



New Pilgrimage Routes

At the Bishops' Conference last week, we were reminded about a new collection of Catholic walking pilgrimages. These have been launched online, with the aim of encouraging people of all faiths and none to explore some of the holiest sites in England and Wales. 'Hearts in Search of God' is a three-year project mapping out 22 pilgrimages, with each route starting at one of the 22 Catholic Cathedrals in England and Wales, before going on to at least one of the local Shrines, with the shortest route being 10 miles. A website listing the new routes has been launched and can be found at pilgrimways.org.uk, providing walking guides, GPX files, prayers and other resources, including a downloadable 'Pilgrim Passport', and a certificate at the end of your walk. The project has been organised by retired GP Dr Phil McCarthy, former CEO of Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN), who has so far walked seven of the ways and intends to finish the rest in the next two years. He said: "I hope the Ways might be useful to Catholic charities for fundraising walks, but you don't have to be formally religious or be walking as a part of a big group to follow these Ways. Walking allows us all to pay attention, to notice small things and to enjoy ordinary places. "I hope the new Pilgrim Ways will be an opportunity for Christians to deepen their faith, but also for people of all faiths and none to experience a pilgrimage in a Catholic context and with the minimum of financial and environmental cost." The idea was inspired by Pope Francis' words about pilgrims, when he said: "Whoever they may be...in every person there is a heart in search of God". Dr McCarthy added: "To go on pilgrimage is to participate in a practice which is ancient and universal. Walking pilgrimages are slow, humble journeys in constant contact with the Earth. They encourage awe at the magnificence of creation."

St. Joseph's Way is a Pilgrim Way for the Diocese of Portsmouth from the Cathedral of St John in Portsmouth to the national Shrine of St Joseph in Farnborough Abbey. From St John's Cathedral the Way soon joins the Pilgrims' Trail out of Portsmouth passing the Church of St Colman at Cosham. At Wood End the way joins the Meon Valley Churches Walk along a disused railway track to West Meon. The Pilgrim Way then crosses farmland by track and lane to reach Ropley where the route joins the St Swithun's Way, passing the Church of St Mary, Alton. Just before Hale the route leaves the St Swithun's Way, turning north and then west to cross parkland to Aldershot and the Church of St Joseph. The Way picks up the Basingstoke Canal towpath and then the Blackwater River path into Farnborough to reach the Shrine of St Joseph at Farnborough Abbey.

Alive in the Spirit

Jesus will not leave us alone. He won't make us children of God in Baptism only to leave us "orphans," He assures us in today's Gospel (see Romans 8:14-17).

He asks the Father to give us His Spirit, to dwell with us and keep us united in the life He shares with the Father.

We see the promised gift of His Spirit being conferred in today's First Reading.

The scene from Acts apparently depicts a primitive Confirmation rite. Philip, one of the first deacons (see Acts 6:5), proclaims the Gospel in the non-Jewish city of Samaria. The Samaritans accept the Word of God (see Acts 17:11; 1 Thessalonians 2:13) and are baptized.

It remains for the Apostles to send their representatives, Peter and John, to pray and lay hands on



the newly baptized—that they might receive the Holy Spirit. This is the origin of our Sacrament of Confirmation (see Acts 19:5-6), by which the grace of Baptism is completed and believers are sealed with the Spirit promised by the Lord.

We remain in this grace so long as we love Christ and keep His commandments. And, strengthened in the Spirit whom Jesus said would be our Advocate, we are called to bear witness to our salvation—to the tremendous deeds that God has done for us in the name of His Son.

In today's Psalm, we celebrate our liberation. As He changed the sea into dry land to free the captive Israelites, Christ suffered that He might lead us to God, as we hear in today's Epistle.

This is the reason for our hope—the hope that sustains us in the face of a world that cannot accept His truth, the hope that sustains us when we are maligned and defamed for His name's sake.

Put to death in the flesh, He was brought to life in the Spirit, Paul tells us today. And as He himself promises: "Because I live, . . . you will live."

By Scott Hahn



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

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

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SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR A (Psalter Wk II)

Entrance Antiphon Cf. Is 48:20

Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard; proclaim to the ends of the earth: The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.

First Reading: Acts 8:5-8, 14-17

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 66

Cry out with joy to God all the earth.

Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:15-18

Gospel Acclamation: Cf. Jn 14:15-21

Alleluia, alleluia!!

