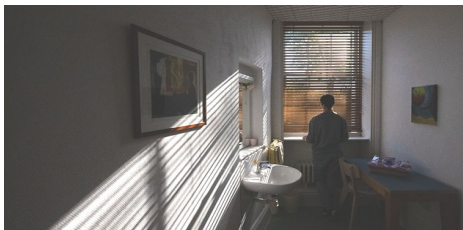


Nikki Dhillon Keane on the quest to eliminate gender-based violence



This month's Catholic News podcast focuses on the 16 Days of Activism against violence against women and girls, with our guest Nikki Dhillon-Keane, a therapist, trainer, author and activist, and the founder of Safe in Faith, a project of Caritas Westminster working to support survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence and exploitation in ways that understand how their faith impacts their experiences.

The theme for this year's 16 Days focuses on digital violence and the growing threat of abuse through digital images, technology-based stalking and harassment or the use of AI to control or threaten victims/survivors of domestic abuse.

Emphasising the importance of being aware of non-physical violence, Nikki explained: "Digital abuse is a form of coercive control, which is the umbrella under which all of these forms of violence and abuse happen. When we're looking at ideas of violence, it's really important to be aware that violence isn't just about physical violence. We need to be mindful also of that death of the soul that happens when we're not free to live our God-given life because someone's controlling everything we do."

This year, CSAN, the National Board of Catholic Women's VAWG Committee and Caritas Safe in Faith have jointly produced a statement and resources which focus on the intersection between violence against women, race and migration. Nikki explained the additional barriers and difficulties that women face when they stand at the intersection of gender-based violence and racial violence or other forms of oppression.

She said: "Statistically in every parish community, there are going to be people who've been subjected to these kinds of harm. In terms of what we can do to help, in the 16-day calendar we've highlighted some of the organisations that specifically work with women who have no recourse to public funds or who particularly work with black and minoritised women, providing support that's linguistically and culturally accessible. We've highlighted those and encouraged people to spread awareness of those organisations and support them in any way that they can."

Nikki announced that as part of the legacy of the Jubilee Year of Hope, in 2026 Caritas Westminster will launch a service called Caritas Hope that will be an umbrella for Safe in Faith and for other services that also support people in different ways. Source: [Nikki Dhillon Keane on the quest to eliminate gender-based violence - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

Here is Your God

John questions Jesus from prison in today's Gospel—for his disciples' sake and for ours.

He knows that Jesus is doing "the works of the Messiah," foretold in today's First

Reading and Psalm. But John wants his disciples—and us—to know that the Judge is at the gate, that in Jesus our God has come to save us.

The Liturgy of Advent takes us out into the desert to see and hear the marvellous works and words of God—the

lame leaping like a stag, the dead raised, the good news preached to the poor (see Isaiah 29:18–20; 61:1–2).

The Liturgy does this to give us courage, to strengthen our feeble hands and make firm our weak knees. Our hearts can easily become frightened and weighed down by the hardships we face. We can lose patience in our sufferings as we await the coming of the Lord.

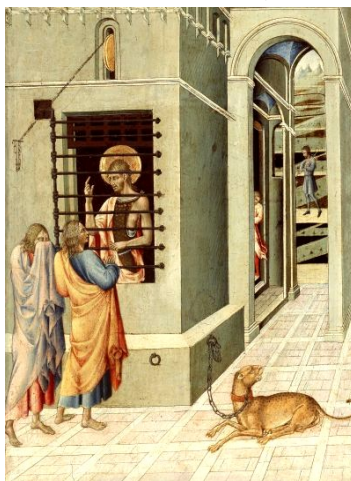
As James advises in today's Epistle, we should take as our example the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

Jesus also points us to a prophet—holding up John as a model. John knew that life was more than food, the body more than clothing. He sought the kingdom of God first, confident that God would provide (see Matthew 6:25–34). John did not complain. He did not lose faith. Even in chains in his prison cell, he was still sending his disciples—and us—to our Savior.

