

Declaration of the Catholic Ordinaries on the Ceasefire in Gaza



The Catholic Ordinaries of the Holy Land welcome the announcement of the ceasefire in Gaza, which aims to end the hostilities in Gaza, return the Israeli hostages and release the Palestinian prisoners. We hope that this ceasefire will mark an important end to the violence that has caused immeasurable suffering. It is a necessary step to halt the destruction and meet the urgent humanitarian needs of countless families affected by the conflict.

However, we are aware that the end of the war does not mean the end of the conflict. It is therefore necessary to seriously and credibly address the deep-rooted issues that have been at the root of this conflict for far too long. Genuine and lasting peace can only be achieved through a just solution that addresses the origin of this long-standing struggle. This requires a long process, a willingness to acknowledge each other's suffering and a focused education in trust that leads to overcoming fear of the other and the justification of violence as a political tool.

We pray that this ceasefire will bring a sense of serenity and relief to all. May this moment of calm allow all to find solace, rebuild their lives and regain hope for the future.

We sincerely hope that this ceasefire marks the beginning of a new path towards reconciliation, justice and sustainable peace. May this be the first step on a path that promotes healing and unity among all the people of the Holy Land.

We eagerly await the return of pilgrims to the Holy Places in the Holy Land. The Holy Places are meant to be places of prayer and peace, and we long for the day when pilgrims can visit them again in safety and spiritual joy.

Despite the pain we have suffered, we continue to look to the future with unwavering hope. May this ceasefire inspire new efforts for dialog, mutual understanding and lasting peace for all. At the beginning of the Jubilee Year dedicated to hope that does not disappoint, we read in this event a sign that reminds us of God's faithfulness.

Finally, we call on political leaders and the international community to develop a clear and just political vision for the post-war period. A future built on dignity, security and freedom for all peoples is a prerequisite for true and lasting peace. We urge all parties to implement the immediate steps and negotiate the future steps of the agreement in good faith. May the Lord bless this land with peace and lead us all on the path of reconciliation and healing.

Source: www.cbcew.org.uk

New Day Dawns

The meaning of today's liturgy is subtle and many-layered.

We need background to understand what's happening in today's First Reading.

Babylon having been defeated, King Cyrus of Persia decreed that the exiled Jews could return home to Jerusalem. They rebuilt their ruined temple (see Ezra 6:15-17) and under Nehemiah finished rebuilding the city walls (see Nehemiah 6:15).

The stage was set for the renewal of the covenant and the re-establishment of the Law of Moses as the people's rule of life. That's what's going on in today's First Reading, as Ezra reads and interprets (see Nehemiah 8:8) the Law and the people respond with a great "Amen!"

Israel, as we sing in today's Psalm, is rededicating itself to God and His Law. The scene seems like the Isaiah prophecy that Jesus reads from in today's Gospel.

Read all of Isaiah 61. The "glad tidings" Isaiah brings include these promises: the liberation of prisoners (61:1); the rebuilding of Jerusalem, or Zion (61:3-4; see also Isaiah 60:10); the restoration of Israel as a kingdom of priests (61:6; Exodus 19:6); and the forging of an everlasting covenant (61:8; Isaiah 55:3). It sounds a lot like the First Reading.

Jesus, in turn, declares that Isaiah's prophecy is fulfilled in Him. The Gospel scene, too, recalls the First Reading. Like Ezra, Jesus stands before the people, is handed a scroll, unrolls it, then reads and interprets it (compare Luke 4:16-17, 21 and Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10).

We witness in today's Liturgy the creation of a new people of God. Ezra started reading at dawn of the first day of the Jewish new year (see Leviticus 23:24). Jesus also proclaims a "sabbath," a great year of Jubilee, a deliverance from slavery to sin, a release from the debts we owe to God (see Leviticus 25:10).

The people greeted Ezra "as one man." And, as today's Epistle teaches, in the Spirit the new people of God—the Church—is made "one body" with Him.

