

The Six Holy Habits (4) Visiting the Blessed Sacrament

In the last Pastoral Letters, I have been encouraging everyone in the Diocese to adopt The Six Holy Habits: (1) Sunday Mass; (2) daily prayer; (3) Friday penance and works of charity; (4) fortnightly visit to the Blessed Sacrament; (5) monthly Confession; and (6) to join a small support-group. This week



we resume this mini-series by considering the fourth Holy Habit: paying a visit once a fortnight to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

It is an amazing truth of our Catholic faith, that in a continuation from the celebration of Mass, Jesus Christ Himself, in His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, is present and active in the Tabernacle on our altars. This reality makes our churches different from what are often termed 'places of worship.' In a Catholic church, Jesus Himself speaks to us, nourishes us with the Eucharist and with His Sacraments, and forms us in communion into His people, the Body of Christ, the Church. To be in His presence is a most refreshing activity. This is why there is nothing like stealing away from our homes and our work to spend a few minutes of down-time with the Lord in church.

In the Diocese of Portsmouth, I've asked that all our parish churches be kept open during daylight hours for prayer, for people to be able to go in to light a candle and to spend some time with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. (Incidentally, our diocesan insurance premium includes cover for churches being open, although obviously we need to be prudent and not leave out precious objects that might be stolen or vandalised). As Pope Francis has said: "Do not lock Christ away from His people."



I've often mentioned how as a child, my father taught me a truly good habit. When I was about 10, I remember him buying a new van for his work and every night he got in from work, he'd take us out for a spin. We'd go all over, but on the way back, we'd always stop by our parish church for a quick visit to say a prayer. It was dark inside: all you could see was the red sanctuary lamp, flickering in the distance, by the tabernacle. Later as a teenager, after school I'd often go out on my bike with friends, but following the habit I'd been taught, I too would lead them, before heading home, to stop by church. It was wonderful to spend a few moments with the Lord Jesus, to be in His presence, to pray to Him, to listen to Him, to speak with Him. I hope you too will develop this habit – of popping into church to pray to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. It will change your life.

Listen To Him

Today's Gospel portrays Jesus as a new and greater Moses.



Moses also took three companions up a mountain

and on the seventh day was overshadowed by the shining cloud of God's presence. He too spoke with God and his face and clothing were made radiant in the encounter (see Exodus 24, 34).

But in today's Lenten Liturgy, the Church wants us to look back past Moses. Indeed, we are asked to contemplate what today's Epistle calls God's "design . . . from before time began." With His promises to Abram in today's First Reading, God formed the people through whom He would reveal Himself and bestow His blessings on all humanity.

He later elevated these promises to eternal covenants and changed Abram's name to Abraham, promising that he would be father of a host of nations (see Genesis 17:5). In remembrance of His covenant with Abraham, He raised up Moses (see Exodus 2:24; 3:8), and later swore an everlasting kingdom to David's sons (see Jeremiah 33:26).

In Jesus' transfiguration today, He is revealed as the One through whom God fulfills His divine plan from of old.

Not only a new Moses, Jesus is also the "beloved son" promised to Abraham and again to David (see Genesis 22:15–18; Psalm 2:7; Matthew 1:1).

Moses foretold a prophet like him to whom Israel would listen (see Deuteronomy 18:15, 18), and Isaiah foretold an anointed servant in whom God would be well pleased (see Isaiah 42:1). Jesus is this prophet and this servant, as the Voice on the mountain tells us today.

By faith we have been made children of the covenant with Abraham (see Galatians 3:7–9; Acts 3:25). He calls us, too, to a holy life, to follow His Son to the heavenly homeland He has promised. We know, as we sing in today's Psalm, that we who hope in Him will be delivered from death.

So like our father in faith, we go forth as the Lord directs us: "Listen to Him!"

By Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

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SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR A (Psalter WK II)

Entrance Antiphon Cf. Ps 26:8-9

Of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face. It is your face, O Lord, that I seek; hide not your face from me.

