

Webinar Report: Promoting Racial Justice in our Parishes

Each year, the Catholic Church promotes Racial Justice Sunday, which in 2025 was held on 16 February and celebrated its 30th anniversary. The theme was 'Pilgrims

of Hope: Our Journey Towards Racial Justice'. Catholics across

England and Wales were invited to reflect during this Jubilee Year on the collective journey towards racial justice in schools, parishes and wider society.

As part of these reflections, on 22 October, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales hosted a webinar titled, 'Pilgrims of Hope: Promoting Racial Justice in our Parishes', chaired by Bishop Paul McAleenan, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster and Lead Bishop for Racial Justice.

The purpose of the webinar was to listen to, and learn from, the experiences, challenges and opportunities in the mission of promoting racial justice in Catholic parishes today.

In his introduction, Bishop McAleenan prayed for an end to the suffering caused by racism, recalling the words of Pope Francis, "Racism is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding and lurks in waiting."

Panellists explored how parishes can better understand and promote racial justice, examining the issues which are faced by people of colour, and looking especially at the intersection between racial justice and social issues, such as domestic abuse and migration.

The speakers expressed hope that parishes can be transformed into places where people can truly grow in ever-deeper knowledge and love of each other and of God. They made several practical recommendations for achieving this, including creating a culture of welcome and hospitality in parishes, taking an inclusive approach to parish ministry, ensuring a participatory approach is taken towards domestic abuse strategies, and being open to learning from other denominations.

Exploring the intersection between racial justice and domestic abuse, Nikki Dhillon-Keane, Founder of Caritas Safe in Faith and co-Founder of the Faith and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Coalition, said:

"We need to be able to recognise those victims and survivors who stand at the intersection of gender-based violence and racial oppression. We need to be able to speak up when we see victims and survivors being responded to differently and treated differently because of their background."

Dr Gifford Rhamie, Doctor of Philosophy and member of the Black Churches Domestic Abuse Forum, echoed this call, and explained: "We also need to develop a tailored domestic violence response framework that is specifically designed to address domestic violence within ... To read more: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/webinar-report-pilgrims-of-hope-promoting-racial-justice-in-our-parishes/>



In a Dark Hour

Jesus exaggerates in today's Gospel when He claims not to know the day or the hour when He will come again. Christ occasionally makes

such overstatements to drive home a point we might otherwise miss (see Matthew 5:34; 23:9; Luke 14:26).

His point here is that the exact "hour" is not important.

What is crucial is that we not postpone our repentance, that we be ready for Him—spiritually and morally—when He comes. For He will surely come, He tells us—like a thief in the night, like the flood in the time of Noah.

In today's Epistle, Paul too compares the present age to a time of advancing darkness and night.

Though we sit in the darkness, overshadowed by death, we have seen arise the great light of our Lord who has come into our midst (see Matthew 4:16; John 1:9; 8:12). He is the true light, the life of the world. And His light continues to shine in His Church, the new Jerusalem promised by Isaiah in today's First Reading.

In the Church, all nations stream to the God of Jacob, to worship and seek wisdom in the House of David. From the Church goes forth His word of instruction, the light of the Lord—that all might walk in His paths toward that eternal day when night will be no more (see Revelation 22:5).

By our Baptism we have been made children of the light and day (see Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5–7). It is time we start living like it: throwing off the fruitless works of darkness, rejecting the desires of the flesh, and walking by the light of His grace.

The hour is late as we begin a new Advent. Let us begin again in this Eucharist.

As we sing in today's Psalm, "let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord." Let us give thanks to His name, keeping watch for His coming, knowing that our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR A (WK 1)

Entrance Antiphon:

To you, I lift up my soul,
O my God.

In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.
Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none
who hope in you be put to shame.

First Reading: Isaiah 2:1-5

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 122

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the LORD.

Second Reading: Romans 13:11-14a

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia.

Show us, O LORD, your mercy,
And grant us your salvation.

Alleluia.

Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44

Communion Antiphon: Ps 84:13

The Lord will bestow his bounty,
And our earth shall yield its increase.

SATURDAY 29th November ... Our Lady on Saturday

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... **Confession after Mass** ... Kathleen McCartney RIP (Helen & Tony Cooper)

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

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... Nelly & Lawrence DeSouza Anniversary Thanksgiving

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Racial Justice

SUNDAY 30th November ... First Sunday of Advent

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... All Who Died in Hong Kong fire RIP

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Emergency Workers

MONDAY 1st December ... NO MASS ... St Edmund Campion

TUESDAY 2nd December

12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... Volunteers in Our Parish

WEDNESDAY 3rd December ... St Francis Xavier

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Canon Peter's Intention (Noel Clifford)

THURSDAY 4th December ... St John Damascene

9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Our Pastoral Area

FRIDAY 5th December ... St Birinus

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Our Clergy

SATURDAY 6th December ... St Nicolas

9:30 am **NO 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 ... Kathleen McCartney RIP (Phil & Gerry McGettigan)

SUNDAY 7th December ... Second Sunday of Advent

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Barbara Wilson RIP (B Torres)

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, Laura Falavina, and all the sick and housebound.



Survey on Bus Service between Didcot & St Amand's Primary

The governors at St. Amand's Catholic Primary School are keen to see if there is demand for a new bus service between Didcot and St. Amand's. This would need to be a privately run bus, secured by the school, to replace the service which the council used to run in the past.