Scott Hann



English Martyrs
Vale of White Horse
Pastoral Area

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3RD SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME YEAR C

Entrance Antiphon: Ps 95:1

O Sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

First Reading: Nehemiah 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 19

Your words, O Lord, are spirit and life.

Second Reading: Corinthians 12:12-30

Gospel Acclamation: Lk 4:18

Alleluia, alleluia!!

The Lord has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor; to proclaim liberty to the captives.

Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Communion Antiphon: Ps 33:6

Look toward the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

SATURDAY 25th January ... The Conversion of St Paul

9:30 am NO MASS ... English Martyrs Didcot

4:30 pm Adoration 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 26th January

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

MONDAY 27th January ... NO MASS ... St Angela Merici

TUESDAY 28th January ... NO MASS ... St Thomas Aquinas

WEDNESDAY 29th January

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

THURSDAY 30th January ... NO MASS

FRIDAY 31st January ... St John Bosco

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot

SATURDAY 1st February ... Our Lady on Saturday

9:30 am NO MASS ... English Martyrs Didcot

4:30 pm Adoration 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 ... François Tanguy, Pedro Salazar & Liam Payne RIP (Cristina Yopez)

SUNDAY 2nd February ... The Presentation of the Lord

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Soniya Mathew's intention

11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

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



DEATH/FUNERAL NOTICE

Paul McCann RIP ... Requiem Mass @1:30pm, 28th January, Didcot



Second Collection for St John's Cathedral 26th January

Since I became Dean of our Cathedral Church of St John the Evangelist in September 2022, the parish has had to pay for the emergency repair of three serious roof leaks, as well as the replacement of two failing flat roofs. The cost of these repairs was met from parish funds. In 2023, the 120-year-old West Window had to be shored up, removed and completely restored to prevent its imminent collapse. So far, generous donors from the parish and from across the diocese have contributed £84,130 of the £90,100 cost of repair.



Our most recent quinquennial architectural survey (autumn 2023) indicated work required over the next few years to the roof, windows, heating, and electrical systems at an estimated cost of £2 million plus VAT.

I fully appreciate the financial pressures being felt by you and by your parishioners but would appeal to you to promote and support the Second Collection for the Cathedral on 26th January. Never has this annual collection by parishes for the Mother Church of the Diocese been more critical or needed. Your support is vitally important to us. Bishop Philip, Diocese of Portsmouth.

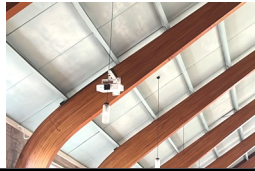
Online donations for the Second Collection can be made at the following link: <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/st-johns-cathedral-second-collection-2025> or by scanning the QR code below with a Smart Phone.



Overhead Projectors and New Audio System installed at English Martyrs Didcot

We are delighted to announce that two overhead projectors and a new audio system have been installed at English Martyrs Didcot on 20th and 21st January. The new audio system provides two wireless microphones and improved control of our existing audio system. The new projectors will come in use in February, providing image projections on two new screens.

These will be used to project lyrics for the hymns and other information related to the mass or our parish. We would like to thank Fr Dominic, the Diocese of Portsmouth, and our Finance Team for their hard work to make this happen. We hope the new audio and visual facilities will help to provide a better church experience for our parishioners, and look into future opportunities to allow a variety of activities to take place in our church. We welcome suggestions and thank you all for the inconveniences caused during the installation work last week.



No mass on Saturday mornings at English Martyrs Didcot

There is NO MASS at 9:30 am on Saturdays at English Martyrs Didcot. Adoration will take place at 9:00 am on Saturdays at English Martyrs Didcot in the month of January. Vigil mass on Saturday will be at 6:30 pm as usual at English Martyrs. Thank you.

Jubilee Catholic Young Writer Award

The Catholic Union Charitable Trust is delighted to sponsor the 2025 Catholic Young Writer Award in this Jubilee Year with the theme 'Jesus Christ, Son of God'.

