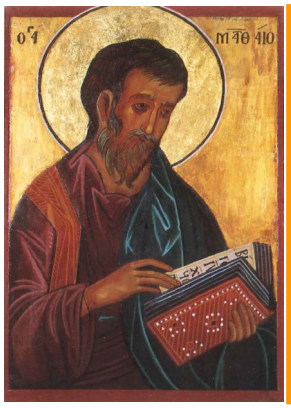

Parishes of Northwood and Carpenders Park & South Oxhey

Third Sunday of Easter
(4th May 2025)

Dear Parishioners

They say a week is a long time in politics. This feels like an understatement in looking at a week in the life of the Church. Only a week ago we were celebrating the wonderful truth of the resurrection of Christ and were full of joy. We had celebrated a wonderful Holy Week together. Last Sunday Pope Francis made a surprise appearance on the balcony of St Peter's. On Monday morning, we heard the news that he had died early that morning and our world had changed.

We can though, draw comfort from the fact that we are bathed in the light of the Easter Candle and so we are reminded that death has no more power after the resurrection of Christ, as St Paul says in his letter to the Corinthians *"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"* The Scripture readings this past week at Mass have reminded us of the hope that comes from Easter. We have seen the disciples encounter the Risen Christ and we have been invited to do the same.

On this Divine Mercy Sunday, the Gospel states that Jesus greets his disciples with the gift of peace. His first words to his fearful disciples are, "Peace be with you!" This is an affirmation that there is peace where Jesus is truly present to us. His peace helps to calm our fears.

Our faith in the risen Christ is the foundation that helps us overcome fear. With Christ alongside us, there is no need to fear. Thomas asked for proof before he would believe, but we rely on our faith in the words and works of Jesus to sustain us through it all.

Today's Gospel tells us that Jesus continues to make his presence known to his disciples and us. He wanted them and us to know that he was always with them. The grave cannot keep us from God's love, which comes to us in Jesus, who rose from the dead.

No matter what we are experiencing right now in our life, God wants us to believe that even when we fear, His mercy will sustain us. His way is better than our own. God is in control. When we recognize that God looks beyond our faults and sees what we need, we will know MERCY!!!

Pope Francis wanted people to experience the Mercy of God. When I was ordained priest, it was in the special Year of Mercy the he called. The place where we can experience that mercy time and time again is in the Confessional. In his first Sunday Angelus as Pope he said "*God never ever tires of forgiving us! "Well, Father what is the problem?". Well, the problem is that we ourselves tire, we do not want to ask, we grow weary of asking for forgiveness. He never tires of forgiving, but at times we get tired of asking for forgiveness*. In addressing confessors he said *"I want to remind priests that the confessional must not be a torture chamber but rather an encounter with the Lord's mercy which spurs us on to do our best. A small step, in the midst of great human limitations, can be more pleasing to God than a life which appears outwardly in order but moves through the day without confronting great difficulties. Everyone needs to be touched by the comfort and attraction of God's saving love, which is mysteriously at work in each person, above and beyond their faults and failings."*

So on this Divine Mercy Sunday, we should take Pope Francis' words to heart and of course we should try and live the words of the Divine Mercy Image of **Jesus I Trust in You.**

With all my prayers and best wishes

Fr Tom

V. O Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia:
R. For he whom you did merit to bear, alleluia,
V. Has risen, as he said, alleluia.
R. Pray for us to God, alleluia.
V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
R. For the Lord has risen indeed, alleluia.

God our Father, you give joy to the world by the resurrection of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. Through the prayers of his mother, the Virgin Mary, bring us to the happiness of eternal life. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

St Matthew's Church
32 Hallowell Road,
Northwood
HA6 1DW

Parish Office Hours
Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 9.00am - 3.30pm

You can make a donation to either parish by using the appropriate QR code.

St Joseph's Church
111 Oxhey Drive,
Watford
WD19 7SW

Parish Office Hours
Tuesday & Thursday: 9.00am - 3.30pm

Thank You.

A huge thank you to all who worked so hard during Holy Week in both of our churches . Our celebrations could not have happened without the contributions of different people.
Thank you also to our school children from St Joseph's who sang so wonderfully at our Requiem Mass for Pope Francis on Friday Evening.
Fr Tom is grateful for the cards and gifts that he received at Easter (and Disco Bob is too).

Prayer Cards

The Bishops' Conference have issued prayer cards for Prayers on the death of Pope Francis. These are available at the back of our churches.

