDAY 12th February

9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Migrants & Ethnic Minorities

FRIDAY 13th February

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Stanislaw Nagorka RIP (Jarek)

SATURDAY 14th February ... St Cyril & St Methodius

9:30 am ** NO MASS **

4:30 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

SUNDAY 15th February

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... The Ubong Family (Otuekong Ubong)

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Ron Almeida RIP (Mary Almeida)

In your prayers, please remember: Margaret O'Conner, Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Joan Russell, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Pat McLoughlin, Barry Molloy, Annie Furlong, Canon Peter Turbitt and all the sick and housebound.



Baptism

We rejoice with the parents and godparents of Reed McCann and Annalise Williams, who through the sacrament of Baptism, will be made members of the body of Christ this Sunday. In your prayers, remember Reed McCann and Annalise Williams. We invoke God's blessings on them as they grow.



Catholic Young Writer and Catholic Young Artist Award 2026

The *Catholic Young Writer Award* is open to all young Catholics (and pupils at Catholic schools) in England and Wales in secondary years 8-11 inclusive. There is a cash prize for the best essay, plus a number of runner-up book prizes. The topic for writing is: Why do we go for confession? For more information, [click here](#). Deadline for entries: 30th June 2026. The *Catholic Young Artist Award* is open to primary school aged children. A cash prize is available for the winner and runners up will be recognised. The theme is Forgiveness – What does this look like to you? For more information, [click here](#). Deadline for application: 22nd May 2026



National Marriage Week

National Marriage Week this year is Saturday 7th - Saturday 14th February, 2026. A Christian marriage is rooted in faith; that means faith in God, as the giver of life and the one who promises eternal life to those who believe in him. The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales has launched a series of [Resources for National Marriage Week](#). You and your spouse may be interested in some of these [Events for Married Couples](#) running online and in our Diocese during National Marriage week.



Ambassadors For Christ

In response to a growing interest in the Catholic faith, the Archdiocese of Southwark has launched Ambassadors for Christ, a landmark apologetics project. This video series is designed to equip you with a deeper understanding of your faith, so you can confidently answer questions and be a joyful witness for the Lord Jesus and his Church. The project will consist of 52 videos, posted every Monday on [YouTube](#). To provide assurances for the viewer that the information is from a trusted source, each video will feature a Catholic priest. Ambassadors for Christ is perfect for RCIA classes, parish study groups, confirmation classes, families, teachers in their delivery of religious education, school groups, chaplaincy groups and many more! For more information, go to this [website](#).

Chorister Opportunities at Westminster Cathedral Choir School

If you are a family with Catholic boys currently in Years 1, 2, 3 or 4 who are interested in becoming a chorister, you are invited by the [Westminster Cathedral Choir School](#) to join them in September this year. Becoming a chorister at Westminster Cathedral offers boys the opportunity to sing in London and on tour internationally in one of the world's great choirs. Boys also receive an outstanding education at one of London's leading schools, up until the end of Year 8. There are no financial barriers to entry: all boys received generous scholarships, with bursaries worth up to 100% of fees available on a means-tested basis. Choristers board during the school week. For more information, please email rbonnet@choirschool.com to register for a Zoom session. The upcoming Zoom session will be on Wednesday 28th January.



Catholic prep school for boys aged 4 - 13 (Reception - Year 8)

Escorted Pilgrimage Tour to Westport, Knock & Co Mayo

Escorted Tour to Westport, Knock & Co Mayo, 08th March 2026. £899.00 pps. Price includes flight from Heathrow or Luton, 10kg hold luggage, 5 nights' in 4* Castlecourt Hotel, Westport with Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Full use of leisure facilities. All entertainment, excursions and transport included. Visit Knock Shrine, Ballintubber Abbey, Fr. Peyton Centre & Kylemore Abbey. Contact 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.

Parish Safeguarding

Our Safety Officer for all adults and children safeguarding issues is Stefania Harford. Please contact Stefania via the parish office on 01235 812338. If there is no response and in an emergency, dial 999.

