

## Bishop Mason: Caring for the sick is an encounter that embraces the whole person

**B**ishop Paul Mason, Lead Bishop for Healthcare, has offered a reflection on this year's theme for the World Day of the Sick, "The compassion of the Samaritan: loving by bearing another's pain".

The World Day of the Sick celebrated every year on 11 February. It was established



by St. John Paul II in 1992, and is a privileged moment of prayer, spiritual closeness, and reflection for the entire Church and for civil society, who are all called to recognise the face of Christ in our sick and vulnerable brothers and sisters.

In his message, Bishop Mason reminds us that care for the sick is first and foremost an encounter which can transform both the caregiver and the one being cared for. Reflecting on the Pope's message for the day, Bishop Mason says:

"Caring for the sick is never limited to treatment or the easing of physical suffering. It is a relationship, an encounter that embraces the whole person. It is also an expression of fraternal love which, as Pope Leo teaches, is never passive but always 'goes out to meet the other'."

### Bishop Mason's full message

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

For his first World Day of the Sick, Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme "The compassion of the Samaritan: loving by bearing another's pain", a theme that highlights how true care for the sick begins with a loving, personal encounter.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan from the Gospel of Luke, Jesus tells the story of a man who is attacked and left wounded on the roadside. Several passers-by ignore him, but a Samaritan stops, tends the man's wounds with his own hands, brings him to a place of rest and makes financial provision for him.

In this year's message for the World Day of the Sick, the Pope reflects on what prompted the Samaritan to act differently from the others and considers the disposition of his heart. He writes: "[...] when the Samaritan saw the wounded man, he did not 'pass by'. Instead, he looked upon him with an open and attentive gaze – the very gaze of Jesus – which led him to act with human and compassionate closeness." When the Samaritan saw the wounded man on the roadside, he did not see just a problem to solve, or a condition to treat. His gaze recognised a person with dignity, created in the image and likeness of God. This recognition opened the way to a genuine encounter, one in which he met the wounded man in the fullness of his suffering, needs, hopes, relationships, and losses ...

To read more: [Bishop Mason: Caring for the sick is an encounter that embraces the whole person - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

## Affair of the Heart



**J**esus tells us in the Gospel this week that He has come not to abolish but to "fulfill" the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets.

His Gospel reveals the deeper meaning and purpose of the Ten Commandments and the moral Law of the Old Testament. But His Gospel also transcends the Law. He demands a morality far greater than that accomplished by the most pious of Jews, the scribes and Pharisees.

Outward observance of the Law is not enough. It is not enough that we do not murder, commit adultery, divorce, or lie.

The law of the New Covenant is a law that God writes on the heart (see Jeremiah 31:31–34). The heart is the seat of our motivations, the place from which our words and actions proceed (see Matthew 6:21; 15:18–20).

Jesus this week calls us to train our hearts, to master our passions and emotions. And Jesus demands the full obedience of our hearts (see Romans 6:17). He calls us to love God with all our hearts and to do His will from the heart (see Matthew 22:37; Ephesians 6:6).

God never demands more than what we are capable of doing. That is the message of this week's First Reading. It is up to us to choose life over death, to choose the waters of eternal life over the fires of ungodliness and sin.

By His life, death, and Resurrection, Jesus has shown us that it is possible to keep His commandments. In Baptism, He has given us His Spirit, that His Law might be fulfilled in us (Romans 8:4).

The wisdom of the Gospel surpasses all the wisdom of this age that is passing away. St. Paul tells us in the Epistle. The revelation of this wisdom fulfills God's plan from before all ages. Let us trust in this wisdom and live by His kingdom law.

As we do in this week's Psalm, let us pray that we grow in being better able to live His Gospel and to seek the Father with all our heart.

Scott Hahn



English Martyrs  
Vale of White Horse  
Pastoral Area

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

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## 6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR A

### Entrance Antiphon:

Be my protector, O God, a mighty stronghold to save me. For you are my rock, my stronghold! Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

**First Reading:** Sirach 15:15-20

**Responsorial Psalm:** Ps 119

Blessed are those who walk in the law of the LORD!

