

English Martyrs' Newsletter

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

LÆTARE SUNDAY 15TH MARCH 2026



ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC CHURCH,
64, LIEBENROOD ROAD, READING, RG30 2EB:
Registered Charity No. 1199568

Parish website: www.englishmartyrsrdg.com

Livestream link on You Tube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCulqb5ncxASpguMmd_0MNtA

PARISH **EMERGENCY ONLY** CONTACT NUMBER: 07495 711537

Parish Priest: Fr. Gaston Forbah gforbah@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Asst Priest: Fr. Innaiah Maddineni imaddineni@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Retired Priest: Fr. Richard Maniak

Secretary: Barbara Poole. Tel: 0118 957 2149

Parish Office: OPEN TUESDAY to THURSDAY 9am to 3pm

All calls/emails are monitored. Email: office@englishmartyrsrdg.com


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PARISH SAFEGUARDING MINISTERS/CONTACT DETAILS/ROLES

Yvonne Newman: safeguarding@englishmartyrsrdg.com (Safeguarding cases and concerns)

Gavin Knight: safeguarding2@englishmartyrsrdg.com (DBS applications/updates of DBS parish register)

Ernestina Amanfo: safeguarding3@englishmartyrsrdg.com (Safeguarding compliance in all parish activities)

SCHOOLS:		TO DONATE TO OUR PARISH:	
English Martyrs Catholic Primary Dee Road, Reading RG30 4BE. 0118 937 5466 Executive Headteacher: Mr Jamie Carroll Head of School: Mr Anton Dworzak https://www.englishmartyrs.reading.sch.uk/home		Parish Bank Details: A/C Name: CDP Reading English Martyrs. Sort Code: 30 – 93 – 04. Account No. 00885666 You can also use Direct Debit (forms available in colonnade), the Dona(te) machines in the colonnade and hall or by scanning the QR code on the right.	
Blessed Hugh Faringdon Fawley Road, Reading RG30 3EP. Head: Dr Simon Uttley 0118 957 4730 https://www.hughfaringdon.org/		MASS TIMES FROM Sunday 15th March Sunday at 9.00am; 11.30am; 5.00pm Monday to Thursday at 9.30am Friday at 6.30am and 9.30am Saturday at 10.00am and 6.00pm (Vigil Mass for Sunday)	CONFESSIONS From Sunday 15th March Sunday 30 mins before 9.00am, 11.30am & 5.00pm Masses Monday to Friday 15 mins before Mass Saturday after 10.00am Mass and at 5.30pm.
		EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION: On Friday from 10.00am to 6.00pm. From 5.00pm, Praise and Worship will feature music, scripture reading, guided reflection, a time of silence and concluding with Benediction.	

GOD HEALS OUR SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS

During Lent the Church invites us not only to pray more, fast, and give alms, but also to seek to enlighten the eyes of our hearts. Our faith is not only about knowing things with our minds but allowing what we have learnt to impact our hearts.

Often our hearts can become spiritually sleepy, or become more like hearts of stone. We go through routines, even good ones like attending Mass or saying prayers, yet we may forget the wonder of what God is doing in our lives. Lent is a season of grace when the Lord gently awakens us again. Through prayer, Sacraments and scripture He opens the eyes of our hearts so we can recognise His presence.

When our hearts are opened, we begin to notice God everywhere: in the Scriptures proclaimed at Mass, in the quiet of prayer, in the kindness of another person, and even in the struggles that invite us to trust Him more deeply. What once seemed ordinary becomes full of meaning. We begin to see not just with human eyes, but with the light of Christ.

This awakening brings a deep joy. It is the joy of discovering again that we are loved, called, and never alone. As we continue our Lenten journey toward Easter, let us ask the Lord each day: *“Open the eyes of my heart.”* When He does, we will see that His grace has been guiding us all along.










NEW PARISH SECRETARY

We welcome Shyamalie McArthur as our new Parish Administrator. Shyamalie volunteered as our Parish Administrator some years ago and currently serves as our Parish Registrar for Weddings. At the Diocesan level, Shyamalie works as a Personal Assistant in the Vicarate for Evangelisation, headed by Fr Gaston Afah.

To keep up to date with the news of the Diocese and the Bishop please follow us on: Facebook: @PortsmouthRC / LinkedIn: Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth / Twitter: @PortsmouthRC / Diocesan website: <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/> If you have news that you want to share with the Diocese, please contact communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

PARISH NOTICES

If you are a newcomer to our Parish, we are delighted to have you join us.
Please, follow this link [New to Our Parish – English Martyrs Reading](#) for some helpful information.
Also, please make yourself known to one of our Welcomers at the back of the church after Mass.