Fr Aidan Sharratt

The Vicar General informed the diocese that Fr Aidan died peacefully on Tuesday evening, at St Anne's Care Home in Stoke Newington with Little Sisters of the Poor, and Sr Clement, praying at his bedside. Fr Aidan served as parish priest of St Joseph's. We give thanks for his ministry. Information about his funeral will be issued in due course.
We pray for the repose of Fr Aidan's soul:
Lord Jesus, our Redeemer,
you willingly gave yourself up to death so that all people might be saved and pass from death into a new life.
Listen to our prayers, look with love on your people who mourn and pray for Fr Aidan.
Lord Jesus, holy and compassionate, forgive his sins.
By dying you opened the gates of life for those who believe in you.
Do not let our brother be parted from you, but by your glorious power give him light, joy and peace in heaven where you live for ever and ever. Amen.
Eternal rest grant unto Fr Aidan, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.

Divine Mercy Sunday

We will hold Divine Mercy Devotions at 2.00pm on Sunday in St Matthew's. All are welcome. Confessions will not be available on Sunday afternoon.

Baptism Preparation Meeting

The next Baptism Preparation evening will be held in the hall at St Joseph's on Thursday 22nd May at 7.45pm (after the evening Mass)

Appeal for help

Over the last number of weeks, the flower room at St Joseph's has been decorated and made usable as an office for Fr Tom to meet people . The final stage of the refurbishment is to lay a carpet that has come out of the presbytery. Is anyone able to lay the carpet for us (or know of someone)? Local carpet businesses don't seem keen to lay a carpet that they haven't sold.

Holy Hour for the Cardinals

At time of printing, the date of the Conclave has not been announced, but it is likely to begin sometime from 5th May (after the official nine days of mourning which began on the day of Pope Francis' funeral. The Cardinals who will elect our new Pope need our prayers more than ever. Next Sunday we will have a Holy Hour at St Matthew's at 8.00pm with the particular intention of praying for the upcoming Conclave.

A Service of Healing and Hope

At On 10th May at 2.30pm, Cardinal Vincent Nichols will lead a Service of Healing and Hope at Westminster Cathedral. This is an open service to which all are welcome as a sign of solidarity, care and hope for those who have been impacted by abuse, as well as those who work with or support them. ***(The celebrant may change)***

Before the service all are welcome to join in a creative workshop from 10am in the Cathedral Hall, run by LOUDFence, to make materials which will be used in the service. If you plan on attending, please bring a packed lunch.

Our Lady of Willesden May Procession

The annual May Procession in honour of Our Lady will take place at the Shrine of Our Lady of Willesden on Sunday, 11th May, at 3pm at which the Preacher will be the Rt Rev Hugh Allan, O.Praem. *Bakerloo and Overground to Willesden Junction - Buses 18, 187, 206, 220, 226, 228, 260, 266 & 487*

Prayer Intentions

Pope's Prayer Intention for April **For the use of the new technologies.** We pray that the use of the new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times.

Pope's Prayer Intention for May **For working conditions.** We pray that through work, each person might find fulfilment, families might be sustained in dignity, and that society might be humanized.

Lamp Prayer Intentions

Blessed Sacrament *(St Matthew's)* **Patrick George O'Neill RIP (Anniv)** Our Lady *(St Matthew's)* **-Pope Francis RIP**
Blessed Sacrament *(St Joseph's)* **Bridget Anidjah's Family Intentions** Our Lady *(St Joseph's)* **Joanne Davitt Intentions**

Pope Francis' Last Easter Message.

On Easter Day Pope Francis appeared on the loggia of the Basilica of St Peter for the Easter Urbi. He greeted the crowds gathered in a tulip-filled St Peter's Square. He then passed on his text to be read by Archbishop Diego Ravelli, the Master of Pontifical Liturgical Celebrations. The full text of his message is below.

Christ is risen, alleluia!

Dear brothers and sisters, Happy Easter!

Today at last, the singing of the "alleluia" is heard once more in the Church, passing from mouth to mouth, from heart to heart, and this makes the people of God throughout the world shed tears of joy.

From the empty tomb in Jerusalem, we hear unexpected good news: Jesus, who was crucified, "is not here, he has risen" (Lk 24:5). Jesus is not in the tomb, he is alive!

Love has triumphed over hatred, light over darkness and truth over falsehood. Forgiveness has triumphed over revenge. Evil has not disappeared from history; it will remain until the end, but it no longer has the upper hand; it no longer has power over those who accept the grace of this day.

