

Amazing Pilgrimage to Rome – Bishop Philip Egan

We had a great diocesan youth pilgrimage to Rome last week! 35 of us, led and superbly organised by Canon PJ, set off very early from Gatwick on Monday 28th July to Rome's Fiumicino airport. From there, we transferred to our hotel, Hotel Lancelot, near the Colosseum. We travelled at the invitation of the Pope who wanted us to keep the Holy Year Jubilee of Youth, so during the week we did the various jubilee spiritual exercises – as well as some tourism and the consumption of much pasta! Once settled into the hotel, we began with a walk across the city to the English College for Mass in the chapel. There are four major basilicas in Rome, and the tradition is to pass through the Holy Door of each, so on Tuesday we visited Santa Maria Maggiore in the morning and St. Peter's in the afternoon. We also made a fascinating visit to the Vatican Museums and the Sistine Chapel.



On Wednesday, we covered some of the sights of Rome, beginning with a pilgrimage to Santa Maria sopra Minerva to pray at the casket of Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, whose body had been brought to Rome for the veneration of the youth. Thousands of young people from all over the world milled around and there were special talks in the church throughout the day on Frassati and his life and example. We explored the Pantheon, the Spanish Steps, the Pontifical Gregorian University, where years ago I was a student, and Piazza Navona where we had lunch and enjoyed some free time.

On Thursday we went to Tre Fontane where St. Paul was martyred and visited the basilica of St. Paul's outside the Walls to pass through its Holy Door. Later that day, we went to the catacombs of St. Callixtus where we celebrated Mass. The hotel was two blocks from a beautiful church, San Clemente, and Friday began with Mass there on the high altar. In the afternoon, we went to St. John Lateran's to pass through the Holy Door and then on to the Circus Maximus, where there was an opportunity for pilgrims to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The highlight of the week was the weekend, with a hike to Tor Vergata on the outskirts of Rome, a massive sports complex. Here in the evening the Holy Father conducted a Vigil of Prayer with over one million youngsters attending. The bishops were taken by a special convoy of buses to and from Tor Vergata and while our youth valiantly slept overnight on the field, we returned late that night after the Vigil then left early again next morning for the Sunday Mass with the Pope. I was seated about four rows away from him. After free time on Sunday afternoon, we left Rome next morning to return to England.

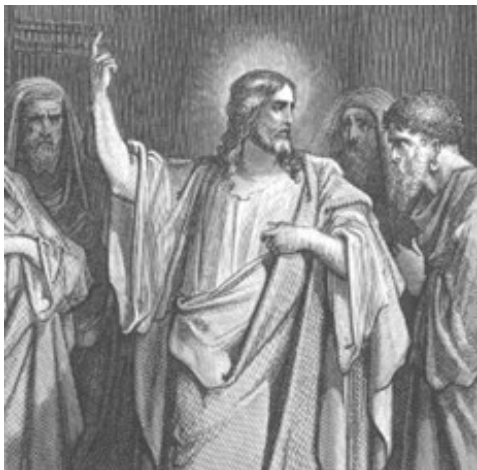
Our young people – and all of us – had an inspiring time. The young people with us were really impressive. They came from across the diocese – from Guernsey in the south to Windsor in the east. Please pray for them and for all of us that our prayer and pilgrimage will make us grow stronger in faith, hope and love.

Consuming Fire

Our God is a consuming fire, the Scriptures tell us (see Hebrews 12:29; Deuteronomy 4:24).

And in this week's Gospel, Jesus uses the image of fire to describe the demands of discipleship. The fire He has come to cast on the earth is the fire that He wants to blaze in each of our hearts. He made us from the dust of the earth (see Genesis 2:7) and filled us with the fire of the Holy Spirit in Baptism (see Luke 3:16).

We were baptized into His death (see Romans 6:3). This is the baptism our Lord speaks of in the Gospel this week. The baptism with which He must be baptized is His passion and death, by which He accomplished our redemption and sent forth the fire



of the Spirit on the earth (see Acts 2:3).

The fire has been set, but it is not yet blazing. We are called to enter deeper into the consuming love of God. We must examine our consciences and our actions, submitting ourselves to the revealing fire of God's Word (see 1 Corinthians 3:13).

In our struggle against sin, we have not yet resisted to the point of shedding our own blood, Paul tells us in this week's Epistle. We have not undergone the suffering that Jeremiah suffers in the First Reading this week.

But this is what true discipleship requires. To be a disciple is to be inflamed with the love of the God. It is to have an unquenchable desire for holiness and zeal for the salvation of our brothers and sisters.