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

### Gospel Acclamation:

**Alleluia, alleluia.**

I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children.

**Alleluia.**

**Gospel:** Matthew 5:17-37

**Communion Antiphon:** Ps 77:29-30

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

## SATURDAY 14th February ... St Cyril & St Methodius

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

4:30 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford

5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... Vocations of Marriage

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... The Sick and Housebound

## SUNDAY 15th February

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... The Ubong Family (Otuekong Ubong)

10:45 am First Confession English Martyrs Didcot ... First Holy Communion Children

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Ron Almeida RIP (Mary Almeida)

## MONDAY 16th February ... NO MASS

## TUESDAY 17th February ... The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order

12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... Herman Hansen RIP (Anne Maria)

## WEDNESDAY 18th February ... ASH WENDESDAY

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford

6:00 pm Mass English Martyrs Didcot

## THURSDAY 19th February

6:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Our Pastoral Area

9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Tony Pollard & Family RIP (Dora Pollard)

## FRIDAY 20th February

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Catechumens in our Diocese

## SATURDAY 21st February

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 ... Patience Erhabor (Judith Montford)

5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot

## SUNDAY 22nd February ... FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

2:00 pm Baptism English Martyrs Didcot ... Olutomilola Oloyede

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, Canon Peter Turbitt and all the sick and housebound.



## Baptism

**W**e rejoice with the parents and godparents of Reed McCann and Annalise Williams, who through the sacrament of Baptism, have become members of the body of Christ last Sunday, and the parents of Olutomi-lola Oloyede, who will become another new member of us through his baptism next Sunday.

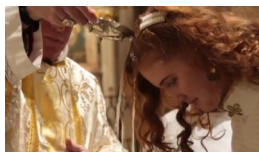
In your prayers, remember Reed McCann, Annalise Williams and Olutomi-lola Oloyede. We invoke God's blessings on them as they grow.



## We Dare to Ask - A Lent course

**T**his Lenten resource, prepared by Director of Mission at Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, is a timely opportunity to look afresh at the grace of living out our baptism. For some, our baptism may simply be a long-ago event of little memory or relevance to our daily lives. Others may have more recent memories, perhaps fondly recalling the baptismal celebrations of their children or grandchildren. You may know others, or are yourself, preparing for your own baptism or that of your newborn infant. This resource is intended for all, wherever you are on your faith journey.

Designed for use by individuals or small groups, [We Dare to Ask](#) is comprised of five sessions which reflect on the Baptismal promises we make or renew at Easter. We are called to respond to this gracious gift throughout our lives. The day of our baptism is just the beginning of a great adventure with God. Each year, at the most beautiful of liturgies, the Easter Vigil – and at other Easter Sunday Masses – we gather, as the people of God, to renew our Baptismal promises. To say with all our hearts, 'Yes, Lord, I believe.'



## Catholic Young Writer and Catholic Young Artist Award 2026

**T**he *Catholic Young Writer Award* is open to all young Catholics (and pupils at Catholic schools) in England and Wales in secondary years 8-11 inclusive. There is a cash prize for the best essay, plus a number of runner-up book prizes. The topic for writing is: Why do we go for confession? For more information, [click here](#).

Deadline for entries: 30th June 2026. The *Catholic Young Artist Award* is open to primary school aged children. A cash prize is available for the winner and runners up will be recognised. The theme is Forgiveness – What does this look like to you? For more information, [click here](#). Deadline for application: 22nd May 2026



## Ambassadors For Christ

**I**n response to a growing interest in the Catholic faith, the Archdiocese of Southwark has launched Ambassadors for Christ, a landmark apologetics project. This video series is designed to equip you with a deeper understanding of your faith, so you can confidently answer questions and be a joyful witness for the Lord Jesus and his Church. The project will consist of 52 videos, posted every Monday on [YouTube](#). To provide assurances for the viewer that the information is from a trusted source, each video will feature a Catholic priest. Ambassadors for Christ is perfect for RCIA classes, parish study groups, confirmation classes, families, teachers in their delivery of religious education, school groups, chaplaincy groups and many more! For more information, go to this [website](#).

## Chorister Opportunities at Westminster Cathedral Choir School

**I**f you are a family with Catholic boys currently in Years 1, 2, 3 or 4 who are interested in becoming a chorister, you are invited by the [Westminster Cathedral Choir School](#) to join them in September this year. Becoming a chorister at Westminster Cathedral offers boys the opportunity to sing in London and on tour internationally in one of the world's great choirs. Boys also receive an outstanding education at one of London's leading schools, up until the end of Year 8. There are no financial barriers to entry: all boys received generous scholarships, with bursaries worth up to 100% of fees available on a means-tested basis. Choristers board during the school week. For more information, please email [rbonnet@choirschool.com](mailto:rbonnet@choirschool.com) to register for a Zoom session. The upcoming Zoom session will be on Wednesday 28th January.



Catholic prep school for boys aged 4 – 13 (Reception – Year 8)

## Lent 2026

**A**sh Wednesday, on 18th February, marks the beginning of Lent 2026. Mass time on Ash Wednesday will be 9:30am and 6pm at English Martyrs Didcot and 12noon at St John Wallingford. Ash Wednesday is a Day of Fasting and Abstinence. During Lent, there will be Stations of the Cross every Tuesday 11:30am in Wallingford and every Friday 6pm in Didcot. In Didcot, there will be Early Mass every Tuesday and Thursday at 6:30am, followed by breakfast served in the Tearoom. Easter Confession will be on Tuesday 24th March at 7pm in Didcot. For more information of all the activities this Lent, please refer to the 2026 Lent and Easter Flyer.



## CAFOD Lent Appeal – Family Fast Day collection

**T**his Lent, live out the Gospel call to love your neighbour. By fasting and giving what you save, you join in Christ's compassion and help another family put food on the table. Your donation can help families around the world grow food in difficult conditions – such as on flood-resistant floating gardens or using solar-powered water pumps in times of drought. Collect a CAFOD envelope to bless others with your support, donate online at [cafod.org.uk/envelope](http://cafod.org.uk/envelope) or call 0303 303 3030. Text CAFODLENT to 70085 to donate £10.



## Helpers Needed for Sunday Tea Group of English Martyrs

**C**an you help in serving tea or coffee and biscuits after our Sunday masses? Our Tea Group needs more hands every Sunday. All you will need is to come before Sunday mass to set up, serve tea and coffee after mass, and clean up afterwards. Trainings will be provided. If you can help, please contact the Parish Office or speak to Eve and Simon Marshall. Thank you.

## English Martyrs Gospel Reading Group February Meeting

**T**he Small Group is meeting on Tuesday 10th and 24th February at 7:30pm in the Tearoom to read and reflect on the coming Sunday's Gospel. Please come and join us. Contact Nick Spencer at 07870 505520.

## Reading and Meditation with Saint John of The Cross

**T**he worldwide Carmelite Order is celebrating 300 years since St John of the Cross was canonised and 100 years since he was declared a Doctor of the Church. 8 manuscripts have been selected for study during this year dedicated to him. Saint John of the Cross, a great lover of nature, will accompany us and help us to find God alive in ourselves, in others, and in creation.

A small group of us will be meeting once a month to ponder on them together. If you would like to know more about Saint John's teaching, share your thoughts with fellow travellers or ask questions, please come and join us, everyone is welcome and no previous knowledge is required! The manuscripts will be sent to you in advance (please email Armelle if you are interested: [c.armelle@btinternet.com](mailto:c.armelle@btinternet.com)). The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 25 February, 9:15 to 10:15 am, in the hall at St John's (access from the back of the Church in Wood Street).

## Registration For All Parishioners on New Online Portal -- ChurchSuite

**W**e would like to invite all our parishioners in Didcot and Wallingford to register or re-register with us on ChurchSuite. 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 give us your consents to receive newsletters by email in your registration on the new platform. As members of the parish, you will be on our record and allow us to stay in touch with you and your family when you register with us. If you have problems in your online registration, please contact the [Parish Office](#) for support. 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.