Registration For All Parishioners on New Online Portal -- ChurchSuite

We would like to now invite all our parishioners in Didcot and Wallingford to register or re-register with us on ChurchSuite. The online registration process is simple and quick. For adults parishioners [click here](#) to register. To register children in your family, [click here](#). Or you may simply scan the QR code which will take you directly to the online registration form. (Links and QR Codes can also be accessed from our [parish website](#)). Weekly Newsletter will be emailed to you if you give us your consents to receive newsletters by email in your registration. You can also take this opportunity to update us with your address and other contact details, and add new members of your family in your registration. As members of the parish, you will be on our record and allow us to stay in touch with you and your family when you register with us. Your personal data will be kept strictly confidential by the policies and procedures of our Diocese.



If you have problems in your online registration, please contact the [Parish Office](#) for support. Paper copies and PDF files of Parishioner Registration Form are NO LONGER AVAILABLE or used. Weekly newsletters will now be emailed via ChurchSuite. You can still obtain paper copies of the weekly newsletters from Didcot and Wallingford when you attend our weekend masses. Thank you.

Lent and Holy Week 2026

Do you have new ideas for Lent and Holy Week planning in Didcot and Wallingford this year? We welcome ideas and suggestions from all our parishioners. Please email your suggestions to the [Parish Office](#). We will bring your ideas to the *Parish Liturgy Group* Meeting on **this Thursday 12th February**. Thank you.

Seniors' Lunch 12th February 1200 Noon

The Seniors Lunch Team will be making a special meal to celebrate Lunar New Year. There will be a fusion of flavours: Cantonese Noodles, British Chicken, Chinese Spring Rolls and a Japanese Pudding. Something for everyone! Please sign up on the sheet at the back of church. We look forward to seeing you.



English Martyrs Gospel Reading Group February Meeting

The Small Group is meeting on Tuesday 10th and 24th February at 7:30pm in the Tearoom to read and reflect on the coming Sunday's Gospel. Please come and join us. Contact Nick Spencer at 07870 505520.

Reading and Meditation with Saint John of The Cross

The worldwide Carmelite Order is celebrating 300 years since St John of the Cross was canonised and 100 years since he was declared a Doctor of the Church. 8 manuscripts have been selected for study during this year dedicated to him. Saint John of the Cross, a great lover of nature, will accompany us and help us to find God alive in ourselves, in others, and in creation.

A small group of us will be meeting once a month to ponder on them together. If you would like to know more about Saint John's teaching, share your thoughts with fellow travellers or ask questions, please come and join us, everyone is welcome and no previous knowledge is required! The manuscripts will be sent to you in advance (please email Armelle if you are interested: c.armelle@btinternet.com). The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 25 February, 9:15 to 10:15 am, in the hall at St John's (access from the back of the Church in Wood Street).

Training for Children Liturgy Leaders

Wantage parish has booked the Dominican Sisters of Sway for training for children's liturgy leaders. The training is for existing leaders as well as those who are new to the role or considering joining the Children's Liturgy team. The training is on Saturday 14th February, in the hall, at St John Vianney Wantage after Mass. Mass is at 10 am and the training will run from 10.30am until 1pm. This is very high-quality training and Wantage parish have generously opened it up to all parishes in the Pastoral Area. If you would like to attend please email the [Parish Office](#) to enrol your interest.

BREAKTHROUGH! -- A Cor et Lumen Christi Event

BREAKTHROUGH! a Cor et Lumen Christi Event will be held on 21st February. In Person Only at Holy Family Catholic Church, Marlowe Avenue, Park North, Swindon, SN3 2PT. Including open Miracle Healing Service. In this one-day event we will be sharing from the teachings of the Church, the wisdom of the Saints and our own personal experience, enabling you to connect with God's plan and purpose for your life and draw from His power and grace to enable its fulfilment.

