Holy Rood Catholic Church

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TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 13 September 2026

March For Life Thank you to everyone who made the March for Life last Saturday, such a success. Over 10,000 turned up with the joy which has become a signature mark of this pro-life event. The theme was 'Pro-family! Pro-life!'

The doors of the Emmanuel Centre opened at 10am to a queue stretching around the corner. Attendees flowed in to check out a range of pro-life stalls and grab a sign or placard to support their favourite pro-life organisations.

At 10:30 events kicked off in earnest: Activities for the children, and for the adults a Pro-Life Family Summit led by Christian writer and academic, Dr Aaron Edwards, husband and father, who spoke about the culture of death and the impact a pro-life mindset can have upon the family and surrounding culture. 'There's a culture of fear. 'The abortion industry thrives, because we see children as a curse, not a blessing.'

Next on the bill was Krista Corbello, a sibling survivor who told of how her mother's family were so against her keeping Krista that they mailed back photos of her baby bump torn up. Krista shared how her mother trusted God and chose life regardless.

Two panels followed, exploring the unique and essential callings of men and women, one on the topic of fatherhood and the other on motherhood. During the fatherhood discussion, panellist Ryan Christopher recounted the losses of his three biological children, Clementine who was miscarried at 9 weeks gestation, Edith who was stillborn, and Benedict who was an ectopic pregnancy. Ryan stated that, 'My identity is now always to be a father. That's the grace given me by my children.' He went on to reflect on fatherhood in its differing expressions, noting that, 'What it is to be a mature masculine person is to be *fatherly*.'

The motherhood panel, following the same format, explored what it is to be *motherly* in different senses and contexts. Speaking from her experience of motherhood and family life, Chiara Finaldi said: 'The antidote to feminism is motherhood,' adding that due to ideological and cultural pressures for women to present their family lives as perfect, 'I feel sorry for the new generation of mothers who are online.' On the other hand, Emily Vaughan-Spruce was able to provide another perspective on every woman's call to follow in the footsteps of the Mother of God whether they are blessed with biological children or not, drawing on her wealth of experience caring for the elderly and infirm, reminding all present: 'God doesn't make women with second-rate hearts.'

While all this was going on, Anglicans, Orthodox, Evangelical Christians and Catholics held their respective services. Westminster Cathedral had standing room only and despite protesters interrupting the Mass, the 15 bishops and countless clergy continued to pray for a transformation of the culture.

At 13:30 the march began and flags of St George and St David, were flying above a sea of signs, banners and icons as we walked the familiar route through Westminster to the sounds of singing and chants. What a privilege it was to march shoulder to shoulder with so many pro-lifers, from retirees in their eighties and nineties to babies in pushchairs, and from bishops to atheists. One could find oneself walking alongside half a dozen teenage boys carrying a banner and five minutes later be chatting with the Archbishop of Southwark, who told me: 'I am here because I believe in the right to life, and to bear witness to the Gospel of Life. The nation needs to hear that message.'

The march ended in Parliament Square, where Hermione Thomas & the Life Band opened performed before roster of speakers. Caroline Farrow of CitizenGo message on pills-by-post and the legalisation of late-term abortions. 'Westminster cannot solve poverty by ending the lives of innocent children,' she said. 'Let us say plainly what Parliament has done: Parliament has made backstreet abortion legal.'

Next to take the stage was Nanayaa, who shared her testimony as a mother of twin boys she might have aborted under pressure from her siblings and medical staff, had not her mother encouraged her to choose life.

March for Life Co-CEO Isabel Vaughan-Spruce addressed the crowd, commenting on the rising death toll of abortion in the UK and the looming threat of legal assisted suicide, and providing updates on the establishment's

Final speaker, Jeff Joaquin, provided the last testimony of the day. He told the heart-rending tale of how he, at 17-years-old insisted on driving, his then girlfriend, for an abortion, though

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he could not bring himself to accompany her into the building. However, this loss proved to be Jeff's first step down a spiral of grief and addiction which culminated in a ruined career and a cocaine-induced heart attack. 'I thought I could bury that issue, go to college and have an NFL career,' he said. 'What ended up happening is that the issue buried *me*.'