We come to Him again now in the Eucharist. Already He has caused the desert to bloom, the burning sands to become springs of living water. He has opened our ears to hear the words of the sacred book, freed our tongue to fill the air with songs of thanksgiving (see Isaiah 30:18).

Once bowed down, captives to sin and death, we have been ransomed and returned to His Kingdom, crowned with everlasting joy. Raised up, we now stand before His altar to meet the One who is to come: "Here is your God."

Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR A (WK III)

Entrance Antiphon:

REJOICE in the Lord always;
Again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1–6a, 10

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 146

Come, Lord, and save us.

Second Reading: James 5:7–10

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia.
The Spirit of the LORD is upon me;
He has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor.
Alleluia.

Gospel: Matthew 11:2–11

Communion Antiphon: Is 35:4

Say to the faint of heart:
Be strong and do not fear.
Behold, our God will come,
and he will save us.

SATURDAY 13th December ... St Lucy

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 ... Ian's 60th Birthday Thanksgiving

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Catherine Olley's Family Intentions

SUNDAY 14th December ... Third Sunday of Advent

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Antonia & John Beard RIP

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Our First Holy Communion Group

MONDAY 15th December ... NO MASS

TUESDAY 16th December

12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... Our Confirmation Group

WEDNESDAY 17th December

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Carolyn Fishwick's Good Health

12:00 pm Funeral Service Patrick Molloy ... English Martyrs Didcot

THURSDAY 18th December

9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Peace & Justice

7:00 pm Pastoral Area Confession Day ... English Martyrs Didcot

FRIDAY 19th December

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Dolly & Pat FitzPatrick RIP (McNamee Family)

SATURDAY 20th December

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Carolyn Fishwick's Good Health

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 21st December ... Fourth Sunday of Advent

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 Russell, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Pat McLoughlin, Barry Molloy, Annie Furlong, and all the sick and housebound.



DEATH/FUNERAL NOTICE

Patrick Molloy RIP ... Funeral Service at 12noon, Wednesday 17th December, Didcot.



On Sacrament of Confession — A sharing from a Dominican Friar

The editor asked, tell our readers what friars do when they grow too old to get about. Well, we hear confessions, is part of the answer. For those who find help in the sacrament of reconciliation, it brings such courage and hope. Without it, we might stick at judging ourselves, try to tear up the darnel – uproot the alien corn we find in our hearts – but somehow that won't work. So we are left discouraged, or else settle for the unexamined life. But in the sacrament of penance, used in the right way of course, I open up to a brother who is an ornery sinner like me. We answer our Lord's invitation when he says 'come to me all you who are burdened, and I will give you rest.' We give up on judging ourselves and throw ourselves on the mercy of our loving God.

In my confession, I am no longer all alone in my failure. I am going to meet another brother who is also in the way of making confession sometimes, and will hear me make mine. The sacrament is a human encounter with a divine depth to it. I am put in touch with a tradition of moral discrimination and prudent care for persons. This is a waymark on the journey of faith and a time to move on a bit in my life, and the Lord himself is the Way.

In confession we come to see what it is we just have to accept about ourselves, the tares among the wheat we are going to have to live with for a while yet. We come to spot the old ways that thankfully we are ready to leave behind now. We come to realise that even as we are, we are God's acre. The love of God is poured into our hearts by his Holy Spirit who has been given us. We are going to taste the peace of God that passes all understanding.

The forbearance of the Father, his great patience and desire to save, is what greets me in confession. Here I learn what I'm able with the help of grace to correct and change, what must be put up with for a time, and what perhaps is just part of me and is to be accepted peacefully. St Paul speaks of Christians as those who put on Christ, clothe themselves in Christ, are found in Christ. When I hear confessions, and there is this quiet return to the sacrament among the people of God, I am brought face to face with the everyday holiness of all these people who have put on Christ and who live through love in his presence.

