

## Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024

**“You can heal me.”**

The hospital movement began when Jesus welcomed lepers into his presence and said one word in Greek, which we translate as “I want to.”

Medieval pilgrimages led to the development of hospitals. Since people often made pilgrimages because they were unwell, they needed places to stay. So, hospital meant, literally, a place for guests, a word derived from the Latin “*hospes*”, meaning “stranger” or “guest”. The guest-house owners gradually developed considerable medical knowledge and practical ways of helping sick people to recover.

Christianity and health care have long been closely associated. The World Day for the Sick, which is celebrated today, was instituted in 1992 by Pope St John Paul II. He intended it to be “a special time of prayer and sharing, of offering one’s suffering for the good of the Church and of reminding everyone to see in his sick brother or sister the face of Christ”.

Appropriately, the World Day for the Sick is celebrated on the Feast Day of Our Lady of Lourdes, although this year it is not observed, as it falls on a Sunday. Nevertheless, it makes today a very good day for thinking and praying about healing and health care, and our Bible readings provide us with a focus.

The contrast between the passages from the Old and New Testaments is striking.

The “lepers” of the Bible were clearly people with severe skin disfigurements. Whether or not they suffered from leprosy, sometimes known as “Hansen’s disease”, the Old Testament law about leprosy was a form of both exclusion and inclusion. At that time leprosy was thought to be highly contagious, so it was, in part, practical. If the skin condition was severe enough, according to the judgement of a priest, the leper was forced to live at the edge of the camp -- not completely excluded but travelling on the periphery.

By contrast, in Mark’s Gospel Jesus is “moved with pity” for the leper who approaches him, even reaching out to touch him. Then he says a word that we translate as the phrase “I want .”

Christianity didn’t invent medicine, or even make great progress in finding cures, although inventive medieval monks and many Christians throughout history have contributed greatly to modern health care. Rather, Jesus brought sick people into the very heart of Christianity. The hospital is a work of Christ because it reverses the practice of excluding sick people and gathers them into a place of care.

Despite the very real risk of infection, the medieval hostellers kept caring for sick pilgrims, believing that to die in their service assured their own place in heaven. Today, the many Christians working in modern health care - and those who don’t — make caring their business. Perhaps we should all take the word “carer” more literally because we are all involved in the business of caring.

So, what is the meaning of caring in this sense? Ways in which we can help include encouraging and praying for medical staff. But “carer” is not just a term for someone who works in health care. It is wider and deeper than that. A carer is anyone whose care is visible in their actions, which is the goal of every Christian. Through caring, we make our faith visible and share it with others. For what is truly in our heart will be truly in our actions.

As carers in this sense, we share our faith, although this doesn't mean trying to press it on other people. Our Lord and his disciples learned to go where they were invited. Evangelisation is always a response, never an imposition. We should trust that our faith is visible through our caring actions. We might say that we need to have faith about faith itself. Faith will find a way.

**Like the original medieval hospitals, many places of care are also places of pilgrimage. Whatever help we can offer each other, life will end one day. No one is outside the care of God because God wishes to work through us. This is the message of Lourdes. Sick people are not to be excluded, but through care and compassion for them, we can bring about the healing of humankind.**

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**Welcome** and thank you to Mgr Jim Overton for celebrating the Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses this weekend.

**Fr Sidon Sagar.** Please keep Fr Sidon in your prayers as he enjoys a break with his family.

**Monthly teas and coffees in the parish hall after 9.15am Mass this Sunday 11<sup>th</sup>**

**February.** Please do go through to the hall after Mass.

**Weekday Masses.** Mass this week on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> February (9.15am) will be said in St Joseph's Chapel.

**Ash Wednesday, Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> February, is a day of Fasting and Abstinence.**

There will be Mass with the distribution of Ashes at 9.15am and 7.00pm.

*There will be a retiring collection after both Masses for the Latin Patriarch in Jerusalem (to support people in Gaza).* **Please note cash donations only** – we cannot take card donations for this appeal.

**Stations of the Cross, Fridays in Lent at 7.00pm starting on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February.**

**Eucharistic Holy Hour** – No Holy Hour on the first Fridays during Lent as there will be Stations of the Cross. Holy Hour will resume after Easter.

**Lent My Day by Day booklets are now available in the narthex.** Please place your donation, £1.00, in the Publications Box in the wall in the narthex.

**Joyce Shelley RIP.** The funeral for Joyce will take place on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> February at 11.15am.

**Andrew Martin Mutton RIP.** The funeral for Andrew will take place on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February. More details to follow.

**Pauline Gore RIP.** Please pray for the repose of the soul of Pauline who died this week.

**Marian Year, 11<sup>th</sup> February to 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2024.** We, the Sons of Divine Providence, are celebrating the Marian Year and invite you to join us to celebrate the year with devotion and veneration to Mary, Mother of God.

