

# First Sunday of Lent, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2024

## **"Repent and believe the Gospel."**

*"People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in."*

**It was in December 1955 that Rosa Parks, an African American woman, was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. Her fight against racial injustice began early in her life. "Back then," she said in an interview, "we didn't have any civil rights. It was just a matter of survival, of existing from one day to the next." As a child she had seen the Ku Klux Klan riding by, and she had been afraid that her house would be burnt down. She decided that it was important for her to get involved and to challenge the authorities that introduced racial segregation. Her actions resulted initially in the Montgomery bus boycott and eventually in a legal ruling that segregation on public transport was unconstitutional. Her determination not to be seen as a second-class citizen brought about massive change in society. It was not without personal cost, though, as she was arrested and lost her job. In an interview in 1992 she said, "I had not planned to get arrested. I had plenty to do without having to end up in jail. But when I had to face that decision, I didn't hesitate to do so because I felt that we had endured that too long. The more we gave in, the more we complied with that kind of treatment, the more oppressive it became."**

Today we hear of the time that Jesus spent in the desert, after being baptised. We learn that he goes on to Galilee and calls on the people to repent and believe in the gospel.

There is a strong theme of repentance in today's readings, as well as a sense of the opportunity of a fresh start. In the first reading, we hear that when the flood is over, God creates a covenant with Noah, his descendants, and all living creatures. In the second reading, Peter reminds his listeners that they are changed through baptism. In both the first and second readings there is a turning around that brings comfort and encouragement — a turning towards God and away from the things that keep us from God.

Another theme here is relationship. We are creatures in relationship with our neighbours and with all living creatures, as well as with God. We hear today how Jesus tells the crowds that the kingdom of God is close at hand. The kingdom is good news for all, especially those who are poor or disadvantaged, oppressed or enslaved. It is freedom - not to hurt, but to heal, not to divide, but to bring together.

The crowds listening to Jesus are invited to change direction - to create better relationships with each other, with God and with their neighbour. The kingdom is one of justice and of peace. Injustice keeps us all apart from one another; it divides and polarises us.

**Sometimes it feels as if Lent could be a rather gloomy season, but it is also a time of blessing. It gives us time to reflect, and it is a great opportunity to commit to change, to take a new direction in our lives, to make a fresh start. As Sr Laurentia Johns OSB writes, "From wherever we may have wandered through neglect, poor choices, stress, busyness, God never tires of calling us back."**

**In order to commit to change and to seek a different direction, we first need to be aware of what needs to change. What is pulling us in the wrong direction, and how can we turn around?**

It is not that we will never make mistakes or choose the wrong path. But as Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, "Holiness does not consist in never having erred or sinned. Holiness increases the capacity for conversion, for repentance, for willingness to start again..." **"Because we are creatures in relationship, this conversion - this need for change — is not**

just an individual matter. Like Rosa Parks, if we open our eyes, we can see the need for change at a community level. Where do we see poverty and injustice? Where do we hear words of hatred and condemnation towards those who are different? What is happening to the beautiful world full of exquisite living creatures that God created? It is time to raise our voices in witness to the truth of the Gospel, even at personal cost. The kingdom is at hand.

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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.

**Weekday Mass.** Mass this week on Monday (9.15am) and Wednesday (6.00pm) will be in St Joseph's Chapel.

**Stations of the Cross on Fridays in Lent at 7.00pm.**

**Andrew Martin Mutton RIP.** The Funeral of Andrew Mutton is on Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> February at 11.00am.

**Deacon Stephen Pickard RIP.** Please pray for the repose of the soul of Deacon Stephen Pickard, St Alban and St Stephen Church, St Alban's, who died on 11<sup>th</sup> February.

**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. We will recite the *Orionine Marian Year Prayer* after Mass each day – you will find prayer cards in the narthex.