Sisters and brothers, especially those of you experiencing pain and sorrow, your silent cry has been heard and your tears have been counted; not one of them has been lost! In the passion and death of Jesus, God has taken upon himself all the evil in this world and in his infinite mercy has defeated it. He has uprooted the diabolical pride that poisons the human heart and wreaks violence and corruption on every side. The Lamb of God is victorious! That is why, today, we can joyfully cry out: "Christ, my hope, has risen!" (Easter Sequence).

The resurrection of Jesus is indeed the basis of our hope. For in the light of this event, hope is no longer an illusion. Thanks to Christ — crucified and risen from the dead — hope does not disappoint! Spes non confundit! (cf. Rom 5:5). That hope is not an evasion, but a challenge; it does not delude, but empowers us.

All those who put their hope in God place their feeble hands in his strong and mighty hand; they let themselves be raised up and set out on a journey. Together with the risen Jesus, they become pilgrims of hope, witnesses of the victory of love and of the disarmed power of Life.

Christ is risen! These words capture the whole meaning of our existence, for we were not made for death but for life. Easter is the celebration of life! God created us for life and wants the human family to rise again! In his eyes, every life is precious! The life of a child in the mother's womb, as well as the lives of the elderly and the sick, who in more and more countries are looked upon as people to be discarded.

What a great thirst for death, for killing, we witness each day in the many conflicts raging in different parts of our world! How much violence we see, often even within families, directed at women and children! How much contempt is stirred up at times towards the vulnerable, the marginalized, and migrants!

On this day, I would like all of us to hope anew and to revive our trust in others, including those who are different than ourselves, or who come from distant lands, bringing unfamiliar customs, ways of life and ideas! For all of us are children of God!

I would like us to renew our hope that peace is possible! From the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Resurrection, where this year Easter is being celebrated by Catholics and Orthodox on the same day, may the light of peace radiate throughout the Holy Land and the entire world. I express my closeness to the sufferings of Christians in Palestine and Israel, and to all the Israeli people and the Palestinian people. The growing climate of anti-Semitism throughout the world is worrisome. Yet at the same time, I think of the people of Gaza, and its Christian community in particular, where the terrible conflict continues to cause death and destruction and to create a dramatic and deplorable humanitarian situation. I appeal to the warring parties: call a ceasefire, release the hostages and come to the aid of a starving people that aspires to a future of peace!

Let us pray for the Christian communities in Lebanon and in Syria, presently experiencing a delicate transition in its history. They aspire to stability and to participation in the life of their respective nations. I urge the whole Church to keep the Christians of the beloved Middle East in its thoughts and prayers.

I also think in particular of the people of Yemen, who are experiencing one of the world's most serious and prolonged humanitarian crises because of war, and I invite all to find solutions through a constructive dialogue.

May the risen Christ grant Ukraine, devastated by war, his Easter gift of peace, and encourage all parties involved to pursue efforts aimed at achieving a just and lasting peace.

On this festive day, let us remember the South Caucasus and pray that a final peace agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan will soon be signed and implemented, and lead to long-awaited reconciliation in the region.

May the light of Easter inspire efforts to promote harmony in the western Balkans and sustain political leaders in their efforts to allay tensions and crises, and, together with their partner countries in the region, to reject dangerous and destabilizing actions.

May the risen Christ, our hope, grant peace and consolation to the African peoples who are victims of violence and conflict, especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in Sudan and South Sudan. May he sustain those suffering from the tensions in the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, as well as those Christians who in many places are not able freely to profess their faith.

There can be no peace without freedom of religion, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and respect for the views of others.

Nor is peace possible without true disarmament! The requirement that every people provide for its own defence must not turn into a race to rearmament. The light of Easter impels us to break down the barriers that create division and are fraught with grave political and economic consequences. It impels us to care for one another, to increase our mutual solidarity, and to work for the integral development of each human person.

During this time, let us not fail to assist the people of Myanmar, plagued by long years of armed conflict, who, with courage

and patience, are dealing with the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Sagaing, which caused the death of thousands and great suffering for the many survivors, including orphans and the elderly. We pray for the victims and their loved ones, and we heartily thank all the generous volunteers carrying out the relief operations. The announcement of a ceasefire by various actors in the country is a sign of hope for the whole of Myanmar.

I appeal to all those in positions of political responsibility in our world not to yield to the logic of fear which only leads to isolation from others, but rather to use the resources available to help the needy, to fight hunger and to encourage initiatives that promote development. These are the "weapons" of peace: weapons that build the future, instead of sowing seeds of death!