**Mass Intentions.** If you wish to book a Mass, please drop your intention envelope in the box at the back of the church in the offertory collection or through the presbytery letterbox. *Please use the new blue donation envelopes if you are able to make your Mass offering under Gift Aid.*

**Bucket Collection.** The Bucket Collection is for TALK Surrey – *supporting people with Aphasia after a stroke or brain injury.* You will find the donations box in the wall at the back of the church.

**Ecumenical World Day of Prayer** on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> March at the Salvation Army, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford at 10.30am. All welcome.

**The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London** is holding a Divine Mercy Lenten Retreat on Saturday 24 February 2024 from 1:30 pm - 4:30 pm at St. Lawrence Church, 1 Hamilton Road, Sidcup Kent DA15 7HB. The Retreat will include teachings on the Message of Mercy, Stations of the Cross, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. All Welcome. Please call Millie on 07957 594646 for more information.

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**This Sunday's readings, Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

*Leviticus 13: 1-2, 44-46; 1 Corinthians 10: 31-11: 1; Mark 1: 40-45*

**Next Sunday's readings, First Sunday of Lent, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

*Genesis 9: 8-15; 1 Peter 3: 18-22; Mark 1: 12-15*

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**Offertory Collection.**

Thank you for your offertories last week:

Loose Plate £528.32; Envelopes £206.50; Standing Orders £900.00

Contactless £137.00 (*The Dona contactless PayPoint is in the narthex*)

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**MANNA Foodbank.** This week's shortages: *Tinned Hot Meat Meals - Chilli, Curry, Bolognese, Chicken, etc; Tinned Cold Meat - Ham, Chicken, Luncheon Meat etc; Tinned Carrots, Green Beans, Mixed Vegetables; Wrapped Chocolate Biscuits - Penguins, Kit-Kats etc; Fruit Squash; Tinned Fruit - especially small tins pineapple, mandarins, apricots, pears; Mug-Shot sachets (or similar); Tinned Mixed Bean Salad, Butter Beans and Kidney Beans; Cereal and Breakfast Bars; Small Jars of Instant Coffee; Tomato Ketchup; Small bags of Loose Rice 500g; Large and Small bags of Sugar; Bars of Jelly; Shaving Foam/Gel; Sanitary Towels/Tampons; Toilet Rolls; Toothpaste; Men's 2in1 Shower Gel/Shampoo; Deodorant; Disposable Razors; Laundry powder/tablets/capsules/liquid.*

Please leave your donations on the Presbytery doorstep or in the Narthex.

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**Safeguarding** If you've any concerns or require advice regarding the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult, please contact our parish safeguarding rep, Tiziana Demurtas on 07778 533932 or ashfordsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk

You can also contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on 020 7798 9356 or

[safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk)

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**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

*During Adoration after Saturday morning Mass (and by appointment)*

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

*To arrange a baptism please refer to the parish website*

*For the parish Mass timetable, please refer to the parish website:*

**<http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford>**

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PLEASE PRAY

for all the sick and housebound in our parish.

for anniversaries in February since 2017: Anastasia Alexander, John Curran, Marie Day, Maria Ibbett, Patricia Manners, Dermod Murphy, Philip Richards, Richard Richardson, Anne Shenton, ETTY Smale, Eileen Fox, Petra Towns, Jean Walker, Shirley Worley.

for Fr Sidon Sagar, Fr Carlo Mazzotta, and the parishioners of St Michael's and for the staff and patients of Ashford Hospital in the Upper Thames Deanery.

for the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that those who are in the final stages of life, and their families, may receive the necessary medical and human care and accompaniment.

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## Mass Intentions 11<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> February

Sun 11<sup>th</sup> **Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time**

(Saturday Vigil Mass)	06.00pm	Anne Shenton RIP
	09.15am	Richard O'Neill RIP
	11.30am	Patricia Gillespie's intentions
	06.00pm	The people of the parish

Mon 12 <sup>th</sup>	09.15am	Herme Simons RIP
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Tues 13 <sup>th</sup>	09.15am	Shirley Ingham RIP
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Wed 14<sup>th</sup> **Ash Wednesday**

	09.15am	Janet Mascarenhas RIP
	07.00pm	The people of the parish

Thurs 15 <sup>th</sup>	11.15am	<b>Funeral of Joyce Shelley</b>
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Fri 16 <sup>th</sup>	09.15am	Lee Gibson's intentions
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Sat 17 <sup>th</sup>	09.15am	Robert Wilson RIP
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Sun 18<sup>th</sup> **First Sunday of Lent**

(Saturday Vigil Mass)	06.00pm	Joan DePasquale RIP
	09.15am	Keith Munro RIP and Christine Scanlon RIP
	11.30am	Trevor and Peggy Gillan's intentions
	06.00pm	The people of the parish

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## St Michael's Catholic Church

112 Clarendon Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2QD

Telephone: 01784 252230

Email: [ashford@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:ashford@rcdow.org.uk)

Website: <http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford>

This parish is part of the Westminster Catholic Diocese Trustee Charity no. 233699

**Fr Sidon Sagar FDP: Parish Priest, Fr Carlo Mazzotta FDP: Assistant Priest**

**Parish Secretary: Mrs Shenda Holmes**

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm