

## EU bishops call for European unity and solidarity with Ukraine amid geopolitical uncertainty

In the context of increasing complexity and geopolitical uncertainty surrounding peace in Ukraine, the Presidency of the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union (COMECE) issued a statement on Tuesday, 4 March 2025, expressing strong support for Ukraine. COMECE: "Ukraine's struggle for peace will also be decisive for the fate of Europe and the world".



The statement emphasises that "Ukraine's struggle for peace and the defence of its territorial integrity is not only a fight for its own future. Its outcome will also be decisive for the fate of the entire European continent and of a free and democratic world."

In a geopolitical landscape that the EU bishops describe as "complex" and marked by "the unpredictability of actions taken by some members of the international community", the Presidency of COMECE calls on the European Union and its Member States to remain united in their commitment to supporting Ukraine and its people.

"Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law. The use of force to alter national borders and the atrocious acts committed against the civilian population are not only unjustifiable but demand a consequent pursuit of justice and accountability," the statement reads.

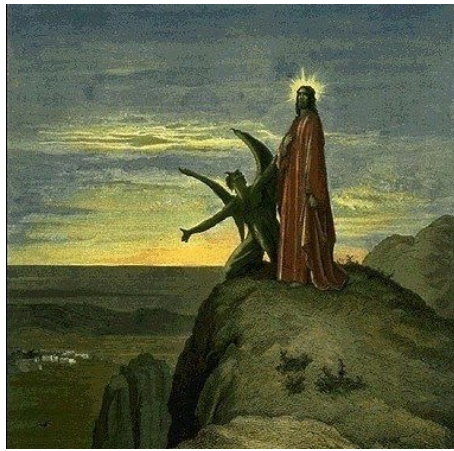
The EU bishops affirm that a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine can only be achieved through negotiations, which should be backed by strong transatlantic and global solidarity and must involve Ukraine. "In order to be sustainable and just – state the EU bishops – a future peace accord must fully respect international law and be underpinned by effective security guarantees to prevent the conflict from re-erupting."

Furthermore, COMECE urges the international community to "continue to assist Ukraine in the reconstruction of the destroyed infrastructure" and specifies that Russia "must adequately participate in this effort." The Presidency of COMECE emphasises that Ukraine is the victim in this war and Russia the aggressor, stressing that any attempts to distort the reality of this aggression must be firmly rejected.

Regarding Ukraine's request to join the European Union and the internal reforms undertaken to achieve this goal, the EU bishops call on the EU "to advance with the enlargement process in a timely and fair manner alongside other candidate countries."

The statement concludes by expressing hope that the European Union "will remain faithful to its vocation to be a promise of peace and an anchor of stability to its neighbourhood and to the world", particularly at a time when the contours of a new global security architecture are being redrawn. Source: comece.eu

## Forty Days



In today's epic Gospel scene, Jesus relives in His flesh the history of Israel.

We've already seen that, like Israel, Jesus has passed through water and been called God's beloved Son (see Luke 3:22; Exodus 4:22). Now, as Israel was tested for forty years in the wilderness, Jesus is led into the desert to be tested for forty days and nights (see Exodus 15:25).

He faces the temptations put to Israel: Hungry, He's tempted to grumble against God for food (see Exodus 16:1–13). As Israel quarreled at Massah, He's tempted to doubt God's care (see Exodus 17:1–6). When the Devil asks for His homage, He's tempted to do what Israel did in creating the golden calf (see Exodus 32).

Jesus fights the Devil with the Word of God, three times quoting from Moses' lecture about the lessons Israel was supposed to learn from its wilderness wanderings (see Deuteronomy 8:3; 6:16, 12–15).

Why do we read this story on the first Sunday of Lent? Because like the biblical sign of forty (see Genesis 7:12; Exodus 24:18; 34:28; 1 Kings 19:8; Jonah 3:4), the forty days of Lent are a time of trial and purification.

Lent is to teach us what we hear over and over in today's readings: "Call upon me, and I will answer," the Lord promises in today's Psalm. Paul promises the same thing in today's Epistle (quoting Deuteronomy 30:14; Isaiah 28:16; Joel 2:32).

This was Israel's experience, as Moses reminds his people in today's First Reading: "We cried to the Lord . . . and He heard." But each of us is tempted, as Israel was, to forget the great deeds He works in our lives, to neglect our birthright as His beloved sons and daughters.

Like the litany of remembrance Moses prescribes for Israel, we should see in the Mass a memorial of our salvation, and "bow down in His presence," offering ourselves in thanksgiving for all He has given us.