First Reading: Genesis 12:1-4

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 33:4-5,18-20, 22

May your love be upon us, O Lord,
as we place all our hope in you.

Second Reading: 2 Timothy 1:8-10

Gospel Acclamation: Cf. Jn 14:23

Praise to you, O Christ, King of Eternal Glory!

From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard:

"This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him."

Praise to you, O Christ, King of Eternal Glory!

Gospel: Mtt:4:1–11

Communion Antiphon: Cf. Mtt 4:4

This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;
listen to him.

SATURDAY 4th March

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot...Rosary for Peace and no confessions at English Martyrs, Didcot

4:30pm Adoration & Confessions will take place prior to the Vigil Mass at St John's Wallingford

5.00pm Vigil Mass St John's - Imogen Davies (OCDS) (Armelle Belcher)

5.50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot

6.30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot

SUNDAY 5th March Second Sunday of Lent

9:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot - Farmers

11:00noon Mass St John's, Wallingford - Thanksgiving (Canonical Erection) --The Blessed Marie Eugene (Armelle Belcher)

TUESDAY 7th March—SS Perpetua & Felicity

6.00.am English Martyrs, Didcot.....Ann Connick RIP (Mary Guinon)

11:30am St John's, Wallingford, **Stations of the Cross**

12:00noon Mass St John's, Wallingford, - Farmers

WEDNESDAY 8th March - St John of God

9:30am English Martyrs, Didcot - Deceased Family & Friends RIP (Julie Lazarus)

THURSDAY 9th March - St Frances of Rome

6.00.am English Martyrs, Didcot... Police and Armed Forces

9:30am Mass at St John's Wallingford - Maria Berggren OCDS (Armelle Belcher)

FRIDAY 10th March

9:30am Mass, English Martyrs, Didcot — All HealthCare Workers

Stations of the Cross.....6.p.m

SATURDAY 11th March

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot...Rosary for Peace and no confessions at English Martyrs, Didcot

4:30pm Adoration & Confessions will take place prior to the Vigil Mass at St John's Wallingford

5.00pm Vigil Mass St John's - Imogen Davies (OCDS) (Armelle Belcher)

5.50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot


6.30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot

SUNDAY 12th March Third Sunday of Lent

9:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot

11:00noon Mass St John's, Wallingford

In your prayers, please remember: Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, Maureen & John Logan Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Terry Appleyard, Joan Russell, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Jidechi Ejiofor, Pat McLoughlin, Margaret Healy, Barry Molloy, David Woodley, Annie Furlong and all the sick and housebound of our churches.





Giving Going Digital

This week, we are rolling out our digital plates. You will find our new DIGITAL COLLECTION PLATE, contactless terminal in the church. Just use your contactless debit/credit card or smart phone/ device to make a donation. It is just one more option to giving.

Simply choose the amount you wish to donate and hold your card onto the reader. You can also opt-in for Gift Aid to increase your donation by 25%. If you are a UK taxpayer then donating with Gift Aid means that we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 received. Contactless donations are simple to administer, secure and convenient. Thank you for supporting our Church.

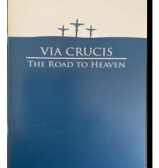
Catechesis for Communion under Both Kinds



The Bishops' Conference have decided that a suitable time for the resumption of Holy Communion received under both species would be at the Mass of the Lord's Supper in Holy Week 2023, given the theological significance of the celebration. Our bishop has shared with us a note on catechesis, prepared by Bishop Patrick McKinney of the Diocese of Nottingham in preparation for the permissive reintroduction of Holy Communion under both species in Holy Week. This season of Lent provides an opportunity to offer a formation on the Eucharist. Formation was a key theme in the synodal responses across the country and the leaflet he has produced is aimed at helping people to deepen their understanding of the Mass, which lies at the heart of our Catholic faith. The leaflet is deliberately short in content so as to encourage people to read and reflect prayerfully on each section writes Bishop Philip Egan. Visit the parish website to download or read this document for formation.

Via Crucis Booklets

We desperately need copies of the Via Crucis (The Road to Heaven) booklets produced by the diocese in 2016 for use during the Stations of Cross on Tuesdays and Fridays. Do you have copies sitting on your book shelves? Kindly consider bringing them to the Church for others who may want the use of them. Come join us every Tuesdays at 11:30a.m...St John's Wallingford, Fridays at 6p.mThe English Martyrs, Didcot.



Care for Our Common Home

Carbon Fast For Lent


In his famous encyclical, *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis highlights how the lives of people in poor countries are affected for the worst by the changing climate. What we buy, what we eat, how we travel and how we heat our homes all contribute to our carbon footprints. Changing our lifestyles overnight is difficult but we can all begin to take small steps that can change our understanding and behaviour. Doing this during Lent, as part of our Lenten observances, can help us place our actions in the context of our faith and strive to be better stewards of God's creation. Here are a couple of ideas to get you started.

- *Turn down the thermostat to 18 degrees C. Even one degree will save energy, and money! If you're feeling the cold, pull on a woolly jumper!
- *Turn off the tap when you brush your teeth. One source claims doing this will save 25 gallons of water a month!
- *Unplug mobile phone chargers, and anything else that has a transformer attached. 8% of electricity consumed at home is from appliances we aren't even using.

Wallingford Emergency Food Bank

To help match donations of food with the needs of clients, Wallingford Food Bank (WEFB) is making use of the Bank the Food app, which can be downloaded to your smartphone. If you have the app on your phone when you go in to stores that are linked to the app – currently Waitrose in Wallingford and the Co-op in Benson – your phone will ping. If you want to donate you can then open the app and it will tell you which items the Food bank is currently short of. There is a short film, narrated by Joe Lycett, explaining the app, which you can find at: <https://www.bankthefood.org/notjustbakedbeans/>

WEFB is extremely grateful to the people of Wallingford and the surrounding villages for their generous support. *Paul Fletcher*



Fostering With Oxfordshire County Council

Our carers stories are all different but what they all provide is just the same: support, security, and safety with a sprinkling of love! Just like one of our foster carers, Ruth: 'I always subscribed to the misconception that I needed to be older, financially secure and even possibly in a partnership to foster but the truth is, almost anyone can foster.' The important thing is that you've got love to give a child.

Interested?


If you'd like to find out more, our fostering team would love to hear from you - email fostering@oxfordshire.gov.uk or phone 0800 7835724...www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/fostering

Confirmation Program To Begin

Have you done your First Holy Communion? Are you 13, going 14 or above and would love to journey with Christ Jesus in a special but profound way? Well, you have a chance. We are starting the Confirmation Program leading to the reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Just go online, fill the Form and submit. We shall get in touch with you and together we shall have a fantastic experience of bonding, learning more about our faith and building strong Christian values and being better persons.

Come Support CAFOD

Soup and bread will be served on Saturdays in Lent in English Martyrs tea room, 12.30 to 14.00, to raise money for CAFOD. Everyone welcome!



Bishop Philip Egan Will Be Here

Our bishop, Bishop Philip will be doing some informal parish visits this year. It will not be a full canonical visitation as was previously done, but an informal visit. No special preparations are needed. Bishop Philip would like to just celebrate Mass, meet the faithful, and share a meal with the clergy.

For the English Martyrs Didcot and St John the Evangelist Wallingford, the bishop will celebrate the holy mass of the 9:00 am (English Martyrs) and the 11:00 am (St John the Evangelist) on Sunday, March 19th. Lets put our bishop in prayers as we welcome him to our parish.

Święconka—The Blessing of Easter Baskets

The blessing of the Easter baskets is one of the most enduring and beloved Polish traditions on Holy Saturday. It is called Święconk. This special event takes place in many of our parishes across the diocese because of our Polish families who enrich our parishes and liturgy. Are you Polish? Do you want to organize or be part of those to organise it on Holy Saturday, April 8th? Speak or write to Father Dominic.

