

Sacred Heart Church, Berkhamsted





✠ **Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A, 26th July 2026, Divine Office: Wk. 1**

MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS, POPE LEO XIV FOR THE SIXTH WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY – 26th July

"I will never forget you" (Is 49:15)

Dear brothers and sisters,

Through the prophet Isaiah, the Lord promises that he will never forget any of us. He assures us that he has engraved our faces on the palms of his hands (cf. *Is* 49:16) and that his love is greater than a mother's love for her child (cf. *Is* 49:15). The prophet gives us a glimpse of an intimate and intense dialogue in which God addresses, in familiar terms, each person individually and the people as a whole. Even today, we can read these words as referring to each of us, and everyone can hear that "I will never forget you" spoken directly to them.

These are words that fill us with comfort and hope. They are the answer to an agonizing feeling that troubles the heart: "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me" (*Is* 49:14). How often in Sacred Scripture, especially in the Psalms, does prayer spring from the despair of those who feel that their lives are of no interest to anyone and are being neglected! The painful feeling of being forgotten is, unfortunately, shared by many people, and among them are quite a few elderly people.

God's love, which forgets no one, offers itself as an act of justice and a response to the anonymity in which human life all too often ends up lost. The lives of many elderly people, in particular, seem to be covered by a veil that blurs the features of their faces and shrouds them in oblivion. This is what happens in homes where loneliness reigns and also in those care facilities where each person's uniqueness risks being reduced to a bed number or an illness.

The celebration of the World Day of Grandparents and the Elderly is an opportunity to rediscover that the Church is called to be a mother to all and that at any age it is always possible to recognize ourselves as sons and daughters of God. May this day, therefore, be an inspiration for everyone, especially the young, to revive the beautiful custom of visiting their grandparents, the elderly members of the family and even those who have no one to visit them. Bring them, through this message and your presence, the closeness and affection of the Pope. Ensure that the words of the prophet, "But I will never forget you," take the form of a tender and affectionate encounter. "In an era that favors speed and fragmentation, the human person still yearns to receive care and recognition from attentive minds, kind words and hands capable of tenderness. The digital culture multiplies connections and offers new opportunities for interaction; yet, the human heart retains an irrevocable need for genuine closeness" (Encyclical Letter, *Magnifica Humanitas*, 239). Cont'd…

Order of Mass: Page 5. Readings, Page 108. **1st** 1 Kin. 3:5-6a, 7-12.
Ps 119(118):57, 72. 76-77. 127-128. 129-130. ℟. 97a
2nd Rom. 8:28-30. **Gospel** Matt. 13:44-52. **EP: III** page 27

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Dear elderly men and women, Pope Francis spoke of you as a "new people" (*Catechesis*, 23 February 2022), since the number of older adults has never been so large in human history. It is, therefore, more important than ever to reflect with you, this "new people," on what our vocation might be when fragility — the human person's companion from birth — seems to take over. I would like to say to you: do not be afraid of fragility! It is precisely this weakness that holds within itself a new potential that also illuminates the other stages of life. Indeed, when "we acknowledge our fragility, our hearts become open to supporting one another and to invoking the One who can grant what no human power can ensure: the profound reconciliation of hearts and, with it, true peace" (*Meeting with the Algerian community*, Basilica of Our Lady of Africa, Algiers, 13 April 2026).

This is how we can live out our old age as Christians: "fragile" yet at the same time "called." A man and a woman can, in fact, be born anew in old age (cf. *Jn* 3:4-6) and exclaim, with the prophet: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength" (*Is* 30:15). This strength can become an invitation not to resort to the ways of arrogance and power to ensure human coexistence, but to the ways of reconciliation and true peace. In this time, so harshly marked by the violence of war and social unrest, many wonder what the world in which their grandchildren will grow up will be like. I urge you, dear friends, to join me in praying earnestly that peace may soon come to the whole world.