Jesus said: "If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him." **Alleluia, alleluia!!**

Gospel: John 14:15-21

Communion Antiphon: Cf. 14:15-16

If you love me, keep my commandments, says the Lord, and I will ask the Father and he will send you another Paraclete, to abide with you for ever, alleluia.

SATURDAY 13h May

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot. Andres Cedena RIP (C. Yopez)

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

5.00pm Vigil Mass St John's - *People of the Parish*

5.50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot...

6.30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot...*Christopher Almeida RIP (Fatima Newnes)*

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 14th May

9:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot - People of Democratic Republic of Congo

11:00noon Mass St John's Wallingford - Increase in vocations

MONDAY 15th May - (No Mass)

TUESDAY 16th May.

12:00noon Mass St John's Wallingford...*Christopher Almeida RIP (Mary Almeida) ...Rosary for Peace*

WEDNESDAY 17th May -

9:00am Mass English Martyrs, Didcot - *Steven Paxford RIP (M. Healey)*

THURSDAY 18th May...THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

9:30am —Mass St John's Wallingford.....*Eleanor Mahy RIP*

9:30 am - Mass English Martyrs.....*Steven Paxford RIP (M. Healey)*

FRIDAY 19th May ...Dedication of the Cathedral of St John, Portsmouth

9.30.a.m Mass at the English Martyrs, Didcot...*Steven Paxford RIP (M. Healey)*

SATURDAY 20th May

9:30 Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot.....**NO MASS**

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

5.00pm Vigil Mass St John's - *Steven Paxford RIP (M. Healey)*

5.50pm Adoration before Vigil Mass at English Martyrs, Didcot...

6.30pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs, Didcot....*Suni Perera...Birthday Thanksgiving*

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 21st May

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, Fr Philip Harris, all the sick and housebound.



Everyone To Wear National Dress

Pentecost takes place on the 50th day after Easter Sunday. Are you ready for Pentecost? Our parish Liturgy Committee has come up with some suggested plans to celebrate this year. At each of the Vigil masses, the priest will invite us to pray to our Lady and the Lord's Prayer in our individual mother tongues or local dialects. This will be awesome.

On the morning of Sunday, at the 9.a.m and 11.am masses, we invite everyone to wear national dress, cheerful clothes, bring sports scarfs and maybe in Pentecost colors red, yellow, white. Remember to bring a national dish to share after Mass.

Remember, this day is to commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus Christ while they were in Jerusalem celebrating the Feast of Weeks, as described in the Acts of the Apostles. Let us share in this experience.



Plant/Veg For Sale

John Elsley has, as usual, potted and home-grown vegs, plants, flowers and they are ready to go. These plants would be available for sale after masses beginning mid May, here in English Martyrs, in the Church porch. Please help yourself and leave a donation in the box. Whatever is raised will be used to support the finance of the parish. Thank you!

Confirmation Program Off To A Great Start

Our Confirmation program kicked off May 4th, 2023 at 7.pm in the Tea Room in Didcot. In total, there are 12 Sessions. This First Session being an introductory session for all concerned (parents, candidates and facilitators) was well attended. The parish will be preparing 20 candidates for the sacrament. The sacrament will be conferred on the candidates in Portsmouth at a date to be communicated. The second confirmation session comes up, June 8th, 2023. Please hold the candidates, their parents and sponsors in your prayers

Learning Skills

Do you know anyone in primary school with learning or skills disability, who is dyslexic and require extra time and attention to their learning strategies and support with sounds, words and reading? Young people with multiple learning disability need support to help them with some areas of their life, such as eating, washing or personal care. But most of all friendship and a supportive environment. Please contact Janice Hassett via email.... janicehassett@hotmail.co.uk or call her on 07759911595

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Find our DIGITAL COLLECTION PLATE, contactless terminal at the church entrance. 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.



Resumption of Communion under Both Kinds

You will recall the Bishops' Conference have decided that a suitable time for the resumption of Holy Communion received under both species, post-Covid should be at the Mass of the Lord's Supper in Holy Week 2023, given the theological significance of the celebration. To this, re-education or catechesis was recommended as a synodal responses across the country aimed at helping people to deepen their understanding of the Mass, which lies at the heart of our Catholic faith. As a parish, it was decided we were not ready then. Now, the Liturgy Committee is fine tuning plans on how we are to return to communion under both kinds. Please if you have ideas or suggestions do speak with Father Dominic or send an email to the office.