May the principle of humanity never fail to be the hallmark of our daily actions. In the face of the cruelty of conflicts that involve defenceless civilians and attack schools, hospitals and humanitarian workers, we cannot allow ourselves to forget that it is not targets that are struck, but persons, each possessed of a soul and human dignity.

In this Jubilee year, may Easter also be a fitting occasion for the liberation of prisoners of war and political prisoners!

Dear brothers and sisters,

In the Lord's Paschal Mystery, death and life contended in a stupendous struggle, but the Lord now lives forever (cf. Easter Sequence). He fills us with the certainty that we too are called to share in the life that knows no end, when the clash of arms and the rumble of death will be heard no more. Let us entrust ourselves to him, for he alone can make all things new (cf. Rev. 21:5)!

Happy Easter to everyone!

Pope Francis' Funeral: Full Text of Homily by Cardinal Re

In this majestic Saint Peter's Square, where Pope Francis celebrated the Eucharist so many times and presided over great gatherings over the past twelve years, we are gathered with sad hearts in prayer around his mortal remains. Yet, we are sustained by the certainty of faith, which assures us that human existence does not end in the tomb, but in the Father's house, in a life of happiness that will know no end.

On behalf of the College of Cardinals, I cordially thank all of you for your presence. With deep emotion, I extend respectful greetings and heartfelt thanks to the Heads of State, Heads of Government and Official Delegations who have come from many countries to express their affection, veneration and esteem for our late Holy Father.

The outpouring of affection that we have witnessed in recent days following his passing from this earth into eternity tells us how much the profound pontificate of Pope Francis touched minds and hearts.

The final image we have of him, which will remain etched in our memory, is that of last Sunday, Easter Sunday, when Pope Francis, despite his serious health problems, wanted to give us his blessing from the balcony of Saint Peter's Basilica. He then came down to this Square to greet the large crowd gathered for the Easter Mass while riding in the open-top Popemobile.

With our prayers, we now entrust the soul of our beloved Pontiff to God, that he may grant him eternal happiness in the bright and glorious gaze of his immense love.

We are enlightened and guided by the passage of the Gospel, in which the very voice of Christ resounded, asking the first of the Apostles:

"Peter, do you love me more than these?" Peter's answer was prompt and sincere: "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you!" Jesus then entrusted him with the great mission: "Feed my sheep." This will be the constant task of Peter and his successors, a service of love in the footsteps of Christ, our Master and Lord, who "came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mk 10:45).

Despite his frailty and suffering towards the end, Pope Francis chose to follow this path of self-giving until the last day of his earthly life. He followed in the footsteps of his Lord, the Good Shepherd, who loved his sheep to the point of giving his life for them. And he did so with strength and serenity, close to his flock, the Church of God, mindful of the words of Jesus quoted by the Apostle Paul: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

When Cardinal Bergoglio was elected by the Conclave on March 13, 2013 to succeed Pope Benedict XVI, he already had many years of experience in religious life in the Society of Jesus and, above all, was enriched by twenty-one years of pastoral ministry in the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, first as Auxiliary, then as Coadjutor and, above all, as Archbishop.

The decision to take the name Francis immediately appeared to indicate the pastoral plan and style on which he wanted to base his pontificate, seeking inspiration from the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi.

He maintained his temperament and form of pastoral leadership, and through his resolute personality, immediately made his mark on the governance of the Church. He established direct contact with individuals and peoples, eager to be close to everyone, with a marked attention to those in difficulty, giving himself without measure, especially to the marginalized, the least among us. He was a Pope among the people, with an open heart towards everyone. He was also a Pope attentive to the signs of the times and what the Holy Spirit was awakening in the Church.

With his characteristic vocabulary and language, rich in images and metaphors, he always sought to shed light on the problems of our time with the wisdom of the Gospel. He did so by offering a response guided by the light of faith and encouraging us to live as Christians amid the challenges and contradictions in recent years, which he loved to describe as an "epochal change." He had great spontaneity and an informal way of addressing everyone, even those far from the Church.

Rich in human warmth and deeply sensitive to today's challenges, Pope Francis truly shared the anxieties, sufferings and hopes of this time of globalization. He gave of himself by comforting and encouraging us with a message capable of reaching people's hearts in a direct and immediate way.

His charisma of welcome and listening, combined with a manner of behaviour in keeping with today's sensitivities, touched hearts and sought to reawaken moral and spiritual sensibilities. Evangelization was the guiding principle of his pontificate.

With a clear missionary vision, he spread the joy of the Gospel, which was the title of his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii gaudium*. It is a joy that fills the hearts of all those who entrust themselves to God with confidence and hope.

The guiding thread of his mission was also the conviction that the Church is a home for all, a home with its doors always open. He often used the image of the Church as a "field hospital" after a battle in which many were wounded; a Church determined to take care of the problems of people and the great anxieties that tear the contemporary world apart; a Church capable of bending down to every person, regardless of their beliefs or condition, and healing their wounds.

His gestures and exhortations in favour of refugees and displaced persons are countless. His insistence on working on behalf of the poor was constant.

It is significant that Pope Francis' first journey was to Lampedusa, an island that symbolizes the tragedy of emigration, with thousands of people drowning at sea. In the same vein was his trip to Lesbos, together with the Ecumenical Patriarch and the Archbishop of Athens, as well as the celebration of a Mass on the border between Mexico and the United States during his journey to Mexico.

Of his 47 arduous Apostolic Journeys, the one to Iraq in 2021, defying every risk, will remain particularly memorable. That difficult Apostolic Journey was a balm on the open wounds of the Iraqi people, who had suffered so much from the inhuman actions of ISIS. It was also an important trip for interreligious dialogue, another significant dimension of his pastoral work. With his 2024 Apostolic Journey to four countries in Asia-Oceania, the Pope reached "the most peripheral periphery of the world."

Pope Francis always placed the Gospel of mercy at the center, repeatedly emphasizing that God never tires of forgiving us. He always forgives, whatever the situation might be of the person who asks for forgiveness and returns to the right path.

He called for the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy in order to highlight that mercy is "the heart of the Gospel."

Mercy and the joy of the Gospel are two key words for Pope Francis. In contrast to what he called "the culture of waste," he spoke of the culture of encounter and solidarity. The theme of fraternity ran through his entire pontificate with vibrant tones. In his Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti*, he wanted to revive a worldwide aspiration to fraternity, because we are all children of the same Father who is in heaven. He often forcefully reminded us that we all belong to the same human family.

In 2019, during his trip to the United Arab Emirates, Pope Francis signed A Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, recalling the common fatherhood of God. Addressing men and women throughout the world, in his Encyclical Letter *Laudato si*' he drew attention to our duties and shared responsibility for our common home, stating, "No one is saved alone."

Faced with the raging wars of recent years, with their inhuman horrors and countless deaths and destruction, Pope Francis incessantly raised his voice imploring peace and calling for reason and honest negotiation to find possible solutions. War, he said, results in the death of people and the destruction of homes, hospitals and schools. War always leaves the world worse than it was before: it is always a painful and tragic defeat for everyone.

"Build bridges, not walls" was an exhortation he repeated many times, and his service of faith as Successor of the Apostle Peter always was linked to the service of humanity in all its dimensions. Spiritually united with all of Christianity, we are here in large numbers to pray for Pope Francis, that God may welcome him into the immensity of his love.

Pope Francis used to conclude his speeches and meetings by saying, "Do not forget to pray for me."

Dear Pope Francis, we now ask you to pray for us. May you bless the Church, bless Rome, and bless the whole world from heaven as you did last Sunday from the balcony of this basilica in a final embrace with all the people of God, but also embrace humanity that seeks the truth with a sincere heart and holds high the torch of hope.

Pope Francis' life recalled in Deed placed in coffin

The coffin of the late Pope Francis was sealed in a ritual in St. Peter's Basilica on Friday evening, after around 250,000 pilgrims had paid their respects to the Argentine-born Pope. As per tradition, the Pope's pallium, coins, and medals minted during his pontificate, as well as a "Rogito" or Deed summarizing his life and papacy, were also placed inside the coffin. Ahead of the Requiem Mass, the Holy See Press Office published the full text of the Deed, written in Latin and sealed inside a metal cylinder. The following is a working English-language translation of the Deed:

DEED FOR THE PIOUS PASSING OF HIS HOLINESS FRANCIS DEATH, INTERMENT, AND ENTOMBMENT OF FRANCIS OF BLESSED MEMORY

With us, pilgrims of hope, guide and companion on the journey toward the great goal to which we are called—Heaven—the 21st day of April in the Holy Year 2025, at 7:35 in the morning, while the light of Easter illumined the second day of the Octave, Easter Monday, the beloved Shepherd of the Church, Francis, passed from this world to the Father. The entire Christian Community, especially the poor, gave praise to God for the gift of his service rendered with courage and faithfulness to the Gospel and to the mystical Bride of Christ.

