

Pope Leo tackles topic of domestic abuse on International Women's Day

In the context of International Women's Day, celebrated March 8, Pope Leo XIV responded to a letter from a reader of Piazza San



Pietro magazine who asked what can be done about femicides, and the pope shared that violence against women causes him "great suffering."

Femicide is defined as a man killing a girl or a woman for the very reason that she is female.

Pope Leo replied to a woman named Giovanna, who said she is "fortunate" to be married to a man who loves and respects her. The letter appeared in the latest issue of the publication, which this March is dedicated to women.

In her letter, the woman confessed to having "tears in her eyes" because of the "death trap" that married life becomes when a man kills a woman due to a "culture of possession."

Giovanna then proposed an alliance between the Catholic Church and schools to educate young people in love and respect. "Who else, if not schools and the Church, can help new generations by spreading a culture of respect, love, and above all, freedom?" she asked.

"You raise a major issue that for me is always a source of great suffering: violence in relationships, and in particular violence against women," the Holy Father responded to Giovanna.

"In a world often dominated by violent thinking, we must further support the feminine genius, as St. John Paul II said, the 'genius of women,' protagonists and creators of a culture of care and fraternity indispensable for giving a future and dignity to all humanity," he emphasized.

Leo XIV added that "perhaps this is also why women are beaten and murdered, because they are a sign of contradiction in this confused, uncertain, and violent society, because they point to values of faith, freedom, equality, generativity, hope, solidarity, and justice."

"These are great values, which are nevertheless attacked by a dangerous mentality that infests relationships and only produces selfishness, prejudice, discrimination, and a will to dominate," he added.

After recalling that he had already denounced the violence of femicides in June 2025, the pope stressed that "violence, any violence, is the boundary that separates civilization from barbarism."

Leo XIV then advised that "we must never underestimate an act of violence and we must not be afraid to denounce violence, including that climate of justification or that downplays or denies responsibility."

"Walking together in mutual respect for our humanity is not a dream, but the only possible reality for building a world of light for all ...

Source: <https://www.ewtnnews.com/vatican/pope-leo-tackles-topic-of-domestic-abuse-on-international-women-s-day>

Eyesight to the Blind

God's ways of seeing

are not our ways, we hear in today's First Reading. Jesus illustrates this in the Gospel as the blind man comes to see and the Pharisees are made blind.

The blind man stands for all humanity. "Born totally in sin," he is made a new creation by the saving power of Christ.



As God fashioned the first man from the clay of the earth (see Genesis 2:7), Jesus gives the blind man new life by anointing his eyes with clay (see John 9:11). As God breathed the spirit of life into the first man, the blind man is not healed until he washes in the waters of Siloam, a name that means "Sent."

Jesus is the One "sent" by the Father to do the Father's will (see John 9:4; 12:44). He is the new source of life-giving water: the Holy Spirit who rushes upon us in Baptism (see John 4:10; 7:38-39).

This is the Spirit that rushes upon God's chosen king David in today's First Reading. A shepherd like Moses before him (see Exodus 3:1; Psalm 78:70-71), David is also a sign pointing to the good shepherd and king to come—Jesus (see John 10:11).

The Lord is our shepherd, as we sing in today's Psalm. By His death and Resurrection He has made a path for us through the dark valley of sin and death, leading us to the verdant pastures of the kingdom of life, the Church.

In the restful waters of Baptism He has refreshed our souls. He has anointed our heads with the oil of Confirmation and spread the Eucharistic table before us, filling our cups to overflowing.

With the once-blind man we enter His house to give God the praise, to renew our vow: "I do believe, Lord."

"The Lord looks into the heart," we hear today. Let Him find us, as Paul advises in today's Epistle, living as "children of light," trying always to learn what is pleasing to our Father.

Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR A — WEEK 4

Entrance Antiphon:

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast.

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 23

The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Second Reading: Ephesians 5: 8-14

Gospel Acclamation:

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.

I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.

