

Bishop Moth issues Pastoral Letter for Jubilee of Prisoners

Full text of Bishop Moth's Pastoral Letter

Dear brothers and sisters,

During this last year, the Church has been celebrating a Jubilee Year – the Jubilee of Hope. The year was



opened by Pope Francis on Christmas eve last year, with the opening of the Holy Door of St. Peter's in Rome. During the year a vast number of people have made a pilgrimage to Rome and there have been celebrations on most weekends during the year, focusing on the many different groups of people who form the family of the Church. This weekend is a special moment for all those, across the whole world, who are in prison, for the focus for this weekend is the Jubilee for Prisoners.

Perhaps a Year of Hope is not easy for us all. There may still be some time left of a sentence; there may be anxiety about a coming court appearance; there may be worry about family or concern about what will happen after release.

Within the confines of the cell and the regime in prison, it may not be easy to think about a pilgrimage to Rome. Yet, the fact that Pope Leo and the crowds who with gather with him in Rome this weekend to pray especially for you is a reminder that nobody is ever abandoned by God, who loves each and every one of us. Even when we have gone down the wrong road in life, the love of God is always there for us, just as it is there for our families, our loved ones and those who have been affected by our actions.

The readings at Mass this Sunday are all about the theme of waiting. Perhaps, like the people in Isaiah's time, we feel that we are in a desert place, that we are weak and anxious. Isaiah reminds us that God will come to save us.

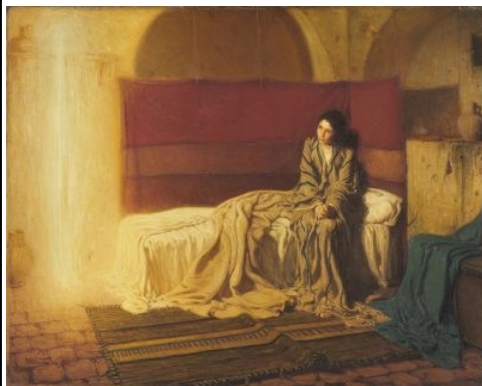
Perhaps, like the people to whom John the Baptist had preached before himself being sent to prison, we are looking for something, someone. Jesus tells the people that He is the one we seek. Jesus has indeed come – we are going to be celebrating his birth in 11 days time – and we know that He is always with us.

St. James, in his letter from which we hear today, writes about patience. This can be a real challenge, especially when time seems to drag and one day simply follows the next with little change. Fixing our minds on the person of Jesus, knowing that it is Him we seek, brings life in the desert.

Just as the pilgrim to Rome can go through the Holy Door of St. Peter's, so the door of hope is always there for us. The door of the cell may be closed for many hours each day, but Jesus is always with us. Allowing Him to give us the gift of hope changes our lives – and there is no place that Jesus cannot reach if we open the door to Him ...

Source: [Bishop Moth issues Pastoral Letter for Jubilee of Prisoners - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

God Is with Us



The mystery kept secret for long ages, promised through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, is today revealed (see Romans 16:25–26).

This is the “Gospel of God” that Paul celebrates in today's Epistle—the good news that “God is with us” in Jesus Christ. The sign promised to the House of David in today's First Reading is given in today's Gospel. In the virgin found with child, God Himself has brought to Israel a savior from David's royal line (see Acts 13:22–23).

Son of David according to the flesh, Jesus is the Son of God, born of the Spirit. He will be anointed with the Spirit (see Acts 10:38), and by the power of Spirit will be raised from the dead and established at God's right hand in the heavens (see Acts 2:33–34; Ephesians 1:20–21).

He is the “King of Glory” we sing of in today's Psalm. The earth in its fullness has been given to Him. And as God swore long ago to David, His Kingdom will have no end (see Psalm 89:4–5).

In Jesus Christ we have a new creation. Like the creation of the world, it is a work of the Spirit, a blessing from the Lord (see Genesis 1:2). In Him, we are saved from our sins, are called now “the beloved of God.”