Francis was the 266th Pope. His memory remains in the heart of the Church and of all humanity.

Jorge Mario Bergoglio, elected Pope on 13 March 2013, was born in Buenos Aires on 17 December 1936, to Piedmontese immigrants: his father Mario was an accountant employed by the railways, while his mother, Regina Sivori, took care of the home and the education of their five children. After earning a diploma as a chemical technician, he chose the path of the priesthood, entering first the diocesan seminary and, on 11 March 1958, passing to the novitiate of the Society of Jesus. He pursued humanistic studies in Chile and, returning in 1963 to Argentina, graduated in philosophy at the San Giuseppe college in San Miguel. He was a professor of literature and psychology at the colleges of the Immaculate Conception in Santa Fé and of the Savior in Buenos Aires.

He received priestly ordination on 13 December 1969 from Archbishop Ramón José Castellano, and on 22 April 1973 he made his perpetual profession in the Jesuits. After serving as novice master at Villa Barilari in San Miguel, professor in the faculty of theology, consultor of the Argentine province of the Society of Jesus, and rector of the College, on 31 July 1973 he was appointed provincial of the Jesuits of Argentina. After 1986 he spent several years in Germany completing his doctoral

dissertation and, once back in Argentina, Cardinal Antonio Quarracino made him his close collaborator. On 20 May 1992 Pope John Paul II named him Titular Bishop of Auca and Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires. He chose as his episcopal motto *Miserando atque eligendo* and inserted the Christogram IHS, symbol of the Society of Jesus, into his coat of arms.

On 3 June 1997 he was promoted Coadjutor Archbishop of Buenos Aires and upon Cardinal Quarracino's death succeeded him on 28 February 1998 as Archbishop, Primate of Argentina, Ordinary for the faithful of Eastern rites residing in the country, and Grand Chancellor of the Catholic University. John Paul II created him cardinal in the consistory of 21 February 2001, assigning him the title of St. Roberto Bellarmino. That October he served as Adjunct General Rapporteur at the Tenth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops.

He was a simple and much-beloved pastor in his Archdiocese, traveling everywhere, even by subway and bus. He lived in an apartment and prepared his own dinner, because he felt himself one of the people.

From the Cardinals assembled in conclave after Benedict XVI's resignation, he was elected Pope on 13 March 2013 and took the name Francis, for, following the example of Saint Francis of Assisi, he wished above all to care for the poorest in the world. From the Loggia of Blessings he appeared and spoke the following the words:

"Brothers and sisters, good evening! And now, we take up this journey—Bishop and People. This journey of the Church of Rome which presides in charity over all the Churches. A journey of fraternity, of love, of trust among us." And, bowing his head, he said: "I ask you to pray to the Lord that he will bless me: the prayer of the people asking the blessing for their Bishop."

On 19 March, the Solemnity of Saint Joseph, he officially began his Petrine ministry.

Always attentive to the least and to those discarded by society, Francis upon his election chose to live at the Domus Sanctae Marthae, because he could not do without contact with people, and from the first Holy Thursday he wished to celebrate the Mass of the Lord's Supper outside the Vatican, visiting prisons, reception centers for the disabled, or those addicted to drugs. He urged priests always to be ready to administer the sacrament of mercy, to have the courage to leave the sacristies to go in search of the lost sheep, and to keep the church doors open to welcome those desirous of encountering the Face of God the Father.

He exercised the Petrine ministry with untiring dedication in favor of dialogue with Muslims and representatives of other religions, sometimes inviting them to prayer meetings and signing joint declarations for concord among the faithful of different creeds, such as the Document on Human Fraternity signed on 4 February 2019 in Abu Dhabi with the Sunni leader al-Tayyeb. His love for the poor, the elderly, and children led him to inaugurate the World Days of the Poor, of Grandparents, and of Children. He also established the Sunday of the Word of God.

More than any predecessor he enlarged the College of Cardinals, calling ten consistories in which he created 163 cardinals—133 electors and 30 non-electors—from 73 nations, 23 of which had never before had a cardinal. He convened five sessions of the Synod of Bishops—three ordinary general assemblies on the family, on young people, and on synodality; an extraordinary assembly also on the family; and a special session for the Pan-Amazonia region.

Often his voice rose in defense of the innocent. At the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, on the evening of 27 March 2020 he prayed alone in St. Peter's Square, whose colonnade symbolically embraced Rome and the world, for humanity frightened and stricken by the unknown plague. The final years of his pontificate were marked by numerous appeals for peace, against the Third World War in pieces unfolding in various countries—especially Ukraine—as well as in Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, and Myanmar.

After hospitalization from 4 July 2021, lasting ten days for surgery at the Agostino Gemelli Hospital, Francis on 14 February 2025 returned to the same hospital for a 38-day stay due to bilateral pneumonia. Back in the Vatican, he spent his final weeks at Casa Santa Marta, dedicating himself to the end, with the same passion, to his Petrine ministry, though not fully recovered. On Easter Day 20 April 2025 for one last time he appeared on the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica to impart the solemn *Urbi et Orbi* blessing.

Pope Francis's doctrinal magisterium was extremely rich. A witness to a sober and humble style, founded on missionary openness, apostolic courage, and mercy, attentive to avoiding the pitfalls of self-referentiality and spiritual worldliness in the Church, the Pontiff set forth his apostolic program in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (24 November 2013). Among his principal documents were four encyclicals: *Lumen fidei* (29 June 2013), on faith in God; *Laudato si'* (24 May 2015), on ecology and humanity's responsibility in the climate crisis; *Fratelli tutti* (3 October 2020), on human fraternity and social friendship; and *Dilexit nos* (24 October 2024), on devotion to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. He promulgated seven apostolic exhortations, thirty-nine apostolic constitutions, numerous apostolic letters—many *motu proprio*—including two *bullae* convocating Holy Years, as well as the catecheses presented at general audiences and discourses given around the world. After establishing the Secretariats for Communications and for the Economy, and the Dicasteries for Laity, Family and Life, and for Promoting Integral Human Development, he reformed the Roman Curia by issuing the apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* (19 March 2022). He modified the canonical process for nullity of marriage causes in the CCEO and CIC (*Mitis et misericors Iesus* and *Mitis Iudex Dominus Iesus*) and toughened legislation regarding crimes committed by clergy against minors or vulnerable persons (*Vos estis lux mundi*).

Francis left to all a marvellous witness of humanity, of holy living, and of universal fatherhood.

CORPUS FRANCISCI P.M.
VIXIT ANNOS LXXXVIII, MENSES IV DIES IV.
ECCLESIAE UNIVERSAE PRAEFUIT
ANNOS XII MENSES I DIES VIII
Semper in Christo vivas, Pater Sancte!

BODY OF FRANCIS P.P.
HE LIVED 88 YEARS, 4 MONTHS, 4 DAYS
HE PRESIDED OVER THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH
FOR 12 YEARS, 1 MONTH, 8 DAYS.

"May you always live in Christ, Holy Father!"

Readings at Sunday Mass

First reading *Acts 5:12-16*

Many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the Apostles. And they were all together in the Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns round Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm *Ps 118(117):2-4. 22-24. 25-27a. ℟1*

Give praise to the Lord for he is good, his mercy endures for ever.

Let the house of Israel say,
'His mercy endures for ever.'
Let the house of Aaron say,
'His mercy endures for ever.'
Let those who fear the Lord say,
'His mercy endures for ever.'

Give praise to the Lord for he is good, his mercy endures for ever.

The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.
By the Lord has this been done,
a marvel in our eyes.
This is the day the Lord has made;
let us rejoice in it and be glad.

Give praise to the Lord for he is good, his mercy endures for ever.

We beseech you, O Lord, grant salvation;
we beseech you, O Lord, grant success.
Blest is he who comes
in the name of the Lord.
We bless you from the house of the Lord;
the Lord is God, and has given us light.

Give praise to the Lord for he is good, his mercy endures for ever.

Second reading *Revelation 1:9-11a, 12-13, 17-19*

I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet saying, 'Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches.'

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash round his chest. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, 'Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Sequence

Christians, to the Paschal Victim offer sacrifice and praise.
The sheep are ransomed by the Lamb;
and Christ, the undefiled,
hath sinners to his Father reconciled.
Death with life contended:
combat strangely ended!
Life's own Champion, slain,
yet lives to reign.
Tell us, Mary: say what thou didst see upon the way.
The tomb the Living did enclose;
I saw Christ's glory as he rose!
The angels there attesting;
shroud with grave-clothes resting.
Christ, my hope, has risen: he goes before you into Galilee.
That Christ is truly risen from the dead we know.
Victorious king, thy mercy show!

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.
You believed, Thomas, because you have seen me,
says the Lord.
Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.
Alleluia.

Gospel *John 20:19-31*

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.
Glory to you, O Lord.

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.'

Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord'. But he said to them, 'Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe.'

Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The Gospel of The Lord
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Please join us in praying for those who are sick and those who have died:

Please contact us with any additional names you may wish to be added to these lists which are updated weekly, and accept our apologies for anyone we have omitted.

For those who are sick: Ann Archer, Joanne Davitt, Kathleen Andrews, Siobhan Frost, Leslie Caesar, Mary Elizabeth Thomas, Dawn Tannian, Phil Carey, Alice Sheppard, Dave Jessop, Michael O'Brien, Brendan Davern, Shay Murray, Ruby King, John Wildsmith, Cecil Swampillai, Belinda Plummer, Marilyn Theodore, Veronica Savill, Levan Soloman, Patricia Procter, Philip Wilson, Mary Hyde, King Charles, Catherine Princess of Wales, Moira Montgomery, Patricia Lee, Eileen Wildsmith, Peter Fitzpatrick, Mark O'Connor, Marie Marron, Carol-Ann Frost, Ada Barker, Ron Picardo, Kerry Blackburn, James Wilson, Audrey Potts, Rafael Pino, Julius Fayiti, Anna Kelly, Justin, Margaret Downing, as well as others for whom we have been praying together recently.

For those who have died recently: Pope Francis, Fr Aidan Sharratt, Florence Rodrigo, Maria Lourdes Damaso Morris, Canon Bernard Scholes and all who have died as a result of violence, war and conflict or natural disaster.

For those whose anniversary occurs around this time: Ernest Miles, Rita Tibbles, Richard Hardcastle, Joseph Aleyne, Maureen Smith, Stanley Rushowski, Hilda Lucas, Peter Conroy, Stephen Usherwood, James O'Connor, James Gallagher, Monica Scudder, Bridget Lynch, Bridget Falvey, Joan Dillon, George Lanagan, Pietro Muoio.

Worship this week

(Saturday)	**6.00pm: Anticipated Mass of Sunday** - *People of the Parishes (St Joseph's)*
Sunday 4th *3rd Sunday of Easter*	**9.00am: Mass** - *Martha Murray (Intns) (St Matthew's)* **11.00am: Mass -** *Maurice & Florence Rodrigo &John Crowle RIP (St Joseph's)* **6.00pm: Mass -** *Tony Marano RIP (St Matthew's)* **8.00pm: Holy Hour praying for the Cardinals preparing for the Conclave** *(St Matthew's)*
Monday 5th *Easter Feria*	**09:40 Morning Prayer** **10.00am: Mass** - *Agostino & Antonina De Falco RIP* ***Followed By Rosary*** *(St Matthew's)*
Tuesday 6th *Easter Feria*	**09:40 Morning Prayer** **10.00am: Mass** - *Andy Jones RIP (1st Anniv)* ***Followed By Rosary*** *(St Joseph's)*
Wednesday 7th *Easter Feria*	**NO PUBLIC MASS**
Thursday 8th *Easter Feria*	**7.00pm: Mass** - *Christine Dodd RIP* ***Followed By Rosary*** *(St Joseph's)*
Friday 9th *Easter Feria*	**09:40 Morning Prayer** **10.00am: Mass** - *Holy Souls* ***Followed By Rosary*** *(St Matthew's)*
Saturday 10th *Easter Feria*	**09:45 Morning Prayer** ***Followed By Rosary*** **10.30am: Mass** - *Julie Simon RIP (Anniv) (St Matthew's)* 11.00am - 11.50am:Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions **ending with Benediction** 5.00pm -5.45pm: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions *(St Joseph's)* **6.00pm: Anticipated Mass of Sunday** - *People of the Parishes (St Joseph's)*
Sunday 11th *4th Sunday of Easter*	**9.00am: Mass** - *Martha Murray (Intns) (St Matthew's)* **11.00am: Mass -** *Maurice Rodrigo &John Crowle RIP (St Joseph's)* **6.00pm: Mass -** *Tony Marano RIP (St Matthew's)* **8.00pm: Holy Hour praying for the Cardinals preparing for the Conclave** *(St Matthew's)*

Please contact the Parish Office if you wish to have a Mass intention (or lamp prayer intention) for a particular date.

Parish Directory

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