

Second Sunday of Lent, 16 March 2025

“Jesus took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray.”

A young father took his two children to see the rabbits in a small enclosure in a local park. Hoping to entice one of them to feed from his fingers, the six-year-old pulled a few blades of grass and held them through the wire netting. It was the first time that the toddler had ever seen a rabbit. Initially curious, he became excited when a large and particularly furry animal hopped towards his elder brother and nibbled the grass. For several seconds, the little boy couldn't move or speak. Immobilised with joy, his eyes said everything. His open-mouthed wonder caught the attention of every nearby adult. Suddenly complete strangers looked at each other and laughed. Sharing the brief experience of a toddler's joy brightened the day for people whose ways parted a short time later.

Transfiguration is transformation with a difference. We all know what it's like to pose for the camera. Sometimes the smile is like an advert for toothpaste: it doesn't travel as far as our eyes. There's no feeling in it. A genuine smile lights up a person's face and shows that life is worth living. Joy creates a different smile: a radiant light suddenly erupts deep within the heart, transforming a little corner of the world. Transfiguration is the smile that is bursting with joy. Transfiguration transforms others if their eyes and heart are open, even to mini miracles.

Peter, James and John accompanied Jesus up the mountain, not expecting the unique experience of the transfiguration, when Jesus' clothes became dazzlingly white and Moses and Elijah appeared. The Gospel tells us that the two most remarkable people in Jewish history, who represented the Law and prophets, spoke to Jesus about his forthcoming journey to Jerusalem and all that would happen there. Confused, the three apostles didn't know what to say or do. Peter's suggestion that they build three tents to honour the occasion was possibly the only thing he could think of at the time. Peter, James and John bowed down in fright and, looking up, saw “only Jesus”. In other words, despite seeing him in his heavenly glory, Jesus was also nobody to fear because he was such a familiar part of their lives. He might have been talking to Moses and Elijah, but Jesus was a young man who shared their lives and made them feel valued. He helped gut fish and cook a meal, lit a campfire, and slept beside them in the star-spangled wilderness. How could they describe or explain their experience? Would anybody believe them? The transfiguration transformed Jesus so that heaven and earth were one momentarily. The apostles briefly saw Jesus in heavenly glory, but also knew he was the person they already knew and loved — and were no longer afraid.

We can't plan for a transfiguration experience. The father wanted his children to enjoy visiting the rabbits but couldn't have expected the toddler to be completely overwhelmed by seeing an animal feed from his brother's fingers. Even the father was awestruck to see the child's reaction.

Peter, James and John had a similar experience. Jesus hadn't prepared them for what would happen when they climbed the mountain. They hadn't expected to see Jesus in glory, talking to Moses and Elijah. No wonder they were absolutely stunned by events and didn't know what to say or do! Jesus didn't need to tell them to say nothing until after the resurrection: they wanted time to think about what they had seen. Jesus knew that the transfiguration would only start to make sense after Calvary and the resurrection, the ascension and Pentecost, when the jigsaw pieces would start falling into place and they would begin to understand all that had happened.

As we go through Lent, we would like to be transformed by our experience and yet most of us must recognise that, by Easter, we'll probably be pretty much the same as we were on Ash Wednesday. Jesus' transfiguration didn't make heroes of Peter and James on Good

Friday! Today's Gospel holds out a promise: one day our hearts will be transfigured and bursting with joy. We too will see Jesus in glory — and yet because we already know and love Jesus, like Peter, James and John, we also have no need to be afraid.

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Parish Census Forms. We are conducting a parish census for the first time in ten years, and **we kindly request everyone to participate, whether you are currently registered with the parish or not. The old Parish Register will be deleted as its data storage does not comply with GDPR norms.** A new Parish Register will be created, so it is mandatory that you complete the census if you wish to be registered with the parish. Your input is invaluable to us. Please complete the census form by scanning this QR



code (which is also available in the Narthex) or by using the provided online link. <https://forms.office.com/e/GTfhzBCTBx?origin=lpLink>

You can also find the information on the parish website - Select the 'About' tab, then 'Parish Registration.'

Your cooperation and participation are greatly appreciated.

CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day, Friday 14th March. We take up the Annual Lent CAFOD Fast Day collection this weekend. You will find donations envelopes in the narthex. Donate online at cafod.org.uk/envelope or call 0303 303 3030. You can also text CAFODLENT to 70085 to donate £10. *Please place your donations in the free-standing wooden box by the hymn book trolleys.*

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

St Patrick, Patron of Ireland. We will celebrate the Feast of St Patick at the 9.15am Mass on Monday, 17th March.

Lenten Alms – Cardinal's Appeal. You will find donation envelopes in the narthex. The Donations Box will be available for donations from next weekend (22/23 March)

Lenten My Day By Day booklets are available in the narthex for £ 1.00 each. Please deposit your money in the Publications Box on the wall in the narthex.

Financial Report 2024. You will find copies of the financial report for the year-end 2024 in the narthex and on the parish website (on the newsletter page).