Cardinal Nichols Reflects on the Coronation and Offers Prayers for the King

My brothers and sisters, in the wake of yesterday's remarkable and historic coronation of King Charles III, today we pray for him. Being King is not easy. Think of the unending, high expectations that are placed on him. Think of the relentless intrusion he has to bear. Think of the criticism that is constantly offered, and then of the crises through which he will be expected to provide leadership. So we pray for him today. There are three aspects in the readings that correspond to aspects of the coronation ceremony.



You might remember that the first words that King Charles spoke when he entered the Abbey were, "I come not to be served, but to serve." For some, it's easy to be cynical when we hear those words from a person of such privilege. But it is, I believe, his sincere intention. It's his way of echoing the priorities of his mother, and understanding the scope, responsibility and power which he has – he is there to serve. In the first reading, we heard of the importance of service in the life of the Early Church, when the apostles were being put under pressure by divisions between the Hebrews and the Greeks, and people were saying, "we're not getting our fair share of help." So deacons were appointed to put love into action, in service. It was the response of the Early Church, that service offered in love overcomes division and hostility. That can apply in society as a whole and within the circles of our own families. I remember listening to a wise leader of the Sikh community in Birmingham. People often brought their family difficulties to him seeking advice. "When I am faced with a husband and wife who are rowing constantly," he said. "I say to them, 'before you go to sleep at night, you must wash each other's feet.'" A Sikh calling on that wonderful example of Christ which was echoed again in the Coronation ceremony. So we can make our own that sense of service in our lives, too. The second aspect comes from the First Letter of St Peter, that we have just heard, and Peter's appeal to us, "Set yourself close to Christ." There were many ways in which that was symbolised in the ancient rituals of the Coronation service. We had the period of silent prayer at the beginning; the moment when the King kissed the Bible, and then his personal prayer, said out loud, begging God that he be a blessing on all people. Then, of course, his anointing and robing, before the blessing, of which I was privileged to play a part. Followed by the Eucharist. In all these ways, the King was being placed close to Christ. He echoes the faith of his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, who year after year spoke to us of how Christ was at the foundation of her life. These are words for us too. Let us set ourselves close to Christ in those same ways. In our reverence for the Word of God, the Scriptures, in our daily practise of prayer, first thing in the morning and last thing at night. In our sharing in public prayer, in the circle of our family life, and in centring our lives on the Mass, on the sacrifice of Christ and receiving his precious body and blood. The third aspect comes from today's Gospel. The Coronation has been spoken of as a day of destiny for Charles. It is true, from birth he was destined for this moment. The Coronation is the start, an ongoing part of the King's destiny. Yet, at work here is a larger sense of destiny. Faith is a clear statement, a shining truth, that our destiny is a place in our Father's House. That is our destiny. And Jesus says there is a place for each of us in that house. He assures us that our fulfilment is there, and that our lives, in his hands, will find that full and final destiny. Our lives, the life of the whole world, are being drawn in an upward movement to fulfilment, fulfilment in our Father's House. Also in this Gospel passage, in a slightly mysterious way, we learn that that destiny starts now, here. Because, as Jesus says, 'to see me is to already see the Father'. To share life with Jesus is already to have begun eternal life. There is a unity between the Father and the Son, and in him we are offered our way, our truth and our life. It is with this sense of destiny that we strive to overcome our daily difficulties and to grow in trust in the pathway of faith, in our beloved Saviour: a pathway of being close to Christ, of knowing our destiny and of being of service to all. This is so important, it is our trust and joy, for king and for commoner exactly alike. Amen.

Parish Council Meeting

The next Parish Council meeting will take place, May 17th, 2023 at 7p.m at the Parish Presbytery, Didcot. If you have ideas or areas of the parish life you wish discussed, kindly speak with Edwin Samu, Anne-Marie Bromley or Father Dominic. Thank You!

Our Church, the English Martyrs Didcot will be open daily for private prayers between 8am and 5pm.

Parish Safeguarding Rep

Our Safety Officer for all adult and child safeguarding issues is Stefania Harford, please contact Stefania via the parish office on 01235 812338, if there is no response and in an emergency then dial 999.