

Assisted suicide is fundamentally dangerous, says Bishop after Jersey votes to make it law



The Bishop of Portsmouth, the Right Reverend Philip Egan, has expressed how “greatly disturbed” he is by the decision by Jersey’s parliament,

the States Assembly, to pass a bill to legalise assisted suicide on the largest of the Channel Islands.

Full Statement

I was greatly disturbed by the results of vote to legalise assisted suicide in Jersey.

It demonstrates a woeful lack of interest in protecting the most vulnerable people in our society and it fundamentally changes the role of doctors and medical staff. I would concur with the views expressed by Deputy Sir Philip Bailhache when he says, “I fear that it will change the community of Jersey in a way in which we may not yet be able to foresee.”

Thou shalt not kill’ (Ex 20: 13) and the injunction ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself’ (Mk 12: 31) are commandments that form the bedrock of not only Jewish and Christian morality but the teaching of all religions. Moreover, they are instinctive principles that are written deeply into every human heart. They ground the laws that govern every civilised society on earth. This is why the legalisation of assisted suicide, presented as ‘mercy killing,’ is fundamentally subversive, horrific and dangerous, however well-intentioned.

Assisting someone to die prematurely or to commit suicide, even when they earnestly request it, can never ever be a compassionate action. It is a grave sin. We must not yield to the temptation to apply rapid solutions, moved by false compassion or by the criteria of efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Instead, we need to show respect and tenderness to patients who are seriously ill so that the sacred value of their life can shine forth with splendour in their suffering.

Modern palliative care should be strengthened and properly resourced, not sidelined in favour of a system that treats ending life as an easier solution than providing care.

Experience in countries such as Belgium, Netherlands and Canada shows that once assisted dying is legalised under tightly defined criteria, much like that currently presented in Jersey, those criteria broaden over time. What begins as a limited provision for the terminally ill has, in several jurisdictions now been considerably extended to include chronic illness, psychiatric conditions, and in some cases non-terminal suffering even for the very young. This is unconscionable.

When the law signals that some lives may be ended in response to suffering, those who are elderly, disabled, isolated or dependent can begin themselves to feel under pressure, subtle or overt. They may feel they are a burden on their families or on the health-care system ... To read more: [Assisted suicide is fundamentally dangerous, says Bishop after Jersey votes to make it law - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

Striking the Rock

The Israelites’ hearts were hardened by their hardships in the desert.

Though they saw His mighty deeds, in their thirst they grumbled and put God to the test in today’s First Reading—a crisis point recalled also in today’s Psalm.

Jesus is thirsty, too, in today’s Gospel. He thirsts for souls (see John 19:28). He longs to give the Samaritan woman the living waters that well up to eternal life.

These waters couldn’t be drawn from the well of Jacob, father of the Israelites and the Samaritans. But Jesus was something greater than Jacob (see Luke 11:31–32).

The Samaritans were Israelites who escaped exile when Assyria conquered the Northern Kingdom eight centuries before Christ (see 2 Kings 17:6, 24–41). They were despised for intermarrying with non-Israelites and worshipping at Mount Gerizim, not Jerusalem.

But Jesus tells the woman that the “hour” of true worship is coming, when all will worship God in Spirit and truth.

Jesus’ “hour” is the “appointed time” that Paul speaks of in today’s Epistle. It is the hour when the Rock of our salvation was struck on the Cross. Struck by the soldier’s lance, living waters flowed out from our Rock (see John 19:34–37).

These waters are the Holy Spirit (see John 7:38–39), the gift of God (see Hebrews 6:4).

By the living waters the ancient enmities of Samaritans and Jews have been washed away, and the dividing wall between Israel and the nations is broken down (see Ephesians 2:12–14, 18). Since His hour, all may drink of the Spirit in Baptism (see 1 Corinthians 12:13).

In the Eucharist, the Lord now is in our midst—as He was at the Rock of Horeb and at the well of Jacob.

In the “today” of our Liturgy, He calls us to believe: “I am He,” come to pour out the love of God into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. How can we continue to worship as if we don’t understand? How can our hearts remain hardened?



Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

PARISHES OF
THE ENGLISH MARTYRS, Didcot
ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST, Wallingford

www.didcotandwallingfordcatholicchurches.org
Office email: didcot@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

(Office Hours Tuesday–Friday 9am to 2pm) Telephone: 01235812338

15 Manor Crescent, Didcot OX11 7AJ

Fr Dominic Adeiza’s email: dadeiza@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Safeguarding email: safeguarding.didwal@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

SVP contact: 07516 701917



THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR A — WEEK 3

Entrance Antiphon:

My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

First Reading: Exodus 17:3-7

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 95

O that today you would listen to his voice!
‘Harden not your hearts.’

Second Reading: Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

Gospel Acclamation:

Glorify to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.
Lord, you are indeed the Saviour of the world;
give me living water, so that I will not be thirsty.
Glorify to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

Gospel: John 4:5-42

Communion Antiphon: Mt 17:5

For anyone who drinks it, says the Lord, the water I shall give will become in him a spring welling up to eternal life.

SATURDAY 7th March

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... **Confession after Mass** ... Thanksgiving for Cardozo Family
4:30 pm Adoration and Confession before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford
5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... Canon Peter (Noah Clifford)
5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot
6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Canon Peter (Chris Stemp)

SUNDAY 8th March ... THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Bethany Vikram’s Health (Vikram & Amelia)
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Leo Maddaford (Judith M)

MONDAY 9th March ... NO MASS ... St Frances of Rome

TUESDAY 10th March

6:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Palliative Care
11:30 am Stations of the Cross St John Wallingford
12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... Revd Sister Pauline RIP (Gillian Snoxall)

WEDNESDAY 11th March

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Fernando Yopez’s Birthday (C Yopez)

THURSDAY 12th March

6:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Peace in Iran
9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Revd Sister Pauline RIP (Gillian Snoxall)

FRIDAY 13th March

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Dementia Patients & Carers
6:00 pm Stations of the Cross English Martyrs Didcot

SATURDAY 14th March

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
5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot
6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

SUNDAY 15th March ... FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

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



Portsmouth Gregorian Chant Course on Radio Live

Tune into your local **BBC radio station on Sunday (8 March)** to hear Neville McNally, the Portsmouth Gregorian Chant course organiser, talk about what the Portsmouth Gregorian Chant course seeks to achieve, the history of the chant and how to sing chant - live on-air! The programme will be going out live on the following radio stations **this Sunday morning, third Sunday in Lent, at 08:35: BBC Radio Oxford – 95.2 FM; BBC Radio Berkshire – 95.4 FM, 104.1 FM; BBC Radio Solent – 96.1 FM, 103.8 FM.** The Portsmouth Gregorian Chant Course is being delivered over three months to more than 70 participants. There is a distinct interest among the wider community in the Christian musical heritage and an appreciation of the calming benefit that Gregorian Chant has for the soul, especially in times of conflict and stress.



Second Collection for Diocesan Clergy Assistance Fund

The Second Collection for the Diocesan Clergy Assistance Fund takes place on the **15th of March, 2026.** The Clergy Assistance Fund contributes to the work of the Department for Clergy Team. The Clergy Support Team is responsible for looking after the welfare, ongoing formation and personal support of our clergy, such as the provision of spiritual direction, counselling, appraisal, ongoing formation and practical advice. It organises retreats, ministerial formation days, courses and sabbaticals. You can make your donation with this link or scan the QR Code provided. Cash donation will be collected after Sunday masses on 15 March. You can also use the contactless device in our parish to pay your donation. Thank you.



ADoRE March Spiritual Mini-Retreat Online

ADoRE spiritual mini-retreat 21st March 10.00-1.00 on Zoom. "THE SPIRIT OF LOVE." The Holy Spirit transforms us by opening us to God's love. Mini retreat morning including Mass, Adoration, Praise, Prophecy, Prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and inspiring talk from guest speaker Daniella Stephens, dynamic young Catholic evangelist and conference speaker. Register in advance at bit.ly/ADOREMAR2026. More information at <http://www.altonrenewal.com>.



