



# CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY & ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY



PP: Fr Denis Sarsfield. Parish Office: 01462 893127. Email: Baldock@rcdow.org.uk

## First Sunday of Lent 22nd February 2026

### The Journey of Lent: Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving

#### *Reflection on Matthew 4:1-11*

As we step into the sacred season of Lent, we begin a forty-day journey of renewal, reflection, and conversion. Lent invites every Christian to turn back to God with all their heart, drawing closer through the practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Each of these disciplines shapes our soul, teaching us to depend less on the world and more on God's grace.

The Gospel proclaimed on the First Sunday of Lent (Matthew 4:1-11) portrays Jesus being led by the Spirit into the desert to be tempted by the devil. For forty days and nights, He fasts and prays, confronting temptation with the Word of God. His victory over the devil becomes our model for spiritual strength and obedience. Just as Jesus relied on Scripture, so too are we called to anchor our hearts in God's Word during this holy season.

Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent, reminds us that "we are dust and to dust we shall return." The ashes placed on our foreheads are not a symbol of despair, but of hope—a visible sign that we are being renewed in Christ. This humble act acknowledges our mortality and expresses our desire for conversion and new life.

**Prayer is one of the central pillars of Lent.** In prayer, we open our hearts to God, not simply to ask for things, but to listen attentively to His voice. Lent calls us to deepen our personal relationship with the Lord through silence, reflection, and gratitude. Whether praying the Psalms, meditating on the rosary, or spending time in Eucharistic adoration, we are invited to dwell in God's presence and allow His Spirit to transform our hearts.

**The second Lenten pillar, fasting,** is not merely about giving up food; it is about self-discipline and freedom. Jesus fasted in the desert not to punish Himself, but to focus completely on the Father's will. When we fast, we learn to hunger for what truly satisfies—the Word and presence of

God. Fasting helps us detach from material comforts and grow in compassion for those who go hungry every day out of necessity, not choice. Each time we deny ourselves something, we create space for God to fill us with His grace.

**Almsgiving, the third Lenten practice,** places our faith into action. It calls us to generosity, reminding us that everything we have is a gift meant to be shared. Almsgiving is not limited to giving money—it encompasses acts of kindness, forgiveness, and service. In reaching out to the poor, visiting the lonely, or supporting a neighbor in need, we encounter Christ Himself. As Jesus said, "Whatever you do for the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you do for me."

**Lent is a sacred opportunity for conversion,** not just of actions but of the heart. Through prayer, we draw nearer to God; through fasting, we master our desires; through almsgiving, we extend God's mercy to others. Each step we take along this forty-day path prepares us for the joy of Easter, where sin and death give way to life and redemption.

Let us enter this season with humble hearts, ready to follow Jesus into the desert. May our prayers be sincere, our fasting purposeful, and our almsgiving generous. In doing so, we will discover anew the beauty of God's mercy—and find ourselves renewed in spirit as Easter dawns.

✠ "Turn Back to God With All Your Heart"

### Lenten Programme

**Stations of the Cross** - will be held after the 10.00am Wednesday Mass and every Friday (except Good Friday) at 7.00pm, during Lent.

**Children's Station of the Cross** - will be held on Good Friday at 10.30am.

**Retreat Day - Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March** - From 11.00am - 3.00pm. The retreat will be led by Fr Nicholas Crowe, who is the Provincial for the Dominican Order in England. Please invite friends along to join this day. Lunch will be provided.

**Reconciliation - Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March** - From 10.30-12.30pm a visiting priest and Fr. Denis will be available for confessions. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed during this time.

**Sunday Reading: Parish Mass Page 151**

**Lenten Appeal:** "Because we are formed in faith, we are sent in love." Our annual Lenten Appeal across the Diocese supports one shared mission: helping people encounter Christ and live that faith in love and service.

Through Education, Youth & Evangelisation, and Marriage & Family Life, the diocese forms hearts, nurtures faith, and strengthens families within our parishes. Through Social Action, that formed faith reaches outward, ensuring that no one in our communities faces life's hardest moments alone. Your generous support this Lent will enable the Church to continue walking with people at every stage of life and be a visible sign of Christ's love, both within our parishes and among our neighbours. To donate today please visit [www.rcdow.org.uk/LentenAppeal](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/LentenAppeal). Alternatively, envelopes are available in church.