Gospel: John 9:1-41

Communion Antiphon: Jn 9:11, 38

The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed, I saw and I believed in God.

SATURDAY 14th March

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... **Confession after Mass** ... Eileen Russell's Intention (D Kennedy)
4:30 pm Adoration and Confession before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford
5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... David Kearney RIP
5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot
6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Clergy

SUNDAY 15th March ... FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Patricia Welch RIP (M Welch)
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Antonietta Boccia RIP (Giorgianni-Payne Family)

MONDAY 16th March ... NO MASS

TUESDAY 17th March ... St Patrick

6:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... John Lythgoe RIP
11:30 am Stations of the Cross St John Wallingford
12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... David Kearney RIP

WEDNESDAY 18th March ... St Cyril of Jerusalem

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Ian Kennedy RIP (Debbie Kennedy)

THURSDAY 19th March ... St Joseph

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Mrs Picta RIP
9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Rosie's Intention (Julie Lazarus)

FRIDAY 20th March

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Matilda Pereira RIP (Sonia Francis & Family)
6:00 pm Stations of the Cross English Martyrs Didcot

SATURDAY 21st March

9:30 am **NO MASS**
4:30 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford
5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... Patt & Chris Watts RIP
5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot
6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Daniel Pagnillo RIP (Rosemary)

SUNDAY 22nd March ... FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Joanne Benzair RIP
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Elizabeth Trainer RIP

In your prayers, please remember: Margaret O'Conner, Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Pat McLoughlin, Barry Molloy, Annie Furlong, Canon Peter Turbitt, Charles Hunt and all the sick and housebound.



DEATH/FUNERAL NOTICE

Ellen Bailey RIP ... Requiem Mass at 11:30am, Friday 27th March, English Martyrs Didcot.



Second Collection for Diocesan Clergy Assistance Fund



The Second Collection for the Diocesan Clergy Assistance Fund takes place on the **15th of March, 2026**. The Clergy Assistance Fund contributes to the work of the Department for Clergy Team. The Clergy Support Team is responsible for looking after the welfare, ongoing formation and personal support of our clergy, such as the provision of spiritual direction, counselling, appraisal, ongoing formation and practical advice. It organises retreats, ministerial formation days, courses and sabbaticals. You can make your donation with this link or scan the QR Code provided. Cash donation will be collected after Sunday masses on 15 March. You can also use the contactless device in our parish to pay your donation. Thank you.



The Didcot Passion Play

Didcot local Christian Churches, *Christian Life Centre Didcot, Didcot Baptist Church, Grace Church, The Ladygrove Church, Redeemed Church of God (Salvation House), The Gate Didcot, The King's Church Didcot* have organized the Didcot Passion Play as part of the Didcot Easter Festival. Experience a dramatic retelling of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus and how He brings hope for our lives today. [Rise Theatre](#) from Reading will perform the play. Everybody is invited to come to the Easter Passion play for free on **Saturday 28 March at 3 pm, at the Orchard Centre**, in front of Sainsbury's.



Formation for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Fr Anthony Fyk is organising a formation morning for EMHC on Saturday 9th May 2026 at the Pastoral Centre in Winchester. There will be a welcome session from Fr Anthony, a talk by Fr Jeremy Corley, focussing on the Eucharist in the sacred scriptures as well as a session on Lectio Divina: "Living a Eucharistic life – what does it mean to live out the eucharist?". All Eucharistic Ministers, experienced and new, are very welcome to attend. Please could you advertise this in your newsletters and ask interested people to register via liturgy@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Turin and Assisi

Join us on a pilgrimage to Turin in northern Italy and Assisi in central Italy to learn about and experience the lives of our two newest saints - St Carlo Acutis and St Pier Giorgio Frassati - Monday 20th July - Sunday 26th July. Beginning in Turin where St Pier Giorgio Frassati was born, lived and died at the age of just 24 in 1925. We will visit his parish church and the family summer house in the foothills of the alps very close to the Marian shrine at Opora. Then to Assisi to visit the tomb of St Carlo Acutis, the modern day saint using the internet to spread the Good News of the Gospels before his death in 2006 aged 15. What's Included? Flights, Accommodation in central Turin and central Assisi, Breakfast and dinner, Local transfers in and around Turin and Assisi, Long distance coach day with stops along route, Visit Marian shrine in Opora, Visit Royal Palace in Turin - site of The Shroud, Visit tomb of St Carlo Acutis. Please contact [Canon PJ Smith](#) for more details.