Being His disciple does not bring peace in the false way that the world proclaims peace (see Jeremiah 8:11). It means division and hardship. It may bring us to conflict with our own flesh and blood.

But Christ is our peace (see Ephesians 2:14). By His Cross He has lifted us up from the mire of sin and death—as He will rescue the prophet Jeremiah (see Jeremiah 38:10).

And as we sing in the Psalm this week, we trust in our deliverer

Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

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20TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME YEAR C

Entrance Antiphon: Ps 83:10-11

Turn your eyes, O God, our shield; and look on the face of your anointed one; one day within your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere.

First Reading: Jeremiah 38:4-6, 8-10

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 40

LORD, make haste to help me!

Second Reading: Hebrews 12:1-4

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia.

My sheep hear my voice, says the Lord, and I know them, and they follow me.

Alleluia.

Gospel: Luke 12:49-53

Communion Antiphon Ps 129:7

With the Lord there is mercy; in him is plentiful redemption.

SATURDAY 16th August ... St Stephen

9:30 am Mass English Didcot ...Ronald Almeida RIP (Kim & Doug)...**Confession after Mass**

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

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ...Ronald Almeida RIP

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ..Collin Jenkins (Patrick Foster)

SUNDAY 17th August

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot....91st Birthday Thanksgiving for Betty Thatcher

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ...Ronald Almeida RIP (Kim & Doug)

MONDAY 18th August ... NO MASS

TUESDAY 19th August ... St John Eudes

12:00 noon Mass St John WallingfordNO MASS

WEDNESDAY 20th August ... St Bernard

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs DidcotThanksgiving for Derek Snoxall Reception into the Church

THURSDAY 21st August ... St Pius X

9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford....Ronald Almeida RIP (Mary Almeida)

FRIDAY 22nd August ... The Queenship of Mary

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs DidcotWedding Anniversary Thanksgiving for Alejandro & Chistina

SATURDAY 23rd August ... St Rose of Lima

9:30 am Mass English Didcot ...All Souls (Kim & Doug)...**Confession after Mass**

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

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford....Lawrence De Souza, good health (Mary Almeida)

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

SUNDAY 24th August

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Antonietta Boccia RIP (Domenica G)

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Antonietta Boccia RIP (Domenica G)

In your prayers, please remember: Margaret O’Conner, Anne O’Brien, Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Joan Russell, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Pat McLoughlin, Barry Molloy, Annie Furlong, Laura Falavina, Ann Johns and all the sick and housebound.



Baptism

We rejoice with the parents and godparents of Augustus William Zackery Moore, who through the sacrament of Baptism, would be made member of the body of Christ at the end of the month. In your prayers, remember Augustus Moore. We invoke God’s blessings on him as he grows.



DEATH/FUNERAL NOTICE

Ronald Almeida RIP ... Requiem Mass @10:30am, August 29th, Didcot.
Sonia Mary Moir RIPFuneral Service @ 1pm, September 4th, Didcot



Volunteer For Ride and Stride 2025

Volunteers are urgently needed to help out at the Ride and Stride, on Saturday 13th September at the English Martyrs Church and St John’s Wallingford. They would be stationed to welcome and log visitors in (and can even be sponsored themselves). Come give an hour or two. You will make new friends at this annual event, organised by the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust.



Churches all across Oxfordshire open their doors, and sponsored visitors (on foot or on bikes) raise funds for their Parish with each Church they visit. Each Church receives half the income generated by the sponsorship of the Riders and Striders from their own Church, with the rest going into a central pot which Churches can apply to the Trust for, to fund repairs and maintenance.

Oxfordshire, and Oxford itself, has many beautiful and historic chapels and churches tucked away. So save the date, prep your bike, trike, scooter or walking shoes and make a day of it with the family. You can travel solo or get together with a group of friends and fellow parishioners. The more the merrier (and, let’s be honest, more sponsorship means more funds for the Church!) New places to visit, good exercise, good company, and all in a good cause! More details to follow as we get closer to the day.

Solar Farm Plan could be "blight on the landscape" on English stretch of Camino says Bishop Philip Egan

Our bishop, Philip Egan, has expressed concern about a proposal to build a huge solar farm on the English stretch of the Camino de Santiago. The English leg of the highly popular and historic pilgrimage runs 68 miles from the city of Reading to the port of Southampton, which falls within the Diocese of Portsmouth and has been frequented by pilgrims for more than a thousand years.