They are keen for families in and around Didcot (especially OX11 post codes) to complete their short survey to explore demand and practical arrangements, such as fares and the preferred route. Even if you aren't interested in a bus service, if you live in OX11 and have (or will have) primary aged children they really need your input! Here is the link to complete the survey: [Didcot Bus Survey – Fill in form](#)



CAFOD World Gifts: Give a life-changing gift this Christmas

This year, share the joy of Christmas with a CAFOD World Gift — from safe water, to school supplies! A meaningful way to bless loved ones and help families overseas. Worldgifts.cafod.org.uk



Children's Liturgy Christmas Cards

Thank you for donating your old Christmas cards back in January. The good news is you can now buy them back! The children have been busy making new cards and these will be on sale at English Martyrs and St Johns from this Sunday. Please remember to bring cash. All monies raised are being donated to a very good cause.



Seniors Christmas Luncheon

We are delighted to advertise the Parish Seniors Christmas Lunch taking place on 11th December at Noon. Festive Fayre will consist of Turkey, all the trimmings, Christmas Pudding and Mince Pies. As usual, all dietary requirements will be catered for and lifts can be arranged. The 'Sign Up' sheet can be found at the back of both churches. Please note: Numbers are limited due to space. RSVPs are required by 5th December.



Confirmation Preparation Class 2025-26

Our Confirmation Preparation Classes are still open for application for young people in our parish aged 13 and above. Parents can download, print and complete the Confirmation Form from [here](#) or visit the parish website at <https://www.didcotandwallingfordcatholicchurches.org/forms>. The 1st Session of the Confirmation Preparation Class is going to be on Sunday 7th December from 4pm to 5pm at English Martyrs Church Didcot. Applications should be submitted with a copy of your Baptism certificate on or before the commencement of the 1st Session to the Parish Office. Please make sure the name of Sponsor/Godparent is put on your application form. Bishop Philip Egan will confer the sacrament for all 11 Churches in our Pastoral Area here in our parish of the English Martyrs Didcot on Friday 5th June 2026.



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 on Thursday 18th December at 7pm. We will welcome all the priests and parishioners from all the eleven parishes of our pastoral area this evening.

This will be the last Confession Day for our parishioners. Saturday confessions sessions in Didcot and Wallingford will not be opened until February 2026.

Pilgrimage Tour to Knock

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. Irish music nightly. Single supplement on Enquiry. Contact 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.



New Parking Spaces for Sunday Mass at Didcot Girls' School

We are glad to announce that our parishioners who attend 9am mass on Sunday at English Martyrs Didcot can now choose to park your cars at the car park of our neighbour – Didcot Girls' School. The School has agreed to open up to 30 parking spaces for our parishioners to use on Sunday morning between 8:30am to 11:00am.

This helps us cope with the wet weather during autumn and winter months when the ground becomes wet and muddy in our church car park. Please continue to use our church car park as your top priority for parking when attending Sunday mass and consider the Girls' School car park as an alternative for traffic overflow and when the ground is too muddy for safe parking. YOU are responsible for your own belongings and safety at all times no matter where you choose to park. Thank you.



Hearing Aids Needed

Do you have any hearing aids in good conditions that you no longer need? Someone with hearing problems may not be able to afford the price could have the use of your outgoing hearing aids. Please if you have one you wish to give away, kindly leave it in the basket marked "Hearing Aid" at the Church entrance. Thank you.

The Season of Advent in the Orthodox Church

Sister Helen Hakim will be speaking to us on 'The Season of Advent in the Orthodox Church'. Come with a friend. This is different from the Latin Church. Come and listen and hear how it runs from 15 November through 24 December. It is a period of fasting and reflective preparation for the Incarnation. We are happy that Sister Helen will spend an hour, 4:30pm to 5:30pm on 6th December at the English Martyrs, Didcot to share her experience and knowledge with us.



The English Martyrs Holy Journey – Joseph & Mary travelling in Didcot

Joseph and Mary, our knitted figurines of English Martyrs Didcot, are ready to set off their journey to Bethlehem. Just like in previous years, they are looking for warm welcomes from Didcot Parish family homes this Advent.

You can take photos with them and drop a line in the diary provided during their visit to your home. Photos may be shared on our parish website and social media. Please let us know if you do not want to be published. Please sign up with Anne-Marie Kershaw or contact the Parish Office if you and your family are ready to welcome Joseph and Mary to your home this Advent.



Food Donation Needed!

Please bring food items for donation to Wallingford and Didcot Food Banks over the next few weeks. 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.



Didcot Gospel Choir Christmas Concert at English Martyrs

Didcot Gospel Choir are coming back to English Martyrs Church Didcot for their Christmas Concert again this year! The Christmas Concert will be on Sunday 14th December at 5:30pm. For tickets, please email to didcotgospel@gmail.com. Ticket prices are £10 including refreshments.

Didcot Gospel Choir will donate all their income to Clear Sky Children's Charity and Didcot Food Bank. Clear Sky Children's Charity <https://clear-sky.org.uk/>, is a charity that supports Play & Creative Arts Therapy services for schools, professionals and families in Oxfordshire. Didcot Food Bank <https://www.didcotbaptist.org.uk/mission/local-activities/didcot-foodbank/> is our local food bank in Didcot operated under Didcot Baptist Church. Come and enjoy a lovely evening of Christmas music by Didcot Gospel Choir while donating to support our local charities on Sunday 14th.



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.