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.

Pastoral Area Penitential Rite & Holy Week

Our Pastoral Area Penitential Rite will be upcoming on Tuesday 24th March at English Martyrs Church Didcot at 7pm. Chrism Mass will be on Tuesday 31st March at St John's Cathedral in Portsmouth. All are invited to attend the mass. There will be no mass in all parishes on that day as Parish Priests across the Diocese will be attending the Chrism Mass in the Cathedral. Holy Week will be in two weeks time. Palm Sunday will be on Sunday 29th March. Palm Sunday will begin with a procession from our nearby Didcot Girls' School Car Park, just like in last year. Please arrive at the car park at 8:45am on Sunday 29th March. You can bring your floral decoration according to your tradition to the Palm Sunday procession.

We need volunteers to participate in the feet washing ceremony on Maundy Thursday 2nd April 7:30pm mass, and lots of Altar Servers to serve in Maundy Thursday 7:30pm mass, Good Friday 3pm mass, Holy Saturday Vigil Mass, and Easter Sunday Masses. Please contact the [Parish Office](#) if you can help.



Registration For All Parishioners — Act NOW!

If you have not yet registered with our new online Parishioner Registration that has started this year, please REGISTER NOW! We need to stay in touch with you on the new system. The online registration process is simple and quick. For adults parishioners [click here](#) to register. To register children in your family, [click here](#). Links and QR Codes can also be accessed from our [parish website](#) and on our noticeboards. Weekly Newsletter will be emailed to you if you have given us your consents to receive newsletters by email in your registration in the new platform.

If you are not yet a Gift Aider, please register with us now by scanning the QR code provided to access the new online Gift Aid Declaration Form. Existing Gift Aiders will not need to re-register with us. Your Gift Aid information will be automatically migrated to our new system. Thank you.



Seniors' Lenten Lunch 19th March

The Seniors' Lunch Team is happy to announce that the next Seniors' Lunch will be on Thursday 19th March at 12 noon in English Martyrs Church Didcot Tearoom. Soup and bread, Sponge Pudding & Custard, tea and coffee will be served. Please put your name on the name list at the foyer, or email [Jacqui](#) / [Parish Office](#) to RSVP and for transportation needs.



Confirmation Class News

Our Confirmation Sessions are on-going and we have 18 candidates in attendance. The sessions are held every other week in the Children's Liturgy Room. Our candidates will receive the sacrament here at English Martyrs Church Didcot on Friday 5th June at 7:30pm. Bishop Philip Egan will confer the sacrament for all 11 Churches in our Pastoral Area here in our parish of the English Martyrs Didcot. As it involves other parishes, more details will be announced later. Please attend all our lessons as usual. If you have any questions, please speak to Fr Dominic during the sessions. Kindly hold these candidates in your prayers.



Stations of the Cross for Cantonese Speakers

Cantonese Stations of the Cross will be led by the Reading Hong Kong Catholic community at [St James Catholic Church](#) on Forbury Road, Reading, RG1 3FD on **Good Friday 3rd April 1:00-1:45pm**. Parking is available at Forbury Retail Park in Kenavon Dr, Reading, RG1 3HS. If you would like to help in the service, please let [Ada Chim](#) in our Parish Office know.

Legal Professionals Needed

IS THERE A LAWYER IN THE HOUSE? The St Vincent de Paul Society is in need of some informal legal advice to help a client. If you think you can help, please contact Dominic Knight at dominic.knight100@gmail.com. Thank you.