The Camino de Santiago is made up of many different ancient routes across Europe that all lead to the tomb of St. James in Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain.

English pilgrims would traditionally take a boat from Portsmouth and sail to Spain before continuing their pilgrimage.

In an email exchange with *Catholic News Agency*, Bishop Philip expressed his worries about the proposal. “The proposal to build a large solar farm seems unfortunate and I can understand any villager, farmer, or lover of the South Downs feeling saddened at the loss of land and the potential blight on the landscape, even if there are several other areas of the South Downs given over to solar farms.” The South Downs is a highly popular national park through which the historic route runs.

“Since I became bishop of Portsmouth in 2012, I have been very aware of this venerable Camino route from Reading to Southampton,” he said. “Our parish in Reading, dedicated to St. James and standing in the ruins of the pre-Reformation abbey, is the official starting point of the Camino.”

“Indeed, only last year, I went out to greet four American bishops hiking the trail and who were staying in a farmhouse near Alton, Hampshire,” he continued. “Much of the central part of the route through Hampshire is idyllic; it is very rural, and you feel far away from the hectic life of modern life. As you walk along, it is easy to feel part of a spiritual exercise that goes back to medieval times.” Egan said he hoped the ancient route would still be marked out in some way, adding: “I wonder too if they might install paneling and other measures to hide the solar cells and safeguard the most attractive views?”

According to a report in the *Daily Telegraph*, the proposed Stokes Lane Solar Farm will supply energy to 9,390 homes every year for 40 years.



Parish Office Is Now Re-Opened

The Parish Office is now re-opened from Tuesday 18th August onwards. Ada will be in the office to receive calls and attend to anyone. Sending out the Weekly Newsletter via email will now resume. Thank you.



Remembrance Day of Slave Trade and its Abolition

The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition is 23rd August. It is not just an invitation to remember the transatlantic slave trade, but to learn lessons and combat modern day slavery. Learn more about slavery in our midst, including signs to look out for, what to do, and helpline numbers at www.modernslaveryhelpline.org.

Dona — Contactless for Offerings and Repository Purchases

Our contactless paying devices — Dona at both English Martyrs and St John have been in use to make general offerings, Christmas or Easter offerings, purchase of repositories or Sunday Missals. Please feel free to make use of the devices when you make purchases or offering any time when the church is open. You can opt to gift-aid your offerings at the device. You may also leave us a message at the end of your payment. You may contact the Parish Office if you have any questions. Please note that purchases cannot be gift-aided. Thank you.



388 Visitors and Traffic on Our Parish Website

In the month of July, our parish website witnessed 388 Visitors and Traffic. WIX our web host made the analysis at the end of the month. In the analysis, it reported that we had New visitors: 276 -10%, Return visitors 112 -24%. The breakdown shows people found our website via Google (332), Direct (246) Bing (22) Facebook (5). We rejoice at this and welcome our visitors.

By this analysis, kindly visit our social media, Facebook and encourage faith sharing. Post faith inspiring stories that could help the public.

Finding Mass Times On Holiday

The purpose of the “Mass Times” ministry is to help Catholics get to Mass by helping them find churches and worship times worldwide. They do this by hosting and sharing the most comprehensive database of Catholic churches and worship times in existence. Dioceses, parishes, and many volunteers help keep the database current.

It can be difficult for Catholics to find a Mass when travelling or when it is not practical to attend their regular parishes. It is not always easy to find the right diocesan or parish websites. Mass Times makes it much easier to search for a Mass by presenting all the possibilities in a geographical area on one page. (www.masstimes.org)

Exam Results

Many of our young parishioners will have received or about to receive their exam results. Some of our young parishioners will be happy and excited about their results, some will be feeling a little disappointed perhaps. What we all need to remember is that whilst passing an exam can open doors, not passing an exam doesn't necessarily mean that the door has shut. Life is all about finding the best path through life, and that 'best path' certainly isn't the same for everyone. Kindly remember young people in your prayers as they will be making life changing decisions.

Night of Light: 31 October 2025

At English Martyrs Didcot this year, we would like to offer our young people a fun alternative to Halloween celebrations: a Night of Light party celebrating our Saints! This will be a joyful activity for our young people to celebrate the All Saints Festival, participate in activities to learn about saints and to have a prayer meeting. We need volunteers to help in planning and organising, setting up, cleaning, and helpers to support and manage the children with doing the games, activities, prayers. Please can you contact the Parish Office if you can help in this. We look forward to hearing from you. Thank you.



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.