



PARISH NEWS FOR THE CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, ANDOVER

St John the Baptist, Andover and St John Fisher, Whitchurch

Parish Priest: Reverend Canon Christopher Rutledge KHS

Office: Alexandra Rd, Andover, SP10 3AD Tel: 01264 352829

Office email: office@catholic-andover.org.uk **Website:** www.catholic-andover.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Officer: Mrs Jackie Kelly: safeguarding@catholic-andover.org.uk

Office Hours: Monday: 8.30am - 3.30pm; Tues. & Thurs.: 8.30am - 12 noon; Fri. 8.30am - 2.30pm.

NB: The Office is CLOSED on Wednesdays / Canon Chris' Day off: Wednesday.

21st and 22nd February – First Sunday in Lent

Entrance Antiphon: When he calls on me, I will answer him; I will deliver him and give him glory, I will grant him length of days.

Psalm Response: Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Gospel Acclamation: *Alleluia, alleluia.* One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes forth from the mouth of God. *Alleluia*

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Today, marking the first Sunday of Lent, we hear in Matthew of Jesus' forty days in the desert. Hearing of Jesus' time being tested by Satan prompts us, perhaps somewhat naturally, to ponder the ways we are tested in our lives. No one of us is without weakness.

A favourite book of my children is *'Saint George and the Dragon'*, a 1985 Caldecott Medal winner. It recounts the ancient tale of Saint George battling a dragon plaguing an English city. (Spoiler alert: he defeats the dragon.) While he is the prototypical knight on a white horse, what struck me as I read this book for the first time, was the suffering the brave knight endures. He is cut, beaten and bruised in his battle with the dragon. His clothes are torn and his shield battered. No shining armor is to be seen – at least on the outside.

What *does* shine is the knight's bravery amidst his fear and knowledge of his weakness against the dragon. This and his virtue gleam far brighter than a sword could in the sunlight. It is the same with Jesus as he is tempted by Satan. I imagine Jesus tired and hungry on the outside, suffering while imagining having the authority and respect he knew was his due. However, Jesus' faith in the Father shines forth and is what enables him to defeat the 'dragon' before him.

Now, at the beginning of our forty days of Lent, let us place similar trust in God. Though knowing our weakness, let us also realize the strength and grace that God bestows, so we, like Jesus and the brave Saint George, may overcome the dragon before us.

S.McC

Note for all those who use Gift Aid Envelopes: Your 2026/2027 Gift Aid envelopes will be available to collect from the Church porch this weekend. If your set of envelopes is missing, incorrectly spelt or if you would like a set of envelopes, then please contact the Parish Office

The Diocese is now using a new system called ChurchSuite, to manage our parishioner database and our communications like the newsletter. To do this we need to renew all the information we hold about

parishioners. To ensure you remain registered as a parishioner and to continue to receive communications from the parish, including the newsletter, please make sure you have filled out a new Registration Form. There is a separate adult and child registration form.

You can use the QR codes on your smart phone to bring up the form, and it's a very simple form.

Or you can use the link on the website to register.

Please be assured that your data is protected and never shared - so it is useful to have all your details on the database - including postal addresses - even if you have been a parishioner for many years!



Adult
Parishioner
Registration



Child Parishioner
Registration

As a 'last resort' do contact the Parish Office and I will endeavour to help you! Thank you in advance for your help and co-operation and to all those who have taken the time to register. Teresa

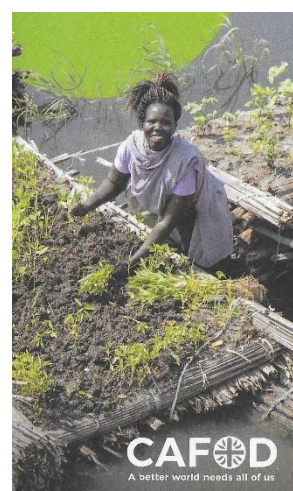
CAFOD'S FAMILY FAST DAY

26th February is CAFOD's Family Fast Day and there will be the Lenten Collection for the work of CAFOD on 27th and 28th February. This weekend, pre-printed CAFOD envelopes will be given out, so that You can complete them home before bringing in your donations next weekend. By filling in the gift card form CAFOD will be able to claim 25% of your donation, which makes a huge difference.

Hunger. Not the kind that comes from waiting too long to eat, but the kind that comes from having nothing to eat at all. Shorai in Zimbabwe put it simply: "As a father, it will be difficult for you to sleep." It's not just the hunger that kept him awake at night, but the guilt and pain of seeing his children go to bed with empty stomachs. Around the world – despite farmers' best efforts – crops are failing.

In Zimbabwe, rain is scarce. In parts of Bangladesh and South Sudan, there's too much water. Either way, the result is the same – seeds fail to grow, harvests disappear, and families go hungry. But there is hope and there is a solution. It needs all of us: you, me, CAFOD's local experts, and families in Zimbabwe and South Sudan all working together. In God's eyes, we are one global family, called to be neighbours – to stand with one another in love and solidarity. In South Sudan and Bangladesh, where devastating floods destroyed farmland, our local partners helped families develop a remarkable solution: gardens that float on water.