**Archbishop Richard Moth** Would like to invite parishioners, clergy and headteachers to share in the celebration of Mass, on Wednesday 11th March - at Our Lady, Queen of Apostles, Welwyn Garden City East, at 6.30pm. The Archbishop will remain at the back of the church at the end of the Mass to greet as many of the congregation as possible. Finally, and importantly, Archbishop Richard sends you his very best wishes, and thanks you for your prayers for him.

**Marie Curie Cake Sale** I just wanted to say a massive thank you to everyone for your support last weekend. We raised £700 which I'm totally blown away by & enabled me to smash my target. So, if you baked, bought or just kindly donated I'm am truly grateful. Now that's the easy bit done ... here's to actually running 26.2 miles!! Love Eilish

**MISSIO - Red Box Scheme** Is there anyone in our Parish who would be interested in taking over the running of the Red Box (Missions) scheme? Training will be given. If you feel you'd like to consider this work in supporting the Missions, please contact Pam Winters on 07810 248141 or Fr Denis. Thank you.

**Your Prayers Are Asked For:**

We pray for the sick and housebound in the parish, especially **Fr. Philip Law, Tony Galvin, Mairead Kirk, Liz McCaul** and for those who care for and support them. We remember those who have died recently, especially **Martin Gratte** and

**Giovanni Perricone** and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time:

*Ellen Callison, Joan Ryan, Angus Hill, Helen Fitzgibbons, Annie Brennan, Ernest D'Addario, Pierre Borgers, Richard Callaghan, Mary Toal.*

**Mass Times and Intentions**

Sat 21st	6.30pm	<i>Private intention (health)</i>
Sun 22nd	8.30am 10.30am	<i>Anthony Sian - RIP Kay Arthur - RIP</i>
Mon 23rd	10.00am	
Tue 24th	10.00am	
Wed 25th	10.00am	<i>Mark Jordan - RIP</i>
Thu 26th	10.00am	
Fri 27th	No Mass	

*Please note that mass intentions as set out above may not always be read out, but the intention is offered.*

**Holy Hour:** Saturday 5.15 - 6.15 pm

**Confessions:** Saturday 5.45 - 6.15 pm

Or by appointment with Fr. Denis.

**Children's Liturgy:** Takes place during the 10.30am Mass except on the First Sunday of the Month (Family Mass) and during school holidays.

The Vigil Mass (6.30pm) and the Sunday Mass (10.30am) can be watched online via the Parish Facebook Page: **Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity and St Augustine of Canterbury.**

**Contacts**

**Parish Safeguarding Officers** have responsibility for promoting good and safe practices in all activities involving children, young people, and adults at risk within the Parish.

Patricia Cusack: [Baldocksg2@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:Baldocksg2@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)  
Colette Murphy: [Baldocksg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:Baldocksg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)

**Our Catholic Schools**

**St. John's Catholic Primary School, Baldock**  
T: 01462 892478 W: [stjohns4.herts.sch.uk](http://stjohns4.herts.sch.uk)

**The Saint John Henry Newman School, Stevenage,** T: 01438 314643 W: [jhn.herts.sch.uk](http://jhn.herts.sch.uk)

**John O'Neil is the Lister Hospital RC Chaplain**  
Mob: 07876 526935 or T: 01438 285518

**Baptisms, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Weddings and Funerals** for further details please speak to Fr. Denis, look at the website or contact the parish office.

**Church Hall Bookings** the church hall is available to be booked for groups or celebrations. Please contact the parish office for more details.

**Baldock Catholic Scout Group** for boys & girls aged 6-14. Contact: [enquiries@2ndbaldockscouts.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@2ndbaldockscouts.org.uk)

*To receive an email copy of the Newsletter, please visit our website: [parish.rcdow.org.uk/baldock](http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/baldock) and click on 'Subscribe to Alerts' at the bottom of the page.*