Scott Hann



English Martyrs  
Vale of White Horse  
Pastoral Area

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

[www.didcotandwallingfordcatholicchurches.org](http://www.didcotandwallingfordcatholicchurches.org)

Office email: [didcot@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:didcot@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)  
(Parish Office Hours Tuesday–Friday 9am to 1pm)

Telephone: 01235 812338  
15 Manor Crescent, Didcot OX11 7AJ

Fr Dominic Adeiza email: [dadeiza@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:dadeiza@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

### 1ST SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR C

**Entrance Antiphon: Ps 90:15-16**

When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

**First Reading:** Deuteronomy 26:4-10

**Responsorial Psalm:** Ps 91  
Be with me, O Lord, in my distress.

**Second Reading:** Romans 10:8-13

**Gospel Acclamation:** Mt 4:4b

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

One does not live by bread alone,  
But by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ.**

**Gospel:** Luke 4:1-13

**Communion Antiphon:** Mt 4:4

One does not live by bread alone,  
but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God.

#### **SATURDAY 8th March ... St John of God**

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... **Confessions after 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

#### **SUNDAY 9th March ... First Sunday of Lent**

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot  
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Lizette de Sousa, Jesuino Jesus de Ponte, Joao Paiva Ribeiro RIP (Ribeiro family)

#### **MONDAY 10th March ... NO MASS**

#### **TUESDAY 11th March**

6:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot  
12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford ... Seamus Doyle RIP (Pauline Doyle)

#### **WEDNESDAY 12th March**

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Christie Warnakulasuriya RIP (Anthony Warnakulasuriya)

#### **THURSDAY 13th March**

6:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot  
9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Phyllis Green RIP (Thursday Coffee Morning Parishioners)  
11:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

#### **FRIDAY 14th March ... Lenten Fast Day**

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Jarek & Zama's Marriage Thanksgiving (Jarek Nagorka)  
6:00 pm Stations of the Cross ... English Martyrs Church Didcot

#### **SATURDAY 15th March**

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... **Confessions after Mass** ... H Souls (Kim & Douglas)  
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

#### **SUNDAY 16th March ... Second Sunday of Lent**

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Lawrence Chim 90th birthday thanksgiving (Ada & John)  
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

In your prayers, please remember: Anne O'Brien, Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Joan Russell, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Pat McLoughlin, Barry Molloy, David Woodley, Annie Furlong and all the sick and housebound of our churches.



### Lent Pilgrimage Walk with Simon — Littlemore on 22nd March

As part of your Lenten observances would you like to join me on a Lent pilgrimage to Littlemore on Saturday 22nd of March. At Littlemore is the International Centre of Newman Friends at Littlemore just outside Oxford. The centre enables you to visit Cardinal Newman's room, chapel, the museum and library.

I am a walk leader for the Ramblers and will lead the walk. The walk will be a linear walk to Littlemore.

We meet up at the bridge car park in Dorchester, near Wallingford, at 10:30am for a 6 mile leisurely walk. We will walk up the High Street to the Roman road over the A4074. Then through Berinsfield, on to Marsh Baldon and then on to Littlemore.

We spend some time having lunch and visiting the International Centre. Then there is a car waiting at Littlemore to take walkers back to the car park at Dorchester.



### Significant Wedding Anniversary Mass

Are you celebrating a 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th, 60th or anniversary over 60 years? If so, Bishop Philip would like to invite you to a Mass of celebration. This will take place at St Bede's church in Basingstoke on Saturday 21st June at 11am. This will be followed by a buffet lunch. It is a wonderful occasion to celebrate and witness to Marriage. Please contact your parish office or send an email to [anniversaries@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:anniversaries@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) to request a form for you to complete and return. Please note the email address is not monitored daily and you may have to wait for a reply, so please be patient. To help celebrate the occasion please could you provide a COPY of your Wedding photograph, you can upload it when you return the form. Again, if you have no access to the internet you can post a COPY along with completed form by post to the following address: St Bede's Parish Office, Popley Way, Basingstoke RG24 9DX.

SIGNIFICANT WEDDING ANNIVERSARY MASS

TO BE HELD AT ST BEDE'S CHURCH, BASINGSTOKE ON SATURDAY 21 JUNE AT 11AM



### Catechist Lent Days of Prayer, Formation and Networking

The Vicariate for Evangelisation (Fr Gaston) will be hosting three online events during Lent for Catechists across the diocese. These events offer a chance to connect with other catechists, share experiences, and find inspiration to hand on the faith in our parishes. Each event will begin at 7:30 PM and last for one hour. Catechists can choose from the three events based on their area of catechesis:

**Thursday 13th March (Children's Liturgy and First Holy Communion)**

**Thursday 20th March (Marriage Preparation and Baptism)**

**Thursday 3rd April (Confirmation and RCIA)**

To sign up for these events, please go to <https://forms.office.com/e/VkCdj1SWzA>.



### Jubilee Pilgrimage to Lourdes

In this Jubilee year of hope please join me on our Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes from 7th to 11th July when we can carry the flame of hope in procession with our sick brothers and sisters; sing the song of hope in the language of every nation gathered; and pray to Mary, the Way of Hope.

Lourdes holds a special affection in the hearts of many across the Diocese and our annual pilgrimage is a wonderful opportunity to experience faith, fun and friendship. I very much hope that you will consider joining me and our fellow pilgrims when we depart from Heathrow Airport on Monday 7th July.

We will be staying close to the Sanctuary at the four-star Hotel La Solitude which enjoys panoramic views of the upper town and the Pyrenees. The hotel boasts ensuite rooms with tea and coffee-making facilities and a comfortable restaurant with a varied and plentiful menu.

Our program takes full advantage of all that Lourdes has to offer, which includes visiting places that were important to St Bernadette during her lifetime, taking part in the Torchlit and Blessed Sacrament Processions as well as offering the opportunity to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. There will be moments of quiet reflection and peace, as well as times when we will be able to hear the chanting and singing of hundreds of voices. During this jubilee year it will also be possible to take part in The Jubilee Way, a journey through the Sanctuary meditating on the Gospel of the disciples of Emmaus and perhaps also receive the grace of a plenary indulgence.

The cost of the pilgrimage is £879 per person for a shared room, youth pilgrims can travel at £825. If you are interested, please contact your Parish Office for application. *Bishop Philip, Diocese of Portsmouth*



### Parishioners' Email Database Update for Receiving Weekly Newsletters

We are preparing to send our weekly newsletter to all our parishioners through email. If you wish to receive our newsletters by email, please make sure that you are a registered parishioner of Didcot and Wallingford. The newsletters will only be sent out to registered parishioners whose information and email addresses are in our parishioner database (PAMIS). To be a registered parishioner, you need to fill in the Parishioner Registration Form and submit the completed form to the Parish Office. If you have not done this registration process yet, please download the Parishioner Registration Form from our website or obtain a printed copy from our churches. If your email address is no longer in use, or you wish to add a new email address, please contact the Parish Office to update your email address. We hope to complete the process of updating our parishioners' email database before the end of April. Please get in touch with us if you have questions. Thank you.



### Pray For Our 3 RCIA Candidates

Our parish has candidates and catechumens preparing to be received in communion with the Church this Easter. These candidates undertook this journey in the last couple of months, spanning two years. One of the candidates joined the Cantonese RCIA group in Reading and while others are being supported in the parish by Pauline Hanley. Please in your prayers, bring our 3 candidates to the Lord as they prepare to be received into the Church.



### WANTED — Carpet and flooring fitters!

The St Vincent de Paul Society has need of a fitter to install hard flooring in a beneficiary's house. The client has children who are allergic to dust mites and are suffering badly with the current carpeting. Please contact Dominic Knight on 07516 701917.

### Seniors' Lenten Lunch

The next Seniors Lunch will be on Thursday 13th March. There will be Mass at 11.30am followed by Soup, Bread, Apple Sponge & Custard. Please add your name to the list on the notice board if you would like to come. You are all very welcome.



### Adult Readers Urgently Needed in Wallingford

Do you know that reading the sacred scripture is a privilege and honour? It is a ministry open to everyone who desires to play a special role in our parish. A reader is the person who proclaims the First or Second Reading, and/or lead the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass. The reader may chant or call everyone to 'Praise the Lord!' or sing 'Alleluia!' before the Gospel reading. It requires nothing but the love of God, a smile and a good voice projection. If you would like to serve the parish as a Reader, please contact Richard via email [richardmet4@icloud.com](mailto:richardmet4@icloud.com). We need you to fill our planner and rota. Thank you.

### IMPORTANT Petition — Care Not Killing!

Please consider signing the Care Not Killing petition which calls on MPs to vote against legalising assisted suicide in England and Wales. The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill would make vulnerable people — including the elderly and disabled — feel a burden on family or carers resulting in pressure to end their lives. There is a petition each at both Didcot and Wallingford churches in the next two weeks until 21st March. Let's sign it together and let our voice be heard. For more information, visit <https://carenotkilling.org.uk/>.



### CELEBRATE FESTIVAL: WITNESS TO HOPE: A Catholic festival for all the family 16-20 August 2025

Join CELEBRATE in the beautiful Sussex countryside for a relaxed faith filled festival situated around our big top!

- Inspirational Speakers. Have your faith renewed and inspired through talks and breakout sessions.
- Great groups for Children and Young People. Make friends and experience the gospel in relevant and dynamic ways.
- Masses and worship. Encounter the presence of God in beautiful Eucharists and anointed worship.
- Prayer. Spend time in Worth's beautiful Abbey and also have the opportunity to receive prayer.
- Fun and fellowship. Get to know others over tea, coffee or a glass of wine and fun family activities.

Come and camp in our festival field, or book into residential school accommodation. Discounts for families and if cost is holding you back. For more information, please go to <https://www.celebratetrust.org/festival>.