Signing of Certificates of Catholic Practice (CCP) for admission to St Michael's Nursery is in the presbytery on Monday, 31st March, 6.45- 7.30 pm. Please try to come at this time, rather than seeking an individual appointment.

Morning Teas and Coffees. Teas and Coffees will be in the Presbytery meeting room **after 9.15 am Mass on Tuesdays and Fridays.** All are welcome.

Flower Arranging. We are looking for someone to take over the running of the existing team of flower arrangers after Easter. If you would like to take on the role and/or would like some more information, please speak to Shenda in the parish office on 01784 252230 or ashford@rcdow.org.uk

Ladies Circle. We meet on **Thursday 20th March** at 8.00pm in the parish hall – celebrating St Patrick's Day and Bingo – please bring penty of change.

Antiques Fair. The next Antiques Fair is on **Saturday 22nd March**, 10.00am to 3.00pm. Stalls available to hire. Please call Ann Hogan for more information – 01784 254462. *This is the last Fair until September 2025.*

Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for Matrimony at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday, 17th May 2025, at 2:30 pm. The Cardinal invites couples in the Diocese to celebrate in 2025 their 5th, 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th, and 60th (and any year over 60) wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage. If you would like to attend, please give the following details to Shenda in the parish office **by Monday, 31st March**: husband and wife's names, wedding date, number of years married, postal address, email (or phone number, if no email).

Young Adults LENT RETREAT DAY with the Assumption Sisters **on Saturday 5th April 2025** 10 am – 5.30 pm. Venue: Milleret House, 20 Kensington Square, London, W8 5HH (closest tube station: High Street Kensington). Programme includes: talks; prayer; adoration and confessions; faith sharing; Mass and social time. Donations only. Register by emailing to: rebecca@assumpta-eu.org

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

Bucket Collection. The Bucket Collection is for Shooting Star Children's Hospices. The donations box is in the wall at the back of the church.

Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) is conducting a survey to understand the impact of the two-child benefit cap and the current economic climate on Catholic families in England and Wales. Please share your experience by completing the survey, which can be accessed at csan.org.uk/news/familysurvey, where you'll also find further information about the survey. **The survey will close on the 25th March.**

This Sunday's readings, Second Sunday of Lent, 16 March 2025

Genesis 15: 5-12, 17-18; Philippians 3; 17 – 4: 1; Luke 9: 28b-36

Next Sunday's readings, Third Sunday of Lent, 23 March 2025

Exodus 3; 1-8a, 13-15; 1 Corinthians 10: 1-6, 10-12; Luke 13: 1-9

Offertory Collection. Thank you for your offertories last week:

Loose Plate £677.35; Envelopes £221.40; Standing Orders £900.00

Contactless £290.00

MANNA Foodbank. This week's shortages: *Tea Bags in 40's packs (we have good stocks of other sizes); Cereal Bars; Instant Mashed Potato; Crackers; Bags of Sugar 500g; Tinned Corned Beef; Jars of Coffee 100g; Tinned Custard; Noodles for 1; Shaving Foam/Gel; Kitchen Roll (small rolls preferably); Laundry pods/liquid/powder/capsules; Men's warm gloves (new only) for our Homeless clients; Easter Eggs/Treats (best before date of at least end of April).* Please leave your donations in the box in the narthex.

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

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:

(see: Parish Life → Sacramental Preparation → Baptism)

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

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

PLEASE PRAY

For all the sick and housebound in our parish.

For anniversaries in March since 2018: Winifred Atkinson, Ben Boone, Kevin Carroll, Lena Chapman, Peggy Collins, Tina Edwards, Elizabeth Floyd, Christina Hunt, Jennifer Langan, Jeremiah McMullen, Lorraine Munro, Noel O'Neill, William O'Rourke, Barbara Parker, Joan Peters, Christopher Worley.

For Fr Philip Baptiste and the parishioners of St Theodore of Canterbury, Hampton in the Upper Thames Deanery.

For the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that broken families might discover the cure for their wound through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

Mass Intentions 16th - 23rd March

Sun 16th Second Sunday of Lent

(Saturday Vigil Mass)	06.00pm	Welby Cooper RIP
	09.15am	Lorraine Munro RIP
	11.30am	In thanksgiving
	06.00pm	The people of the parish

Mon 17th St Patrick, Bishop, Patron of Ireland

	09.15am	Margaret and Cliff Jones RIP
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Tues 18th	09.15am	A special intention
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Wed 19th	06.00pm	A special intention – Collette Maric
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Fri 21st	09.15am	Lee Gibson's intentions
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Sat 22nd	09.15am	Maisie Finley RIP
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Sun 23rd Third Sunday of Lent

(Saturday Vigil Mass)	06.00pm	Joakim Souza RIP
	09.15am	The people of the parish
	11.30am	John and Mary Daly RIP
	06.00pm	Juanita Oropeo RIP

St Michael's Catholic Church

112 Clarendon Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2QD
Telephone: 01784 252230; Email: 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