All nations now are called to belong to Jesus Christ, to enter into the House of David and kingdom of God, the Church. Together, through the obedience of faith, we have been made a new race—a royal people that seeks for the face of the God of Jacob.

He has made our hearts clean; He has made us worthy to enter His holy place, to stand in His presence and serve Him.

In the Eucharist, the everlasting covenant is renewed, the Advent promise of virgin with child—God with us—continues until the end of the age (see Matthew 28:20; Ezekiel 37:24–28).

Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR A (WK IV)

Entrance Antiphon:

DROP down dew from above, you heavens,
and let the clouds rain down the Just One;
let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 24

Let the LORD enter; he is the king of glory.

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Emmanuel – which
means, God with us.
Alleluia.

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24

Communion Antiphon: Is 7:14

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son;
and his name will be called Emmanuel.

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 ... Bernadette Black RIP
5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot
6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Catholic Education

SUNDAY 21st December ... Fourth Sunday of Advent

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Bernadette Black RIP
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... The Holy Land

MONDAY 22nd December ... NO MASS

TUESDAY 23rd December ... St John of Kanty

12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... Marie C Trevor RIP

WEDNESDAY 24th December ... Christmas Eve

5:00 pm Family Mass English Martyrs Didcot
8:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford
11:00 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

THURSDAY 25th December ... The Nativity of the Lord

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

FRIDAY 26th December ... St Stephen ... NO MASS

SATURDAY 27th December ... St John

9:30 am **NO MASS**
5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... Conrad & Carol Almeida 50th Wedding Anniversary
Thanksgiving (Mary Almeida)
6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

SUNDAY 28th December ... The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Thomas Coen's Intention (Bridie Quinn)

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

Michael Carty RIP ... Funeral Service at 10am, Wednesday 7th January, Wallingford.



First Holy Communion Class News

Our next First Holy Communion Class session will be on **Sunday 11th January 2026 at 10:30am** 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 First Holy Communion children every week. Thank you.



Floral Arrangement at English Martyrs

The Floral Arrangement Group at English Martyrs are glad to welcome a few newcomers to join their team on **Sunday 11th January** in their meeting after the 9am mass. If you also want to join them in arranging flowers for English Martyrs, please come to the meeting. No experience needed. Training will be provided. Thank you.



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.



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 **5:00pm**, 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.



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.



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.

Mass Time – 27th December to 11th January

SATURDAY 27th December ... St John

9:30 am ****NO MASS****

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... Conrad & Carol Almeida 50th Wedding Anniversary
Thanksgiving (Mary Almeida)

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

SUNDAY 28th December ... The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

MONDAY 29th December ... St Thomas of Canterbury ... NO MASS

TUESDAY 30th December ... NO MASS

WEDNESDAY 31st December ... NO MASS

THURSDAY 1st January 2026 ... Mary, The Holy Mother Of God

9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford

6:00 pm Mass English Martyrs Didcot

FRIDAY 2nd January ... Ss Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen ... NO MASS

SATURDAY 3rd January ... The Most Holy Name of Jesus

9:30 am ****NO MASS****

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Tess Daukes RIP (R Frearson)

SUNDAY 4th January ... Second Sunday after The Nativity

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Valentine John & Lily Finch RIP

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

MONDAY 5th January ... NO MASS

TUESDAY 6th January ... The Epiphany Of The Lord

12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford

6:00 pm Mass English Martyrs Didcot

WEDNESDAY 7th January ... St Raymond of Penafort

10:00 am Funeral Service Michael Carty ... St John Wallingford

THURSDAY 8th January ... NO MASS

FRIDAY 9th January ... NO MASS

SATURDAY 10th January

9:30 am ****NO MASS****

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Janina Krokowska RIP (J Lazarus)

SUNDAY 11th January ... The Baptism Of The Lord

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford