Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 8 November 2026

'Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.'

It is always very moving to visit a Commonwealth war cemetery. The sight of rows of gravestones stretching into the distance is very poignant. Walking along the rows, one is always struck by how young those who died were. They are mostly young men who gave their lives in service and sacrifice. Their religion is identified, and together they share in death. Different religions express the hope of eternal, immortal life through their symbols.

War is always a tragedy. St Augustine, who argued that, under certain conditions, war could be justified because of human sin, recognised war's tragedy and grieved deeply over the suffering and death it caused. He cried a lament about warfare: 'People say a wise person will fight in wars that are just. But if someone remembers they are human, they will grieve that they must fight at all – even in a just war. Anyone who feels joy at even a just war has lost touch with their humanity.' We weep at warfare and the suffering it causes. We also recognise the lives of those who died so that we might have freedom.

St Paul, writing to the Church in Thessalonica, consoles the early Christians about the Lord's second coming, which they expected, and writes to them about the hope of eternal life. Whether they are alive or dead when Christ returns, all will hear God's trumpet and rise to glory. The sound of the trumpet, as we hear in Handel's Messiah, has become a metaphor for the summons of death and calls for readiness to meet the Lord's merciful judgment.

This theme is repeated in the Gospel. We can understand the virgins carrying their lamps in the context of the wedding feast. After the betrothal, they often waited a long time before marriage. When the wedding day arrived, the bridegroom left his house with his entourage and walked to his bride's home. They then walked to their new house for the wedding feast, led by maiden friends bearing their lamps. Those unwilling to share their oil are not hard-hearted; rather, they fear that if they share it, there won't be enough to keep the lamps burning until they reach the groom and bride's new house. It would be embarrassing to lose the way in the darkness if the lamps went out.

Jesus' parable uses this image to symbolise the need to be ready to meet the Lord whenever he returns. We can think of the virgins as the Christian community waiting for the return of the Lord. Jesus warns his disciples to stay ready for this day and to live with fidelity to the Gospel at all times. The oil can be understood to represent the good deeds of a person's life. As St John of the Cross writes: 'At the end of your life, you will be judged on love.'

The words: 'Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour,' have become a warning to be ready. For those engaged in warfare, both in the Armed Forces and those who are suffering because of war, the closeness of death is a daily reality, and each moment of life is precious.

On this Remembrance Sunday, we pray for those who have died in warfare for freedom and security. We thank God for the chaplains who serve the forces, accompany members of the Armed Forces, and offer consolation and faith to those in their care. We also pray for peace in our world, and that we may find ways to overcome war through dialogue and understanding that lead to peacebuilding. Jesus tells us, 'Blessed are the peacemakers.'

This Sunday's readings also call us to face our own encounter with death with courage and Christian faith in Christ's resurrection. This faith leads to hope. It also leads to the love expressed by those who care for the sick and seek to save lives, paramedics and healthcare professionals.

We are encouraged to stay faithful in prayer, reconcile with God through the sacrament of reconciliation, and be open to receiving the sacraments and living a life of loving others.

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ACTIVE LIFE OF THE PARISH

Every 1st Sunday, we have tea and coffee after the 9.15am Mass in the parish hall. Remember, the joy of tea and coffee lies not just in the beverages themselves, ***but in the shared moments and conversations. Cheers to building beautiful connections over a cuppa!*** ☕

Morning Teas and Coffees. Tea and Coffee will be available in the Presbytery Meeting Room **after 9:15 a.m. Mass on Tuesdays and Fridays.** All are welcome.

Every 2nd Saturday after 9.15 am Mass: Garden Cleaning. 🪴 **Every 4th Saturday after 9.15 am Mass: Church Cleaning**

Dear Parents/Elders: Please note **STRICTLY NO FOOD** in the Church, and please give the Children **SOFT TOYS ONLY**

Church opening times. The church is now open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. (but not on Thursdays).

Saturday morning Mass. Please note that there will be no 9:15 a.m. Mass on the **3rd Saturday of the month**.

Thursdays. Kindly note that Thursday is the rest day for Fr. Sidon and Fr. Anthony. Please do not call at the presbytery except with a prior appointment or in an emergency.

Church Roof Appeal. If you would like to donate to the Roof Appeal, you will find envelopes in the narthex.
If you are donating by cash or cheque, please use the small blue envelope and complete Sections 1 to 3. (Tick 'other' in Section 3 and write *Church Roof Appeal*).
If you are donating by bank transfer, please complete the white form.
Please hand completed forms to the priest after weekend Masses or post them through the presbytery letterbox.

Sick and Retired Priests Collection. We will take up the annual diocesan collection for Sick and Retired Priests next weekend 14th/15th November. *You will find Gift Aid Donation envelopes in the narthex.*

Raymond Browne RIP. Raymond Browne's funeral will take place on **Monday, 9th November at 11.00am.**

Margaret Watson RIP. Margaret Watson's funeral will take place on **Wednesday, 11th November at 10.30 am.**

November Blessing of Graves. On **Saturday, 7th November,** I will bless the graves of members of your family at **Long Lane Cemetery** at **11.00 am, Stanwell Cemetery at 2.00 pm**, and **Staines Cemetery at 3.00 pm.**

November List. Envelopes for the names of your departed loved ones are now available in the narthex. Please place the completed envelopes in the wooden box at the back of the church. Two Masses per week in November will be offered for the souls of your departed families and friends on the November list.

St Michael Catholic Primary School Open Mornings. Are you interested in applying for your child to join our Reception classes at St Michael's in September 2027? Come along to one of our Open Mornings and see our wonderful school! Learn more about the school from the headteacher, Mr Lane, and enjoy a pupil-led tour. We recommend that only parents and carers attend: *Tuesday, 17th November, 9.30-11.30am and Thursday, 19th November, 9.30-11.30am.*

Certificates of Catholic Practice (CCP) signing for Reception 2027 entry will be held on **Wednesday 25th November - 9:00 am** to **1:00 pm**, and on **Friday 27th November - 6.45 to 7.45pm** *in the Presbytery*. ***Please bring your child's Baptism Certificate with you (not an image on your phone)***

Mass Intentions. If you wish to book a Mass, please drop your intention envelope in the weekend offertory collection bags or post 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 **the Sons of Divine Providence.**

📢✨ **Announcement: Ven. Father Agnelo Novena Mass** ✨📢

St Michael & St David parishioners are warmly invited to celebrate the Ven. Father Agnelo Novena Mass, celebrated by Father Renato Andrade, **on Monday, 9th November at 6:00 pm at St Michael Parish, Ashford**. ⛪🙏

☕🍪 **Tea and coffee will be served after Mass.**

Let us gather as one community in prayer and gratitude. 🙏❤️✨

Caritas Westminster will be running the following online sessions in November:

1. "It Does Matter" – an online session with Caritas Deaf Service, 7.00- 8.00 pm, Tuesday 10th November

https://caritaswestminster.org.uk/event/it-does-matter-online-session-with-the-deaf-service/

This session will explore how churches can become more welcoming, accessible, and inclusive, offer practical insights, raise awareness of the barriers people face, and encourage us all to play our part in ensuring everyone feels welcomed, valued, and able to participate fully in parish life.

2. Beneath the surface: Understanding Trauma, Wednesday 18th November 7.00–9.30pm

https://caritaswestminster.org.uk/event/beyond-the-surface-understanding-trauma/

This Sunday's Readings, Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time, 8th November 2026
(Mass book page 152)
Wisdom 6: 12-16; 1 Thessalonians 4: 13-18; Matthew 25: 1-13

Next Sunday's readings, Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, 15th November 2026
Proverbs 31: 10-13, 19-20, 30-31; 1 Thessalonians 5: 1-6; Matthew 25: 14-30

Offertory Collection. Thank you for your offerings last week:
Loose Plate £696.76; Envelopes £224.00; Contactless £373.33
Monthly Standing Orders in September: £2306.00

MANNA Foodbank. This week's shortages: *Boxes of Porridge Sachets; Small Tins of Potatoes - 300g/400g; Small Packs of Instant Mashed Potato (Smash type); Spam - small size 200g; Sugar - small size 500g; Crisps; Toilet Rolls; Single Adult Toothbrushes; Men's 2 in 1 Shower Gel 225ml.* Please leave your donations in the box in the narthex.

PLEASE PRAY

for all the sick and housebound in our parish.

For anniversaries in November since 2019: Mary Docherty, Francis Doherty, Evelyn Gallagher, Eunice Hatch, Neil Hogan, Dennis Holland, Philomena Kenna, Angela King, Catherine Lewis, Georgette Long, Elizabeth McGearty, Carmen Nunes, Domenico Stillitano, Dennis Syberg.

For Canon Peter Newby and the parishioners of St James, Twickenham in the Upper Thames Deanery, and for staff and students of St Mary's College, Twickenham.

for the Holy Father's Prayer Intention for the proper use of wealth: that not succumbing to the temptation of selfishness, it may always be put at the service of the common good and solidarity of those who have less.

Mass Intentions 8 - 15 November 2026

Sun	**8th**	**Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time**		
	(*Saturday Vigil*)	**06.00pm**	Gary Fox RIP
		09.15am	Silvana D'Cruz RIP
		11.30am	A special intention
		06.00pm	Holy Souls on the November List
Mon	**9th**	**The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica**	
		09.15am	Patricia Afonso RIP
		11.00am	**FUNERAL OF RAYMOND BROWNE**
Tues	**10th**	**St Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church**	
		09.15am	Holy Souls on the November List
Wed	**11th**	**St Martin of Tours, Bishop**	
		10.30am	**FUNERAL OF MARGARET WATSON**
		06.00pm	John Reilly RIP
Fri	**13th**	**09.15am**	In thanksgiving – Reagan and Mellany
Sat	**14th**	**09.15am**	Holy Souls on the November List
Sun	**15th**	**Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time**	
(*Saturday Vigil*)		**06.00pm**	Intentions of Priya Rodrigues, Sasha Karkada and Maria DaSilva
		09.15am	Margaret Hollinshead RIP
		11.30am	Claire De Souza intentions
		06.00pm	The people of the parish

St Michael's Catholic Church

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Website: *http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford*

This parish is part of the Westminster Catholic Diocese Trustee Charity no. 233699
Parish Priest: Fr Sidon Sagar FDP; Assistant Priest: Fr Anthony Cruz, Jesu Dass FDP
Parish Secretary: Mrs Shenda Holmes
Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm