

The Parishes of Northwood and Carpenders Park & South Oxhey

TWENTY THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
(6th September 2026)



Dear Parishioners

This coming week brings two very different events which invite us to reflect on the value we place upon human life. On Friday, 11 September, we will mark the 25th anniversary of the terrorist attacks of 9/11. It is hard to believe that a quarter of a century has passed since those terrible events. Many of us remember exactly where we were when we first heard the news. Nearly 3,000 people lost their lives that day, and countless others have lived with the consequences ever since.

Anniversaries such as this are important because they help us to remember. We remember those who died, those who were injured, the families who lost loved ones, and all those who continue to carry the scars of what happened. We also remember the terrible consequences of hatred and violence and pray that future generations will not have to experience such suffering. The anniversary comes at a time when our world again seems deeply divided. We see war, terrorism, persecution and violence in different parts of the world, and it can sometimes seem that human life is valued less and less. As Christians, our response must be to reaffirm the dignity of every human person and to pray and work for peace.

There is another issue concerning the value and dignity of human life which will come before Parliament this week. On Friday, the House of Commons is due to debate and vote on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, which seeks to introduce assisted suicide in England and Wales.

The Catholic Church is firmly opposed to assisted suicide because human life is a gift from God and possesses an inherent dignity which does not depend upon our health, independence, usefulness or quality of life. The Church teaches that we must never deliberately cause the death of an innocent human being, even with the intention of ending suffering. This does not mean that the Church is indifferent to suffering. Quite the opposite. We are called to accompany people who are seriously ill, to relieve pain, to provide excellent palliative care and, above all, to ensure that nobody faces the end of life feeling abandoned, unwanted or a burden to others.

This is why the Church is concerned about the message that legalising assisted suicide could send to some of the most vulnerable members of our society. An elderly or seriously ill person should never feel that they ought to die because they are dependent upon others. A disabled person should never be made to feel that their life is less valuable. Someone approaching the end of life should hear the message: “You are loved. You are precious. We will care for you.” The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales is therefore asking Catholics and all people of goodwill to contact their Member of Parliament and ask them to vote against the Bill. I would encourage parishioners to do so.

This is not about telling others what they must think. It is about making our voices heard respectfully in an important public debate. As citizens, we have a responsibility to engage with the political process, particularly when questions of fundamental human dignity are at stake. The Bishops' Conference has provided information about the Bill and a straightforward way of contacting your MP. I encourage you to take a few minutes to do so.

At the same time, we should pray for our Members of Parliament as they consider this legislation. They have difficult decisions to make, and they need wisdom and courage. We should also pray for those who are seriously or terminally ill, for those who care for them, and for families who are facing difficult decisions at the end of life.

Perhaps these two events—the 25th anniversary of 9/11 and the parliamentary debate on assisted suicide—also remind us of something fundamental to our Christian faith. Every human life matters. Those who died on 11 September 2001 mattered. The elderly person who can no longer live independently matters. The person with a terminal illness matters. The disabled person matters. The person who feels lonely or burdensome matters. The person whose life seems, in the eyes of the world, to have little left to offer matters. And each one matters not because of what they can achieve, but because they are loved by God.

As a parish community, let us therefore remember, pray and, when necessary, speak. Let us make our contribution to public life with charity and respect, but also with the confidence that comes from knowing what we believe. And let us pray that our society will always be one in which the answer to suffering is greater love, better care and deeper companionship—not death.

With all my prayers and best wishes

Fr Tom

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: 9.30am - 3.30pm

Holy Hour

This Sunday we have our monthly Sunday evening Holy Hour at 8.00pm ending with Compline.

St Matthew's 200 Club

It's time to renew subscriptions for the 200 Club. Renewal/Application forms are available at the back of church. This will be for the September draw.

RCIA

If you are an adult who is not a Catholic and would like to explore becoming one, it's not too late to sign up for our RCIA course which begins in September. If you are a baptised Catholic who has not been confirmed, then this is also for you. Please sign up using the QR code on the poster at the back of church.

Good Books

If you are interested in joining us – in person or in the WhatsApp group – do come along. Our next meeting is at **7 pm on Wednesday 9 September** in the Fr Bebb Room at St Matthew's. We'll be talking about **Shy Creatures** by **Clare Chambers.** The poster in the porch of both churches also has more information.

Catholic Women's League

We are a small, happy group of friendly ladies, who meet at St Joseph's Church, on the second Monday of the month at 2pm. We are part of the Westminster branch of the CWL. We have tea, biscuits, a raffle and chat about events we are organising and participate in initiatives organised by the main CWL body. We would welcome any new members to our group ,especially those from St Matthew's Church. The next meeting is on **Monday 14th September**. (Entrance is using the side door of the church). For more details contact any of the following: Ann Farrell 07922 836030, Breda Griffin 07738 363932, Pauline James 07511 668812.

They will be collecting for MIND during the weekend of 12/13 September

Nicholas Birch

Nicholas has made the following appeal. I am running the 2026 Berlin Marathon to raise money for The Passage who help those experiencing homelessness. I have been very fortunate in my life to have always had somewhere to call home, however many people around the country don't. Organisations such as The Passage provide support to those without access to even the most basic things that we take for granted. Any donation towards my marathon effort and the work that they do is greatly appreciated! Thank you and God bless you!

The Passage's vision is of a society where homelessness no longer exists, and everyone has a place to call home. The Passage is based in the heart of Westminster, providing practical support and a wide range of services to help transform the lives of people who are, or are at risk of homelessness. Every gift, no matter how big or small, enables us to help people who are experiencing homelessness to regain their confidence and hope for the future.

You can make a donation at **https://www.justgiving.com/page/nicholas-birch-4**

Organ Recital

Our extremely talented organist Isabella Flynn will be giving an organ recital to mark St Matthew's tide. on Sunday 20th September at 3.00pm in St Matthew's Church and it will be followed by Refreshments. See poster for details,

An evening with Lissa Evans

The talented children's author, novelist and BAFTA winning producer of Fr Ted will having a book evening at St Matthew's on Thursday 12th November. (Her book was the July Book of our parish book group) Tickets are £10. Mark the date in your diary.

An Day with Mary

The next Days with Mary in our diocese are as follows. **Saturday 12 September** at ***St Aloysius Church, Somers Town*** 10.00am - 5.30pm **Saturday 26 September** at ***St Joseph's Church, Wembley*** , 9.30am - 5.30pm. For more details see **https://adaywithmary.org/**

Feast of Saint Matthew

We celebrate the Feast of Saint Matthew on Monday 21st September. As in previous years we will pray a novena to Saint Matthew which will begin next Saturday. Here are the prayers for Day 1

<u>Opening Prayer</u>

God of mercy
you chose a tax collector, Saint Matthew,
to share the dignity of the apostles.
By his example and prayers
help us to follow Christ
and remain faithful in your service.
We ask this
through Our Lord Jesus Christ, your son,
who lives and reigns with you
and the Holy Spirit, one God,
forever and ever. Amen



Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 5:3)

Dear Jesus, I have sinned against God and you. I have gone against you and hurt you with each and every sin I have committed. I am not worthy of your love, but you are my only hope. Please save me, and please forgive me, for I am lost without you.

Saint Matthew, as you were one of the lucky twelve who walked the Earth with Jesus by your side, you were continually made aware of your own nothingness before his greatness and saw many evidences of God's immense grace. Help me to be so poor in spirit that I acknowledge my own nothingness before God on a moment-by-moment basis, and please intercede with Jesus in asking him to grant my desperate request, *(STATE REQUEST).* Amen.

Parish Pilgrimage to Rome & Palazzola (12th—19th April 2027)

Some more details of our proposed pilgrimage to Rome, staying at the Venerable English College's retreat and pilgrimage centre of Palazzola overlooking Lake Albano in the Alban Hills (or Castelli Romani) just south of Rome. Please contact the parish office to register your interest and we will send you a brochure (when it is printed).

The programme (subject to change) is as follows:

Mon 12 Morning departure from London Heathrow Airport (Terminal 5) at 10.55 on ***British Airways*** Airbus 320/321 flight **BA552** to Rome. Arrival at Rome Fiumicino (14.35) and transfer by coach to **Palazzola** overlooking Lake Albano with time to settle-in, celebrate evening Mass and enjoy dinner.

Tue 13 Morning coach transfer around Lake Albano to the village of Castel Gandolfo for a timed-entry guided tour of the **Papal Palace and Secret** (= private) **Garden** that now also includes an exhibition of life there in WWII, an exhibition on the Popes from 1503 to today. Lunch. Free afternoon to enjoy Palazzola. Late afternoon walk around the Villa grounds with its Roman consul's tomb and mosaics of 100 BC and terraced garden, the 13th century Cistercian church and cloisters, the 18th century Franciscan developments including the 18th century Baroque fountain in the garden of the Villa. Evening Mass and dinner.

Wed 14 Full-day excursion to the east of Rome for a morning visit to the Benedictine Monastery of Sacro Speco at **Subiaco** with a guided tour by one of the monks or lay assistants and to celebrate Mass. Lunch in a local restaurant. Afternoon return to Palazzola. Dinner.

Thu 15 Morning visit to the **Catacombs of San Callixtus** for a tour by one of the brothers and Mass**.** Lunch. Late afternoon visit to the local town of **Frascati** for sampling ice cream, enjoying the shops or walking in the footsteps of the Cardinal Duke of York. Dinner.

Fri 16 Full-day excursion into **Rome** to the Church of **San Alfonso** (with the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour and also Cardinal Vincent Nichols titular church) for Mass followed by a visit to the **Basilica of Saint Mary Major** (where the Pope's celebrated the first Mass of Christmas until 1870 and relics of St Thomas Becket and where Pope Francis is laid to rest). Afternoon guided tour of **St Peter's Basilica**. Dinner.

Sat 17 Morning coach transfer around Lake Albano to the village of **Castel Gandolfo** for a timed-entry eco-bus tour of the **Borgo Laudate Si'**, the gardens and farm of the Palazzo Barberini. Lunch in the gardens. Afterwards free time to enjoy the village with its cafes, shops and a parish church designed by Bernini with maybe a coffee or ice-cream or aperitif while looking back across the lake to Palazzola. Evening Mass. Dinner.

Sun 18 Morning transfer into Rome to attend Mass at the **Venerable English College** (the oldest British institution abroad dating back to 1362) before transferring to **St Peter's Square** to join Pope Leo XIV for the *Angelus*. Afternoon transfer via the **Basilica of St Paul's Outside the Walls** (with its many English connections including King Charles III being awarded the title of Royal Confrater, and also the mosaic portraits of the 267 Popes - and a cafe) en-route to Rome Fiumicino Airport for ***British Airways*** Airbus 320/321 flight **BA557** at 18.15 arriving London Heathrow (Terminal 5) at 19.55.

COST £1395 per person inclusive of:

- flight London Heathrow/Rome Fiumicino return
- airport taxes and security charges
- one piece of 23 kg hold luggage
- one piece of hand luggage
- reserved seating
- 6 nights at Palazzola
- continental breakfast
- 4 lunches and 6 dinners
- wine and water with main meals
- all transfers and excursions in Italy
- entry/audio charges and Mass offerings
- tips to coach drivers/guides

The following items are not included:

- travel insurance
- UK airport transfers
- two lunches
- any increases in/additional local taxes
- personal expenditure









Lamp Prayer Intentions

(St Matthew's)

Blessed Sacrament

Wisdom for our MPs as they debate Assisted Suicide

Our Lady

Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Intentions)



(St Joseph's)

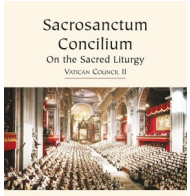
Blessed Sacrament

Pugh Family (Intentions)

Our Lady

Louise Cullen (Intentions)

Pope Leo XIV



We continue Pope Leo's catechesis series on the Second Vatican Council and its documents at his weekly Wednesday General Audience in August. This is the catechesis that he gave on Wednesday 12th & 19th August.

Catechesis. The Documents of Vatican Council II.
III. Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium.
6. The liturgical year

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

The fifth chapter of the Conciliar Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC) is dedicated to the liturgical year, a theme we would like to look at today, to explain its value in the life of every believer.

First of all, it is important to note that this way of referring to the cycle of Christian feasts as the 'liturgical year' became widespread in ecclesiastical language thanks to the work of the Servant of God, Abbot Prosper Guéranger (1805–1875).

In the Encyclical Mediator Dei, Pope Pius XII states that it "is not a cold and lifeless representation of the events of the past, or a simple … record of a former age. [The liturgical year] is rather Christ Himself who is ever living in His Church. Here He continues that journey of immense mercy which He lovingly began in His mortal life … with the design of bringing men to know His mysteries and in a way live by them. These mysteries are ever present and active" (III Divinum Officium et Annus Liturgicus, II Cyclus Mysteriorum). The liturgical year should thus be understood as a constant renewal of the work of salvation which Christ accomplishes in history. As she journeys through this temporal cycle, the Church remains in contact with the Lord's redemptive action, so that all the faithful may be filled with His grace (cf. SC, 102c).

The encounter with Jesus, who died and rose again for us, is the purpose that the Church always pursues, placing the celebration of the Paschal event at the centre of every moment.

Hence the Council Fathers considered "the foundation and kernel of the whole liturgical year" to be Sunday, "the original feast day" (cf. SC, 106). In various modern languages, its name indicates that it is the "dies Domini", "the Lord's day". Even in those languages where the reference to the "day of the sun" (Sunday, Sonntag) has prevailed, the link with Christ can be discerned: Christ is the true "sun of righteousness" who enlightens every person!

Saint John Paul II, in the Apostolic Letter Dies Domini (31 May 1998) teaches that Sunday is the day of the Lord, the day of the Church, the day of man and, finally, the "day of days". "Since Sunday is the weekly Easter, recalling and making present the day upon which Christ rose from the dead, it is also the day which reveals the meaning of time. … Springing from the Resurrection, it cuts through human time, the months, the years, the centuries, like a directional arrow which points them towards their target: Christ's Second Coming. Sunday foreshadows the last day, the day of the Parousia" (75), when we shall all rise again.

To sanctify Sunday, it is fundamental to celebrate the Eucharist. Listening to the Word and partaking of the Body of Christ entail, according to the Council Fathers, the coming together in unum (cf. SC, 106), that is, the joyful gathering of the faithful. In this assembly, the Christian community makes visible its communion with the Lord and bears witness to its belonging to Christ and its fidelity to the Church. This assembly cannot be substituted by a solely virtual presence, nor can it be reduced to a merely passive gathering. The liturgical assembly is in fact fulfilled through the active participation of brothers and sisters, called together to "thank God who 'has begotten them again, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, unto a living hope'" (1 Pet 1:3) (ibid.).

In this regard, I urge everyone to seek the best possible conditions so that even those who are unable to take time off work on Sundays may take part in Holy Mass.

Dear friends, the liturgical year, punctuated by Sundays, has an interesting history, in which the faith and devotion of the Church are interwoven. Indeed, from as early as the second century AD, the celebration of the weekly Easter was joined by that of the annual Easter, the "most solemn festival" (SC, 102), extending over the most joyful period of fifty days, culminating in Pentecost, and prepared for by the season of Lent with its penitential character (cf. SC, 109). The development of the Christmas cycle, which took place later and was modelled on the Paschal cycle, has made it possible to relive the mysteries of the Incarnation of the Word of God, of His birth and of His manifestation to the world. The Church then incorporated into the various times the veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary, "joined by an inseparable bond to the saving work of her Son" (SC, 103), and "the memory of the martyrs and the other saints" who "sing God's perfect praise in heaven and offer prayers for us" (SC, 104).

The liturgical year thus repeats, in sacramental form, the teaching of the history of salvation, guiding the faithful from the expectation of the Messiah to the fullness of the Paschal Mystery and to the anticipation of future glory. In it, the Church celebrates the salvific relevance of the mystery of Christ, enabling believers to participate in it ever more deeply. For this reason, the liturgical year constitutes the guiding principle and the essential framework for all pastoral action.

Catechesis. The Documents of Vatican Council II.
III. Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium.
7. Sacred Music

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

The sixth chapter of the Second Vatican Council's Constitution Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC) is dedicated to sacred music. The document states that: "The musical tradition of the universal Church is a treasure of inestimable value, greater even than that of any other art. The main reason for this pre-eminence is that, as sacred song united to the words, it forms a necessary or integral part of the solemn liturgy" (SC,, 112). It specifies that "sacred music is to be considered the more holy in proportion as it is more closely connected with the liturgical action, whether it adds delight to prayer, fosters unity of minds, or confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites. But the Church approves of all forms of true art having the needed qualities, and admits them into divine worship" (ibid.).

Here we find the core of the Council''s teaching, which confirms and deepens the ministerial function of music in the liturgy, already highlighted by Saint Pius X in the Motu Proprio Inter Sollicitudines (22 November 1903). Indeed, music is part of the liturgical action and is not merely a decorative part of the celebration. To sing and play music during the liturgy is to pray, attuning one's heart to that of our sisters and brothers and to God, through active participation in the mystery being celebrated. In particular, music expresses the affective dimension of prayer, as Saint Augustine says: "Cantare amantis est", that is, "singing belongs to those who love" (Sermon 336, 1). This is very important, because it helps us open our hearts to God's action in grace and allow ourselves to be moulded by it.

Singing also fosters communion. It contributes to the unity of hearts, overcoming differences between people and bringing everyone together in praise of God through the symphony of voices. Thus, it becomes an epiphany of the Church, a tangible manifestation of the communion that belongs to her very nature.

The profound theological value of sacred hymns as an integral part of liturgical action carries certain requirements. The first is that, at every level, it must respond to what is most appropriate for the liturgical moment, beyond fashions or composers' particular sensitivities. Its form, especially in its melodic aspect, must be at once noble and simple, of high musical quality and easily performable, particularly when it is intended to be sung by the whole assembly (cf. SC,, 121).

For the same reason, the Council also recommends that the texts be suitable, profound and at the same time readily understandable, inspired mainly by Sacred Scripture, liturgical books and the spiritual Tradition of the Church. Attention must be paid to this, so that the dynamic expressed in the ancient principle lex orandi, lex credendi, that is, the law of prayer is also the law of faith, may remain alive and continue to grow.

Sacrosanctum Concilium devotes considerable attention to the theme of the active participation of the faithful (cf. n. 114). This "must be understood […] on the basis of a greater awareness of the mystery being celebrated and its relationship to daily life" (Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation Sacramentum caritatis, 52), in a "spirit of constant conversion which must mark the lives of all the faithful" (ibid., 55). As for the practical way in which this can be achieved through sacred music's specific role, the Constitution offers a clear answer: "the people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs", and "reverent silence" should be fostered (SC,, 30). It urges each person, minister or member of the faithful, to perform "all of, but only, those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy" (SC, 28), in a harmonious balance between different ministries, various interventions and moments of silence.

The Council attributes great value to Gregorian chant, without excluding other genres of sacred music from the celebration. Particular attention is also given to the organ (cf. SC,, 120), while the use of other instruments is permitted "on condition that the instruments are suitable, or can be made suitable, for sacred use, accord with the dignity of the temple, and truly contribute to the edification of the faithful" (SC,, 120).

A theme close to the Council's reform is that of inculturation, including in the field of sacred music. In particular, with regard to the musical traditions of different cultures, the Council emphasizes the importance of taking them into consideration seriously, as they form part of people's religious and social life. Thus, on one hand, an "attitude toward religion" should be promoted in everyone (SC,, 119). On the other, "every effort should be made to see that they become competent in promoting the traditional music of these peoples, both in schools and in sacred services" (ibid.).

A particular role in the liturgical context is given to the schola cantorum. The Council recommends the promotion of this pastoral instrument, to ensure the "proper performance of the parts which belong to it, according to the different kinds of music sung, and to encourage the active participation of the faithful in the singing" (Sacred Congregation of Rites, Instruction Musicam Sacram, 19).

Hence, composers of sacred music are called to know and preserve the musical heritage of the Church, allowing it to inspire new compositions at the service of the liturgy, while respecting contemporary sensibilities and the different cultural traditions, so as to "'purify worship from ugliness of style, from distasteful forms of expression, from uninspired musical texts which are not worthy of the great act that is being celebrated', to guarantee dignity and excellence to liturgical compositions" (Saint John Paul II, Chirograph on Sacred Music, 22 November 2003, 3).

For all these reasons, the Council Fathers recommended promoting the formation and practice of sacred music "in seminaries, in the novitiates and houses of study of religious of both sexes, and also in other Catholic institutions and schools" (SC,, 115), and ensuring that musicians and singers receive sound liturgical formation (cf. ibid.).

Dear brothers and sisters, the Fathers of the Church held liturgical singing in great esteem as a symbol of ecclesial communion. We can therefore conclude with Saint Ignatius of Antioch's beautiful words: "Let each of you unite to become a choir, so that, harmonious in love and taking up the song of God in unison, you may with one voice sing to the Father through Jesus Christ, so that he may hear you and recognize, from the good works you perform, that you are members of his Son" (cf. Letter to the Ephesians, 4, 2).

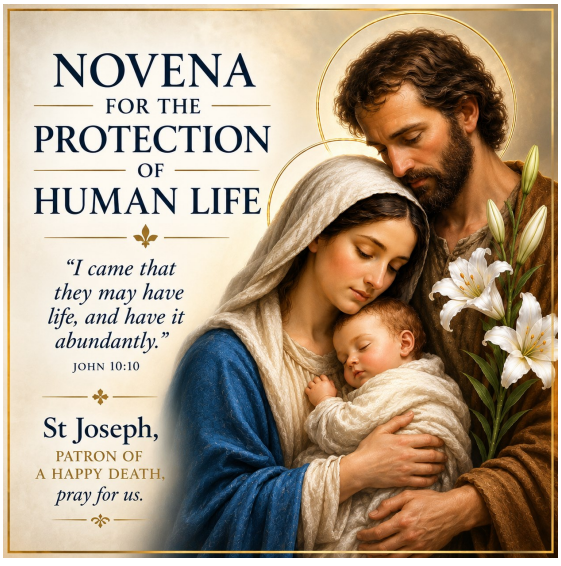
Novena for the Protection of Human Life (2–10 September 2026)

In preparation for"Choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him." (Deuteronomy 30:19–20)

As Parliament prepares to debate legislation concerning assisted suicide, we continue with out Novena

Daily Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father,
you are the Creator and Lord of all life.
Every person is fashioned in your image
and loved with an everlasting love.
As we pray this novena,
grant us hearts filled with compassion,
minds open to your wisdom,
and courage to witness to the dignity of every human person.
Bless those who are sick,
comfort those who are anxious,
strengthen families and carers,
guide healthcare professionals,
and enlighten those entrusted with making laws for our nation.
Through the prayers of Saint Joseph,
Patron of a Happy Death,
may we always cherish, protect and serve the gift of life.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Day Four (5 September)
Supporting Families and Carers

Scripture

"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ." (Galatians 6:2)

Reflection

When serious illness enters a family, it touches everyone. Husbands and wives, parents and children, relatives, friends and neighbours often become carers, quietly giving of themselves day after day. Their love is expressed in countless hidden acts of service: preparing meals, sitting through sleepless nights, offering encouragement, and simply remaining present.

These acts of loving care remind us that compassion is not merely a feeling but a way of living. They reflect something of Christ himself, who came "not to be served but to serve." While the demands of caring can sometimes feel overwhelming, no act of love is ever unnoticed by God.

Today we give thanks for all who care for loved ones at home, in hospitals, hospices and care homes. We pray that they may be sustained by hope, strengthened by grace, and supported by the communities around them. May no family carry this burden alone, but may all discover the generosity and kindness that build up the Body of Christ.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you showed us the meaning of self-giving love. Bless all who care for those who are sick, elderly or frail. Renew their strength, give them patience in difficulty, joy in their service, and the assurance that every act of love is precious in your sight. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day Five (6 September)
The Ministry of Healing

Scripture

"Heal the sick who are there and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'" (Luke 10:9)

Reflection

Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus revealed God's compassion by drawing close to the sick. He healed many, comforted those who mourned and restored hope to those who had lost it. Today his healing ministry continues through the dedication of doctors, nurses, paramedics, chaplains, hospice staff, therapists, care workers and countless volunteers.

Modern medicine can achieve remarkable things, but alongside medical skill there remains the indispensable gift of human presence. A gentle word, a listening ear, a reassuring hand or a quiet prayer often brings comfort beyond measure.

We pray especially for those working in palliative and hospice care. Their vocation reminds us that even when illness cannot be cured, every person can still be cared for with dignity, tenderness and love. May God bless all whose daily work is to relieve suffering while cherishing the value of every life.

Prayer

Compassionate Father, bless all who work in healthcare and hospice care. Grant them wisdom, gentleness and perseverance. May they always recognise the dignity of those entrusted to their care, bringing comfort, hope and peace through their knowledge and their kindness. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day Six (7 September)
Our Hope is in Christ

Scripture

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live." (John 11:25)

Reflection

Death is one of life's greatest mysteries. It brings sadness, uncertainty and grief. Yet Christians do not face death without hope. Our confidence rests not in our own strength but in Jesus Christ, who died, rose again and opened for us the way to eternal life.

Christian hope does not ignore suffering, nor does it pretend that loss is easy. Rather, it proclaims that suffering and death do not have the final word. The Cross is followed by the Resurrection. Every tear will one day be wiped away, and those who trust in Christ will share in his everlasting life.

Today we pray for all who are approaching death. May they experience the peace of Christ, the comfort of the sacraments, and the loving presence of those who care for them. May they know that they are held securely in the hands of God.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, you conquered sin and death by your glorious Resurrection. Strengthen all who are nearing the end of this earthly life. Fill them with your peace, surround them with loving care, and lead them safely into the joy of your heavenly kingdom. For you live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

Day Seven (8 September)
The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Scripture

"Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord." (Luke 1:45)

Reflection

Today the Church celebrates the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose faithful "yes" opened the way for the coming of our Saviour. Mary's whole life points us towards her Son, teaching us to trust in God's loving plan even when the future is uncertain.

In welcoming the gift of life entrusted to her, Mary became the Mother of the Redeemer and the Mother of the Church. She stands beside all who suffer, offering comfort to the sorrowful, hope to the discouraged and courage to those who carry heavy burdens.

On this joyful feast we entrust our nation to Mary's maternal care. May she help us to build a culture in which every human life is welcomed, cherished and protected, and where those who are suffering encounter love rather than loneliness.

Prayer

Holy Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church, pray for our nation. Help us to welcome every human life as a gift from God. Comfort those who suffer, strengthen those who care for them, and lead us always to your Son, the Lord of Life. Amen.

Day Eight (9 September)
A Culture of Compassion

Scripture

"Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful." (Luke 6:36)

Reflection

The word "compassion" literally means "to suffer with." Jesus showed true compassion by entering into the suffering of others, never abandoning them, never treating them as burdens, but always revealing their immeasurable worth.

Our society is at its strongest when those who are weakest know they are loved, protected and valued. Compassion is expressed through friendship, patient listening, generous service, excellent healthcare and communities that refuse to leave anyone behind.

Today we pray that our homes, parishes and communities may become places where every person is welcomed with tenderness and respect. May our words and actions bear

witness to the Gospel of Life, offering hope wherever there is fear and companionship wherever there is loneliness.

Prayer

Father of Mercies, make us instruments of your compassion. Open our eyes to those who are lonely, our ears to those who long to be heard, and our hearts to all who suffer. Teach us to love as Christ has loved us. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Day Nine (10 September)
Entrusting Our Nation to God

Scripture

"The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want." (Psalm 23:1)

Reflection

As this novena comes to its conclusion, we entrust our prayers to the loving providence of God. Whatever lies before us, we know that the Lord remains faithful. He calls us to continue witnessing to the Gospel with charity, humility and hope.

Tomorrow Parliament will consider legislation with profound consequences for our society. Today we pray for all who will take part in that debate, for those whose lives are touched most directly by its outcome, and for our nation as a whole. We ask that every decision may be guided by wisdom, justice and reverence for the God-given dignity of every human person.

Above all, we renew our own commitment to accompany those who suffer with generous hearts, to support families and carers, to value the ministry of healthcare professionals, and to proclaim by our lives that every person is infinitely loved by God.

May Saint Joseph, who died in the loving presence of Jesus and Mary, obtain for us the grace to live faithfully, to care compassionately, and to entrust ourselves with confidence into God's merciful hands.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, receive the prayers we have offered throughout these nine days. Guide our nation in the ways of truth, justice and compassion. Protect the vulnerable, comfort the sick, strengthen those who care for them, and inspire each one of us to bear faithful witness to the dignity of every human life. Through the intercession of Saint Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death, may we remain steadfast in faith, abounding in hope, and generous in love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Concluding Invocation

Saint Joseph, Patron of a Happy Death, **pray for us.**
Our Lady, Mother of Life, **pray for us.**
All the Saints of England and Wales, **pray for us.**
Sacred Heart of Jesus, **have mercy on us.**

Readings at Sunday Mass

First reading *Ezekiel 33:7-9*

Thus says the Lord: 'So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.'

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm *95(94):1-2. 6-7b. 7c-9. ℟7c, 8a*

O that today you would listen to his voice!
'Harden not your hearts.'

Come, let us ring out our joy to the Lord;
hail the rock who saves us.
Let us come into his presence, giving thanks;
let us hail him with a song of praise.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
'Harden not your hearts.'

O come; let us bow and bend low.
Let us kneel before the Lord who made us,
for he is our God, and we the people,
the people of his pasture, the flock of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
'Harden not your hearts.'

O that today you would listen to his voice!
'Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your forebears put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my work.'

O that today you would listen to his voice!
'Harden not your hearts.'

Second reading *Romans 13:8-10*

Brothers and Sisters: Owe no one anything, except to love each other. For the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet', and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!
God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself,
and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Gospel *Matthew 18:15-20*

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.

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

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples, 'If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.'

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: Mary Emmanuel, Joe Mullen, Leo McLoughlin, Patrick Coyle, Lourdes D'Silva Torres, Eliana Ost, James Conradi, Anne Paget, Mary Vaughan, Helen Jones, Sinead Ceasar, Gilda Kumarathasan, Siobhan Frost, Leslie Caesar, Mary Elizabeth Thomas, Georgette Gornall, Ann Archer, Kathleen Lynch, Kathleen Andrews, Harry Nandlal, Dawn Tannian, Phil Carey, Alice Sheppard, 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, Moira Montgomery, Patricia Lee, Peter Fitzpatrick, Mark O'Connor, Marie Marron, Carol-Ann Frost, Ron Picardo, Kerry Blackburn, James Wilson, 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, Horace Clarke and all who have died as a result of violence, war and conflict or natural disaster and those who have no one to pray for them.

For those whose anniversary occurs around this time: Ann Walsh, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, Isobel Sayers, Lynda Cox, Freddy Fernando, Patrick Murray, Frank Kemp, Eileen Mary Holden, William John O'Connor, Fred Boddington, Jerome Delima, Frank Leek, Garrett Leech, Antoinette Roberts, Helen Case, Lucy Ames.

Pope's Prayer Intention for September. For the care of water, we pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it. .

Worship this week

Sunday Readings: *Year A* ***Weekday Readings:*** *Week 23 (Year 2)* ***Daily Office:*** *Week 3*

	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 6th *23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time*	**9.00am: Mass** - *Audrey Potts RIP (St Matthew's)* **11.15am: Mass -** *Gertrud Birch RIP (Anniv) (St Joseph's)* **6.00pm: Mass** - *Kathleen & Eardley McHeyzer RIP (St Matthew's)* **8.00pm: Holy Hour** *Concluding with Night Prayer (St Matthew's)*
Monday 7th *Feria*	**.00am** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament **09:40 Morning Prayer** **10.00am: Mass** - *No intention yet (St Matthew's)*
Tuesday 8th *The Nativity of the BVM*	**9.00am** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament **09:40 Morning Prayer** **10.00am Mass** - *Philip Wilson (Birthday Intns)* ***Followed By Rosary*** *(St Joseph's)*
Wednesday 9th *Feria*	**NO PUBLIC MASS**
Thursday 10th *Feria*	6.00pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament **7.00pm Mass** - *Sharon Hallissey RIP (St Joseph's)* ***Followed By Rosary*** *(St Joseph's)*
Friday 11th *Feria*	**9.00am** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament **09:40 Morning Prayer** **10.00am: Mass** - *JJ Delima RIP (Anniv) (St Matthew's)* ***Followed By Rosary***
Saturday 12th *Most Holy Name of Mary*	**09.45 Morning Prayer 10.00am: Rosary** **10.30am: Mass -** *Patricia Nicolls Jones 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** - *John Moore RIP (Anniv) (St Joseph's)*
Sunday 13th *24th Sunday in Ordinary Time*	**9.00am: Mass** - *People of the Parishes (St Matthew's)* **11.15am: Mass -** *Michael Cassidy RIP/LD (St Joseph's)* **6.00pm: Mass -** *No intention yet (St Matthew's)*

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

Parish Directory

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