Then came a time of prayer to conclude the day. First intercessory prayers were led by Pastors Dia Moodley and Regan King along with Christian Concern's Andrea Williams, Lisa Barr of Evangelical Alliance, and Voice for Justice CEO Lynda Rose. Finally, the Roman Catholic bishops, who this year numbered 15, took to the stage along with Canon Montjean of the ICKSP to lead the Prayer for Life and impart a message from His Holiness Pope Leo.

Although protesters were visible throughout the day, the March for Life, well and truly drowned them out, with over 10,000 attendees and the day was one of abundant blessings and faithful witness to the unavoidable truth that abortion hurts the family. Thank you to all those who came along, particularly those who travelled great distances and overcame obstacles to be there. A big shout out to the many volunteers and friends who joined us, to priests and pastors who led others there and all the pro-life organisations who were part of this. Save the date for Saturday 4th September 2027. From the March for Life Team

A huge thank you to all those from Holy Rood who attended some or all of the events. A powerful day, and yet maybe the most powerful part of the day was at the end, when were all asked to kneel down in Parliament Square for one minute of silence and prayer. Wow … I bet that doesn't happen too often. And just before the prayers had started, the small group of noisy protestors that infiltrated the square, swiftly left. Funny that!

Sadly the protesters, small in numbers, were angry, full of hatred and continuously shouted. We hear in scripture how demonic behaviour is reflected in loud angry shouting. If they only listened to the testimonies, I believe many would have a change of heart. Let us pray for them, that Gods' peace enfolds them. God bless. Fr Gerard.

So many have been hurt as a consequence of abortion, including families and friends. But there is help and counselling. Please check out notice board or visit sites such as ARCH, www.archtrust.org.uk, SPUC, www.spuc.org.uk, lifecharity.org.uk. Please don't suffer in silence.

MacMillan Coffee Morning Parish Centre on Friday 25th September from 10am to 12noon. Everyone welcome.

St Joseph's Parents Group meet on Friday 18 September in the parish centre from 11am to 12.30pm. All welcome.

St Joan of Arc and Loreto College open evenings
Please see noticeboard for details.

Tuesday evening Gospel Refection Group re-opens this Tuesday 15th in the Parish Centre. 8pm. All are welcome.

MASS INTENTIONS
Sunday 13 September
+TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

8am	Brian Dines RIP anniv.
9.30am	Stephen Taprell Holland RIP, Benefactor of Holy Rood Church, Rectory & school
11am	Desmond Figueiredo RIP
12.30pm	Manna Joshi Int.
2.15pm	Polish Mass

Monday 14 September
The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

12noon	People of the Parish

Tuesday 15 September
Our Lady of Sorrows

8.30am	Desmond Figueiredo RIP
12noon	Noelle Ford RIP 1st anniv.

Wednesday 16 September
Saints Cornelius, Pope and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs

12noon	Peter Elliott RIP anniv.

Thursday 17 September
Feria

12noon	Jackie Elliott RIP

Friday 18 September
Feria

7pm	Annual Healing Mass with Adoration

Saturday 19 September
Feria

11am	Carmel Murray RIP
6pm	Pauline Jenkins RIP anniv.

Sunday 20 September
+TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

8am	Pablo De Peralta RIP
9.30am	People of the Parish
11am	Noelle Ford RIP 1st anniv.
12.30pm	Manna Joshi Int.
2.15pm	Polish Mass

BLESSED SACRAMENT LAMP
Pablo De Peralta RIP
EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT & BENEDICTION
Tuesday 9am-11.15am; Friday 6.30pm-7.15pm

SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION
Friday 6.30pm-7pm
Saturday 11.30am-12noon & 4.45pm-5.15pm

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK & LAST RITES By request

BAPTISMS Please contact Parish Office 01923 224085

Youth Mass Garston Please seen noticeboard for details.

Mass for He aling

'We are all in need of healing. Physically, spiritually, mentally. Our faith in the risen Christ is the answer. Prayer is the answer.

Friday 18th September, 7pm

with specific readings and prayers. A short period of exposition will follow and the monstrance carrying Our Lord will be carried through the church. All are welcome. Bring a friend, a family member, someone away from the church for a while.

The Eucharist 'This is my body. It is not a symbol, for if it was, it would not be perfect, but unfinished, imperfect, unreliable. But the Eucharist is perfect, whole & real.'

The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few, therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." Matthew 9:37-38. Please pray daily for vocations to the priesthood.