**Cardinal's Lenten Appeal 2024.** If you can, please show your support for the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal. All funds raised go towards projects across the Diocese. Each year, the Diocese uses donations made to support the work of its services, such as *Marriage & Family Life*, *Youth Ministry* and *Education*. Funds are also used to support the work of *Caritas Westminster*, who work for and with some of the most vulnerable people in our Diocese. Cardinal Nichols has expressed his gratitude to everyone who supports the Appeal. Please do take a donation envelope, which you will find in the narthex. The donations box is at the back of the church or you may use the QR code to make your donation online.

**Crib Donations.** Thank you for your donations of £334.29 for the Catholic Children's Society.

**Parish Bingo Night.** Thank you to all who organised the Bingo Night last Saturday and to those who attended. £557.02 was raised for the parish.

**Repository.** On sale now Mother's Day cards and St Patrick's cards and badges. There are still a few calendars and diaries left.

**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. The donations box in the wall at the back of the church.

**Antiques Fair.** The next Antiques Fair is on **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February**, 10.00am to 3.00pm in the parish hall. Please do go and have a browse through the stalls. More information from Anna Hogan on 01784 254462.

**CAFOD Family Fast Day, Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February.** There will be a retiring collection for CAFOD next weekend. You will find the donation envelopes in the narthex.

This Lent, your donations will help hardworking people like James the fisherman in Liberia with resources, tools and training to feed their families for good. Make your donation using the envelope or online at [cafod.org.uk](http://cafod.org.uk) and please join us in praying with James that our sisters and brothers around the world have what they need to feed their families. Use the envelope in church or give online at [cafod.org.uk](http://cafod.org.uk). To find out about volunteering opportunities with CAFOD visit [Volunteer \(cafod.org.uk\)](http://Volunteer.cafod.org.uk)

**Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 2:30pm.** The Cardinal is inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese, who are celebrating their **5<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> (and every year over 60)** wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage in 2024. If you are celebrating an anniversary, please give Shenda in the parish office the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and email (or telephone number, if no email) by **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024**.

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

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#### **This 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*

#### **Next Sunday's readings, Second Sunday of Lent, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

*Genesis 22: 1-2, 9-13, 15-18; Romans 8: 31-34; Mark 9: 2-10*

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#### **Offertory Collection.**

Thank you for your offertories last week:

Loose Plate £540.90; Envelopes £218.60; 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 Carrots, Green Beans, Mixed Vegetables; Wrapped Chocolate Biscuits - Penguins, Kit-Kats etc; Fruit Squash; Tinned Fruit - especially small tins pineapple, mandarins, apricots, pears; Tinned Salmon; Tinned Mixed Bean Salad, Butter Beans and Kidney Beans; Cereal and Breakfast Bars; Small Jars of Instant Coffee; Tomato Ketchup; Chocolate Spread; Large and Small bags of Sugar; Blocks of Jelly; Family packs Adult Toothbrushes; Shaving Foam/Gel; Sanitary Towels/Tampons; Toilet Rolls; Kitchen Rolls - smaller rolls if possible; Liquid Handwash; Deodorant; Disposable Razors.*

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](mailto: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 18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> February

**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

**Mon 19<sup>th</sup>**

**09.15am**

A personal intention (workplace success)

**Tues 20<sup>th</sup>**

**09.15am**

Rejimon Thomas RIP

**Wed 21<sup>st</sup>**

**06.00pm**

For peace in the world

**Fri 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**09.15am**

Janet Mascarenhas RIP

**11.00 am**

**Funeral of Andrew Mutton**

**Sat 24<sup>th</sup>**

**09.15am**

Joaquim and Silvio Fernandes-in thanksgiving

**Sun 25<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday of Lent**

**(Saturday Vigil Mass)**

**06.00pm**

Magdalene Silva RIP

**09.15am**

The people of the parish

**11.30am**

Michael O'Shea RIP

**06.00pm**

Amancio Macale RIP

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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**