We all have our own way of making our confession. Some of us look for a brief encounter with the priest, and that's alright. Some have a story to tell or a conundrum to explore face to face, that's alright too. The confessor shares our joys and our sorrows. Where even two are gathered in the name of Jesus, there he has promised to be too, and when it is for this sacrament, there is all goodness and all grace. When the words of absolution are spoken, priest and penitent enter into a moment of great peace. But goodness, what numbers of young people come for confession these days! Who told them it was alright to come? Once I have heard today's confessions, I'll have no fear for the future of the Church, no fear at all. (Source: THE DOMINICANS — Winter 2025)



Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity falls on 18th to 25th January 2026. Christians from Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches pray together in the [Week of Christian Unity](#).

Churches Together in Didcot and District has been coordinating churches in and around Didcot for prayers and events in this week in our churches. **English Martyrs Didcot** are happy to host the 'Day 7 event' on **Saturday 24th January** in our parish at **5:30pm**, followed by refreshments in our Tearoom. Please come and join us in our prayers for Christian Unity. If you can help in welcoming our visitors and serve tea, coffee and refreshments, please let the Parish Office know. Thank you.



Thursday 18th December is Pastoral Area Confession Day

English Martyrs Church Didcot will once again be the host parish to the Oxfordshire Pastoral Area End-of-Year Advent Confession **this Thursday on 18th December at 7pm**. We welcome all the priests and parishioners from all the eleven parishes of our Pastoral Area this Thursday. This will be the last Confession Day for our parishioners. Saturday confessions sessions in Didcot and Wallingford will not be opened until February 2026.

Parish Office Holidays

As Christmas & New Year are approaching, the Parish Office will be closed on **16th and 17th December**, and from **24th December to 4th January**. We will also be closed early at 12noon on **Friday 19th December** for our Staff Lunch. There will be **NO newsletters** for the weeks of 28th December (The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph Sunday) and 4th January (Second Sunday after the Nativity). Thank you.



Meeting With Bishop Philip about The Priesthood

Bishop Philip is inviting any man in our Diocese, aged 17 or older, who is not married and who would like to know more about being a diocesan priest, to contact him and come to a short meeting **at the Cathedral on Sunday 4th January at 3 o'clock** (finishes at 5 pm). Please register your interest with the QR code provided.



Advent Events in Our Parish

We will continue to collect food donations this week. Please bring in any food donations when you come to attend masses in English Martyrs and St John's. Your donation will be delivered to the local Food Bank before the Christmas.

Next Sunday 21st December we invite you to bring your family crib or Nativity scene to be blessed. The custom of displaying figures, depicting the birth of Jesus, owes its origin to Saint Francis of Assisi who made the Christmas crèche or manger for Christmas Eve in 1223. We are continuing a beautiful Christmas tradition. Please place your crib under the altar before the Mass begins.



Food Donation Needed!

Please bring food items for donation to Wallingford and Didcot Food Banks **by next Sunday 21st**. The items need to have 3 months best before dates. An exception of shelves life for the following items: Christmas mince pies, Christmas pudding, long-life custard, cakes, chocolate or children's goodies. Your generosity will help bring warmth and happiness to the vulnerable families who are struggling at this time of the year.



Confirmation Class News

Our next Confirmation Class session will be on **Sunday 21st December 4pm in Children's Liturgy Room** at English Martyrs Didcot. Attendance in classes is very important to all candidates of Confirmation, as is attendance in weekly masses. Parents please kindly make an effort to attend masses with your Confirmation youngsters every week. Please contact the Parish Office by email in advance if your child cannot attend the Confirmation Classes. Thank you.

Christmas Offerings to Our Parish

The 'Give As You Live' online donation platform for collecting Christmas offerings to our parish is now open. You can scan the QR code provided or access the webpage at <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/didcot-and-wallingford-english-martyrs-and-st-john-the-evangelist-catholic-parish-christmas-collection-2025>.



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.