Dear elderly brothers and sisters, I thank you for supporting me every day with your prayers, especially when you recite the Holy Rosary. I return this gratitude from the bottom of my heart and leave you with this prayer: may the Lord always renew us in faith, hope and love — He who never forgets us!

Full Text - https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/grandparents/documents/20260615-messaggio-nonni-anziani.html

Masses in August – Weekday Mass on Fridays ***only*** at 10am. Sunday Mass on Saturdays at 5pm and Sundays at 8:30am & 10am.

Sacramental Preparation Registration 2026/2027 – We welcome expression of interest from parents whose children will be in school years 3 to 6 from September 2026 and whose children would like to receive First Holy Communion. The same goes to those who will be in year 9 and above from September who would like to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. All, as a matter of fact, should be practising the faith and attending Mass regularly. For expression of interest, please email Fr. Joseph - josephokoro@rcdow.org.uk Both sacramental programmes will be run here at Sacred Heart.

Wedding Ceremony – Scarlett Griffiths and Cameron Jessup, on Thursday 6th August at 12:30pm. Please keep them in your prayers. Congratulations to Scarlett and Cameron.

Seniors' Light Lunch – Thank you to all who made this event possible last Thursday, the next lunch is scheduled for the **24th September**, a sign-up sheet will be placed at the back of the Church nearer the time.

Assisted Suicide Bill – A Private Members' Bill has been reintroduced to The Parliament seeking to legalise assisted suicide - the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill. There will be a crucial vote on **Friday, 11 September.** The Bishops are calling on the faithful to continue to uphold the dignity and sanctity of every human life. Please write to our Member of Parliament, even if you have done so before. Please do not be discouraged by the last response you got on the subject during the last Parliament. We have a crucial role and Christian obligation to ask our Member of Parliament to vote down the Bill by going to https://righttolife.org.uk/Sept11vote It takes just 30 seconds.

Requiem Mass – Of your charity, please pray for Olive Jeanne Cozens, RIP, who died recently and whose funeral Mass will be celebrated on Tuesday 28th July at 11:30am. Please attend if you can. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family. May she rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

Offertory Collections – 19/07/2026
Weekly Loose Plate – £132.21
Weekly Contactless - £111.00
Thank you to every one for your support to our Parish.

June 2026 Offertory
Standing Orders: £6,562.00
Loose Plate/Contactless: £877.60
Total: £7,439.60

Contactless Donation Machine – Donations for Mass stipends, votive candles, building maintenance fund, flowers for the Church and offertory can also be made using the contactless machine or the QR code below. You can also gift-aid your donation if you are a UK taxpayer.

Online Giving – Should you wish to become a regular online donor please use the Parish bank details below.

QR Code to enable donation via mobile

WRCDT Berkhamsted
Sort Code 40-05-20
Ac. Number 31264354
Do use your name for reference. To gift-aid your donations, please ask Fr Joseph or Laura for a Gift-aid Form. Thank you for your continued generosity.

Mass Intentions – Please call, email or visit the parish office to book Masses for your intentions, or use the blue envelopes at the back of the church. The Diocesan suggested donation is £10.00. Thank you. If making a donation online, please use 'MASS STIPEND' and the date of the mass as your reference.

Mass Cards – A lovely selection of cards for various intentions are available from the parish office during opening hours at a cost of £1 per card.

Blessed Sacrament Lamp – Recommended donation for one-week sponsorship for intentions is £5. Ring the office for availability. Intention cards are also available from the office.

Car Registration Update - Changed your car recently? To update your records, please email the parish office with your new vehicle registration number. If you have not yet registered your vehicle with the parish, please email the office to request a parish registration form. Having up to date records will prevent issuance of parking fine in error by the company helping the parish manage the car park. Thank you for your cooperation.

New Baby & Toddler Group – Now Running! Join us every Monday from 9:00–10:30am in the Parish Hall. This is a drop-in session offering a relaxed and welcoming space where babies and toddlers can play, while parents, grandparents, and carers enjoy tea, coffee, friendly conversation, and the chance to connect with others. Please help spread the word!
Running up to the end of July and then back again from the 7th of September.