Updated and Extended Pastoral Programme at Douai

Fr Peter Bowe OSB shares the updated and expanded Douai Abbey Pastoral Programme for the coming months. The next sessions coming up are: Saturday 7th March: Day of Reflection: Cave – Refectory - Road: A gentle, contemplative day led by Barbara Priest exploring our Lenten pilgrimage & its three monastic elements: the solitude of our cave, the hospitality of our table, and our journey of faith. Saturday 28th March: Awakening to the Mystery of God in the Scriptures, in our environment and each other led by Fr Peter Bowe OSB & Martin Webb, to look at how our awareness of the Divine Mystery may grow, enriched over time - by the Scriptures, what is about us and through one another. How might we be more open to the Presence of God now? You can find more information and the complete programme of events for the abbey's Pastoral programme on their [website](http://www.douaiabbey.org).



Grace – Living in God's Transforming Friendship

A Study Day with the Dominican Friars at Blackfriars, Oxford. Get insight and inspiration from expert Dominican Friars into the role of God's grace in our lives as Christians. Join us at Blackfriars in the heart of Oxford for a study day for lay people, designed to strengthen your faith and understanding (online attendance also available; see below), Fr Nicholas Crowe OP (Prior Provincial, Province of England) and Fr Toby Lees OP (Chaplain of Radio Maria, England) will be your guides on this exploration of the Christian faith. For more information: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/grace-living-in-gods-transforming-friendship-tickets-1982423194139>



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 — Act NOW!

If you have not yet registered with our new online Parishioner Registration that has started this year, please REGISTER NOW! Gift Aid will be administered via the new system by April. We need to stay in touch with you on the new system. 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 have given us your consents to receive newsletters by email in your registration in the new platform. As members of the parish, it is your responsibility to be registered and allow us to stay in touch with you and administer your pastoral needs. If you have problems in your online registration, please contact the [Parish Office](#) for support. Thank you.

Legal Professionals Needed

IS THERE A LAWYER IN THE HOUSE? The St Vincent de Paul Society is in need of some informal legal advice to help a client. If you think you can help, please contact Dominic Knight at dominic.knight100@gmail.com. Thank you.

Seniors' Lenten Lunch 19th March

The Seniors' Lunch Team is happy to announce that the next Seniors' Lunch will be on Thursday 19th March at 12 noon in English Martyrs Church Didcot Tearoom. Soup and bread, Sponge Pudding & Custard, tea and coffee will be served. Please put your name on the name list at the foyer, or email Jacqui / [Parish Office](#) to RSVP and for transportation needs.



Thank you from CAFOD

Thank you for your generous support this Family Fast Day – your kindness is helping families like Shorai's in Zimbabwe and Rejoice's in South Sudan grow food, even in the face of drought and floods. You have shown what it means to love your neighbour this Lent – fasting, praying and giving so families can put food on the table. Find out how your donations are helping to build a better world at <https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/parishes/parishes-thank-you>. PS It's not too late to donate – pick up a CAFOD envelope in church or visit <https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/parishes/virtual-envelope>



Lent 2026 and Almsgiving

As Lent unfolds, let's not forget to give to those in need in our community. Please bring food donation to English Martyrs Didcot and St John Wallingford. Your donation will be delivered to the local Food Bank. Food donations should have 3 months Best Before dates. Thank you.



We Dare to Ask – A Lent Course at English Martyrs Didcot

At English Martyrs Didcot, we are following the [We Dare to Ask](#) – the Lent resource prepared by Director of Mission at Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, in a Lent-only weekly gathering on **Wednesdays 4th, 11th and 18th March**. Join us in the Tearoom on Wednesday at 7:30pm. Please contact [Nick Spencer 07870 505520](mailto:Nick.Spencer@emdidcot.org) if you would like further information.

Parking for Sunday Masses in Didcot

Due to the current wet weather that we are experiencing, our car park ground has consistently become muddy and difficult to park on. We would like to encourage parishioners to park at Didcot Girls' School Car Park when you come to mass on Sunday in Didcot. The School Car Park is opened for our use on Sunday mornings between 8:30am to 11am. There are about 30 parking spaces available in the parking area on the left of the entrance driveway. Please do not park in the area directly in front of the school office (entrance right). Thank you.