Rejoice is a mother in South Sudan. To protect her children, she was forced to flee conflict twice, losing everything she owned. Just as she began to rebuild her life, disaster struck again. Severe flooding submerged her farmland. Crops were destroyed. Livestock was lost. Rejoice explains: *"The farmlands were submerged underwater. Everything, including livestock, was completely destroyed."* Rejoice is a skilled farmer, but when the land disappeared beneath the water, there was nothing she could do. With no food to harvest, she faced the terrifying reality of not being able to feed her children. But Rejoice didn't give up. With the support of local experts and donations like yours, she learned a remarkable solution: growing food on top of the water. Floating gardens now rise with the floodwater, allowing crops to grow where fields once lay underwater. She told us: "The yields from the garden help me feed my family."



The Bible is full of gardens - from the first garden in Genesis to the healing Tree of Life at the end of the book of Revelation, images of growth and nature abound in Scripture.

The prophet Isaiah, spoke to a people in exile of the renewal that will come when they follow God's ways, says they shall be "like a watered garden".



Isaiah's beautiful image would certainly resonate with husband and wife Shorai and Hamunyare, who live in northern Zimbabwe. Lack of rain left them and their children hungry, as their crops withered in the ground. But with input from our local partners and a lot of hard work, the couple have grown an eco-garden, using drought-resistant crops and a solar-powered water pump that draws water from a nearby dam. The dry ground has become a well-watered garden. That pump, funded by Fast Day donations like yours, draws water from a nearby dam, turning dry

ground into fertile land. Shorai told us: "A good neighbour is someone who can help me in periods of need." By donating this Family Fast Day, you're being the good neighbour Jesus calls us to be – loving others as we love ourselves.

You can make your donation at Mass next weekend, or you can visit

<https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/parishes/virtual-envelope> and link your donation to the Parish or use the QR code to donate. **There is great news ahead of Family Fast Day!**

A group of generous supporters has offered to match online donations to CAFOD's Lent Appeal up to £378,000! Donate and your gift will be doubled! Thank you.

CAFOD envelopes will be handed out at all Masses this weekend.



Marriage Care will be hosting two in-person **Preparing Together Days**; the first one on Monday 4th May 2026 at Corpus Christi Catholic Church, 60 Sturges Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 2HE, and the second one, on Saturday 18th July 2026, at St. Josephs Catholic Church, located at 36 Cookham Road, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL67EG. Please visit the website: www.marriagecare.org.uk to find out more information and book a place in Wokingham or in Maidenhead.

The **Andover Foodbank** would like to thank everyone who has donated over the past few weeks. We are, as always, incredibly grateful and appreciative of your continued support. We currently have very low stocks of the food and non-food items listed below and would welcome any donations: **Tinned Meat; Longlife Milk; Shampoo, Toilet Rolls and Deodorant.**

All donations can be made at the foodbank office, our opening hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm or they can be put in the collection boxes at all the local supermarkets.

MASS INTENTIONS. There is a tradition in our faith to have Masses celebrated on behalf of our friends and loved ones in particular circumstances. We are able to accept Mass intentions for the next 2 or 3 months; if you would like a Mass celebrated, please contact the Parish office, the usual offering is about £10 per Mass.

READINGS AT MASS

For the readings each day at Mass, including Sundays, you can scan this QR code on your smartphone and it will take you to the Universalis Website for the readings for the day.

Scroll to the bottom of the page and you have the readings for the week. *If you use this on your phone in Church, please remember to turn off your sounds and notifications.*



BAPTISM COURSE EVENING The next pre-Baptism evening course will be on **Wednesday 6th May** from 7.00pm to approximately 9.00pm in the Parish Hall. Completion of the session is required before booking a baptism. To register for the course, please email / telephone the Parish Office. Both parents are requested to attend - but not children - and you must be registered with the Parish.

'THINE BE THE GLORY'

Andover Chamber Choir celebrates the spring season with their concert, 'Thine be the Glory: Choral Favourites for an Eastertide Celebration' on Saturday, 18th April at St Michael and All Angels' Church, West Andover, SP10 3BB at 7.30pm

Tickets are £15 on the door or £12 in advance from The Lights (in person and online) or through choir members. Under 16s are admitted free. Interval refreshments included in ticket price.

While Easter Sunday may have passed, the fifty days of Eastertide are in full flow, and the choir's latest programme is designed to keep that flame of joy burning bright. *"Easter Sunday is the start of a whole season of celebration and renewal,"* says Musical Director, Lucy Hole. *"I wanted a programme that captures the feeling of spring arriving and the continued joy and importance of the resurrection."* The concert aims to showcase the diverse textures of the Easter story - from quiet moments of individual devotion to the rousing collective joy of full choir and organ. The programme features choral favourites and organ classics, celebrating composers who have defined the British choral tradition. These include Vaughan Williams' 'O clap your hands', Widor's 'Toccata', the world-famous 'Hallelujah Chorus', and the iconic hymn from which the concert takes its name, Handel's 'Thine be the Glory'.

Proceeds are in aid of Andover Young Carers, providing vital support and respite to young carers in Andover and the surrounding areas. www.andoverchamberchoir.org.uk

Formation Morning for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communication

Fr Anthony Fyk, Director of Liturgical Formation and the Liturgy Formation team, invites you to a formation morning at St Peter's Pastoral Centre, Winchester on **Saturday 9th May 2026** commencing with Mass at 9.00am. There will be a welcome session from Fr Anthony, a talk focussing on the Eucharist in the sacred scriptures as well as a session on Lectio Divina: "Living a Eucharistic life – what does it mean to live out the eucharist?". All Eucharistic Ministers, experienced and new, are very welcome to attend. If you wish to attend, please register via liturgy@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS FROM 21ST FEBRUARY TO 6TH MARCH

Sat. 21st No Andover Mass as Canon Chris is attending the Rite of Election in Portsmouth Cathedral

Sat. 21st Andover 6.00pm Mass *Maud and William Dwyer RIP - Anniversary*

Sunday 22nd February - First Sunday in Lent

Whitchurch Mass 8.30am

Farleigh School Mass 10.00am -

Andover Mass 10.30am *For the People of the Parish*

Mon. 23rd Andover Mass 10.00am *Mathew Dias - In Thanksgiving*

Tue. 24th Andover Mass 10.00am *Harry Lane RIP – In Memoriam*

Andover - Healing Prayers from 6.30pm - 7.00pm

Wed. 25th No Mass or Service

Thur. 26th Whitchurch Mass 10.00am

Today is CAFOD Family Fast Day. There will be a CAFOD collection on 28th Feb / 1st March

Fri. 27th Andover Mass 10.00am followed by Exposition until 11.00am *Sheila Muir RIP – In Memoriam*

Fri. 27th 12 noon - Funeral Service for Michael Bishop RIP

Fri. 27th Andover - Lenten Stations of the Cross at 7.00pm

Sat. 28th Andover Mass 10.00am followed by Exposition and Confessions until 11.00am

For the Intentions of the Johnson-Fernandes Family

Sat. 28th Andover 6.00pm Mass *Brian McAuley RIP – Birthday Memoriam*

Sunday 1st March – Second Sunday in Lent

Whitchurch Mass 8.30am *For the People of the Parish*

Farleigh School Mass 10.00am -

Andover Mass 10.30am *Daisy Rodrigues RIP*

N.B. No refreshments after Mass.

Mon. 2nd Mass In St John the Baptist School at 9.30am *Blanche David RIP - Anniversary*

Tue. 3rd Andover Mass 10.00am *June Saunders RIP - Anniversary*

Requiem Mass 11.30am for Paweł Tworek RIP

Andover - Healing Prayers from 6.30pm - 7.00pm

Wed. 4th No Mass or Service

Thur. 5th Whitchurch Mass 10.00am

Fri. 6th Andover Mass 10.00am *Henry and Tina Rachwalski RIP - Anniversary*

Fri. 6th Andover - Lenten Stations of the Cross at 7.00pm

Please pray for: Esmé Coveney, Rita Lane, Margaret Williams, Patrick Arnold, Fiona Hilleard, Tony Fabian, Helen O'Connell, Douglas Manning, Diane Mahoney, Rita Casey, Rose Bull, Carol Keenan, Eileen Wharton, Oran Keenan, Margarita Hardiman, Robert Colledge, Eileen Price, Concepta Cuddihy, Frank Hinds, Clan Furtado and Avis Willson.



Please pray for the repose of the souls of Sile Monnelly, Michael Bishop and Pawel Tworek. May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace.

DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTIONS: 22nd February – 28th February

Sun: The Holy Father. **Mon:** Community of St Bernadette, Les Quennevais, Jersey. **Tue:** Diocesan Spiritual Formation Team. **Wed:** Catholic Scout Association members in the Diocese. **Thur:** Catholic Girlguiding UK members in the Diocese. **Fri:** All Parish/Community Pastoral Councils. **Sat:** Community of St Oswald, Burghfield Common.

PARISH COLLECTIONS - 14TH/15TH FEBRUARY LOOSE PLATE: £574.55 GIFT AID ENVELOPES: £222.50

STANDING ORDERS: (WEEKLY AVERAGE) £933 DIRECT DEBITS: (WEEKLY AVERAGE) £315.00

Please note: The Parish Office will be closed from 2.30pm on Friday 27th February to 8.30am on Monday 9th March. Only phone the Parish Office in an emergency; all emails will be checked and if non-urgent, will be replied to on 9th March.