St Thomas More Raffle Winners – Please see notice board at the back of the Church for a list of prize winners. All prizes are in the school office, ready to be collected. If anyone is unable to collect, please let me know and we can arrange delivery of these to the Church.

Community Fridge and Pantry – Now at Northchurch Social Centre on Tuesdays between 2pm-3:30pm with a pantry outside by the gate. Any donations, please put inside the wooden pantry cupboard. Like to volunteer? Please contact Joan Fisher 07778 399 353. There is also The Food Hub at 360 High Street and opens Mon 9:30am - 12:00pm & Thurs 4:30-7:00pm.

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Please Pray for the Sick and the Housebound – Maureen Murphy, Alice McDonnell, Malcolm Hill, Nigel, Cameron, Sheila Sumner, Michael Di Napoli, Alice Gancke, Margaret Jarrett, Judith Poupart, Michael Holmes, Jeanne Bolton, Dave & Anne Phillips, Roberta Barbour, Paddy Hart, David Johnstone, Annie Lukeman, Patricia Whelan, Jack Nash, Eileen Clarke, Caroline Butler, Ron Harper, Joe Quinn, Rosemary Goacher, Dympna O'Connor and Christopher Chapman.

Mass Intentions:

Sun 26 Jul	**✠ Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**	**8:30am**	Susan Maxfield Special Birthday Intention
	Holy Rosary Prayer ***By the Lady Chapel***	***9:30-9:55am***	
		10:00am*	Maurice and Stella Hoban, RIP
Mon 27 Jul	**Feria**	**10:00am**	Carmel Twomey Int
Tue 28 Jul	**Feria**	**11:30am**	Requiem Mass - Olive Jeanne Cozens, RIP ***Note time change***
Sat 1 Aug	**Sunday Vigil**	**5:00pm**	Chris and Terry Moran and All Holy Souls RIP
Sun 2 Aug	**✠ Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time**	**8:30am**	Claire Hallett and All Holy Souls RIP
	Holy Rosary Prayer ***By the Lady Chapel***	***9:30-9:55am***	
		10:00am*	Bridie Riordan RIP

✠ Holy Day of Obligation * Livestream Mass

~~**First Friday Devotions** with Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament – 10am-3:30pm.~~

~~**Saturdays** - 9:00am – Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (and confession alongside) with Benediction at 9:45am.~~

~~*Confessions can also be arranged outside of these times, please contact Fr Joseph*~~

Parishes Celebrations / Dates for your Diaries:

23rd Jul	Seniors' Light Lunch, after 12pm Mass in Parish Hall
24th Sep	Seniors' Light Lunch, after 12pm Mass in Parish Hall
11th Oct	Sunday Lunch 12pm
21st Nov	Churches Together Prayer Breakfast

Anima Christi

Soul of Christ, sanctify me
Body of Christ, save me
Blood of Christ, inebriate me
Water from the side of Christ, wash me
Passion of Christ, strengthen me
O good Jesus, hear me
Within Thy wounds hide me
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee
From the malignant enemy defend me
At the hour of my death call me
And bid me come unto Thee
That I may praise Thee with Thy Angels
And Thy Saints forever and ever. Amen.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus,
Make our hearts like unto thine.

Recently Deceased and Anniversaries:

Olive Cozens,Teresa Tipper, Doreen Smyth, Maxine Burdon, Bill Readman, Justina Nnadi, Jean Giffen, Roseleen Rice, Michael Roberts, Giovannina Mistretta, Chris Holmes, Kay James, Anne-Marie Clarke, John O'Neill (Potten End), Grace O'Reilly, Hugh Deane, Patricia Rice, Sue McQuinn, Bridie Morahan, Krys Evans, Michael Kennedy, Keith Gay.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen

The Blessed Sacrament Lamp
is lit this week for the intentions of All Grandparents and the Elderly.