The Catholic Young Writer Award was launched by The Keys, the Catholic Writers Guild of England of England and Wales in the 1990s and has been flourishing ever since. It is now sponsored by the Catholic Union Charitable Trust. The winners are invited to the Annual Meeting of the Catholic Union, held each Autumn in London, to receive their prizes from the President, Baroness Hollins.

The Catholic Young Writer Award is open to young Catholics (and pupils at Catholic schools) in England and Wales in secondary years 8-11 inclusive. There is a cash prize of £50.00 for the best essay, plus a number of runner-up book prizes. The deadline for entry is 30 May 2025. For more information, visit <https://catholicunion.org.uk/2025/01/catholic-young-writer-award-2025/>.



February Seniors' Lunch and Mass For Seniors 13th February

Seniors' Lunch is back! The first Seniors' Lunch in 2025 will take place on Thursday 13th February at 12:00 pm in our Tearoom in Didcot. A Mass for Seniors will start at 11:30 am in English Martyrs Church Didcot before the start of the Seniors' Lunch. Please invite anyone in the parish or people you know who want to get connected and enjoy a hot meal with us. Thank you.



Thank you from Canon Peter Turbitt

Thank you for the gifts and Christmas cards from all of you. I hope you had had a wonderful time with your family and loved ones over the holidays and be full of blessings for the new year. Canon Peter.



Isaac and Nathaniel Kershaw - trip to Kampala, Uganda in February

We want to thank all the wonderful parishioners of Didcot and Wallingford and especially Jacquie, Gay and the Children's Liturgy group for helping us raise funds for this trip and to give to the children in the Mercy for Life orphanage. We are making one final appeal and ask for donations of children's and teen clothing next Sunday 26th January. We plan to take a large suitcase each and fill it with good quality clothing to leave with the orphanage. There are seven young people going with our leaders Andy and Maria Rodrigues. The trip is from 15th to 23rd February. Thank you for your generous support! Isaac and Nathaniel Kershaw



CAFOD Meeting in February — All Are Welcome

CAFOD meeting is on Saturday 22nd February from 10:30am to 1pm at Christ the King Church Hall Reading RG2 8NR. Please join us to find out how your donations to CAFOD are making a difference to communities in Kenya. Everyone is welcome and please book your place so that we have an idea of numbers by emailing Jo on jlewry@cafod.org.uk.



Recruitment of Accountant for St Amand's Catholic Primary School

The School Governors of St Amand's Catholic Primary School are looking for someone with an accounting background/experience of auditing basic accounts, who can spare an hour or two to do a basic audit of our School PTA's accounts and the School Building Fund account. This shouldn't take more than a few hours and the school would be very grateful for anyone who is willing to offer their time to help us out. Please contact Debbie Morton, office.3855@st-amands.oxon.sch.uk or 01235833342 in the school office if you feel can you help. Thank you.



Leave your mark – Do something amazing today by supporting your family, friends & faith with a Gift in your Will

The Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth has partnered with market-leading solicitors and will-writing providers to offer anyone over 18 to easily write or update a basic simple or mirror Will for free. Whether you would like to write your Will in person, online or over the phone, you will be expertly supported through the process. You are under no obligation to leave the Diocese a gift in your Will, but a gift of this kind is an opportunity to make a lasting gift to God and His Church.

Making or updating a Will is an expression of profound confidence that Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life; it is a mature and thoughtful way of acknowledging our own mortality. Making provision for the Church in our Will is a continuation and crown of the service we ourselves may have offered over many years, in terms of our time, our talents and our treasure. It is following in the footsteps of all those whose generosity in generations past has bequeathed us the Church we know and love today.

Once you have considered your loved ones, you may choose to leave a legacy to a specific cause, Pastoral Area or parish in the Diocese; or, as good stewards, we will apply any gift given for the Diocese's general charitable purposes where there is the greatest need. Do please get in touch if you would like further information by emailing: fundraising@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