Readings for:	4 th SUNDAY IN LENT	5 th SUNDAY IN LENT
	First: Samuel: 16: 1b. 6-7. 10-13 Psalm: 23(22); 1-6. Second: Ephesians: 5: 8-14. Gospel: John: 9: 1-41.	First: Ezekiel: 37: 12-14 Psalm: 130(129); 1-8. Second: Romans: 8: 8-11. Gospel: John: 11: 1-45.
	NEW PARISH SECRETARY We welcome Shyamalie McArthur as our new Parish Administrator, replacing Barbara Poole, who will begin her well-deserved retirement at the end of March. Shyamalie volunteered as our Parish Administrator some years ago and currently serves as our Parish Registrar for Weddings. At the Diocesan level, Shyamalie works as a Personal Assistant in the Vicarate for Evangelisation, headed by Fr Gaston Afah.	
	MONDAY 9th MARCH . This was the 10th week we have hosted the night shelter this year. We welcomed 7 guests overnight, plus an extra dinner guest. The cottage pie, Quorn mince pasta and trifle were declared delicious. Uno, Jenga and Sudoku were played. The chance to shower was greatly appreciated. After a quiet night indoors, our guests were fortified by the very popular full English Martyrs' hot breakfast, and left, ready to face the varied challenges of the new day. Thank you to all our volunteers and those praying for our guests, staff and volunteers.	
	EMMAUS GROUPS – HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE . NEXT MEETING(S) WILL BE ON: Wednesday 18th March at 10.30am in the Bethlehem Chapel and Thursday 19 th March at 7.30pm in Room 2.	
	LENT FOOD BANK – HELPING PARISH FAMILIES IN NEED OF EXTRA SUPPORT Please, bring only food items which are non-perishable as we will keep the items during Lent. Thank you for your generosity.	
	STATIONS OF THE CROSS FRIDAY 20th MARCH @ 7.00pm Group Leading: RCIA/Bed 4 the Night Organiser(s): Angela Wills & B4N members.	
	READING HALF MARATHON – NEXT SUNDAY 22ND MARCH . Roads will be closed as follows: Tilehurst Road (from Russell St. to Liebenrood Rd.) between 9.30am and 1.15pm: Liebenrood Rd.(all) between 9.30am and 2.00pm. THERE WILL BE NO VEHICLE ACCESS TO THE CAR PARK FOR THOSE ATTENDING 11.30 MASS. THOSE ATTENDING 9.00am MASS IN CARS WILL NEED TO LEAVE PROMPTLY.	
	FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION: Next Session: Friday 20th March at 6.00pm This session will guide the children through Prayer Stations—simple, hands-on ways of praying that help them pause, reflect, and speak to God in different ways. We will meet in the church before moving into the hall.	
	PARISH AFTERNOON TEA There will be another Parish Afternoon Tea for any parishioners who would like to come and join us for a relaxed afternoon with tea / cake and a chat. The event is being held in the Parish Hall on Thursday 19th March at 2.30pm. Please spread the word, and you can bring a friend with you to the Tea if you wish. We can offer transport to anyone who needs it. Please let Stephen Hogg know on 07891 773379 if you need a lift. We look forward to seeing you all again."	

OUR LADY'S GARDEN IN ENGLISH MARTYRS PRIMARY SCHOOL

English Martyrs School is hoping to tidy and clean our Mary statue and improve the surrounding green area, which is in need of some TLC. If any parishioners with gardening experience would be willing to offer their time or advice, we would be most grateful. Even a small group of helpers would make a wonderful difference. Please email jwalsh@englishmartyrs.reading.sch.uk

LENT FAITH SHARING The in-person session is on Thursdays at 7:30pm in the parish hall. The ONLINE OPTION is on Mondays at 7:30p.m. You can join by clicking the following link: [Clickhere to join the meeting](#) or go to the Parish Calendar on our Website and click on "Ongoing Formation". Sessions start at 7:30pm. You can also join by using the following Teams login details:
Meeting Name: "Ongoing Formation". Meeting ID: 397 486 525 516; Passcode: z2sLwB

DBS CHECKS Gavin Knight will be available this Sunday, after 9.00am Mass to undertake DBS ID verification and documentation checks. Please attend on either date, should you wish to take part in any activities or groups within the church that require DBS checks.
Details of required ID are as shown in last week's newsletter.

PARENT AND BABY GROUP Every Thursday at 10:30am. The children can play with lots of toys in a safe and friendly space. There is also a display of children's items in the mini market. Parents with children between 0 and 3 years old are welcome to join us – regardless of religious belief.

BARN DANCE Friday 19th June 2026. 7:00pm to 10:30pm in the Parish Hall. A night of fun and frolic for all ages in aid of Cathedral Renovation and the Upgrading of English Martyrs Audio Visual System.
ADULTS £15.00; CHILD (5-12) £10.00; Under 5's Free. (Ticket price includes sit down meal)

LENT RECONCILIATION SERVICES

St John Bosco, Woodley - 23rd and 24th March all at 6.00pm
Christ the King, Whitley – 26th March 7.00pm
St Joseph, Tilehurst – 27th March 6:30pm
Our Lady of Peace, Earley – 28th March from 9.00am to 12.00pm
English Martyr, Tilehurst – 28th March at 9.30am (Note that this is earlier this year)
St James, Reading Centre – All Saturdays of Lent 5.00pm to 6.00pm.

SUPPORT OUR PARISHIONERS IN THE READING HALF MARATHON ON 22nd MARCH.

Nick Gurr will be taking part and is running to support our beloved Hope Into Action team and projects. We can sponsor Nick via the following link: <https://www.justgiving.com/page/nickgurr>
Phil D'Arcy, is also taking part with the goal of raising funds for Sue Ryder Hospice. Please, support Phil using the following link: http://www.justgiving.com/page/phil-darcy-1?utm_medium=FR&utm_source=WA&utm_campaign=020

READING PASTORAL AREA LENTEN RETREAT

We are invited to join a Lenten Retreat in St James Church, Forbury Road (RG1 3FD), on Saturday March 21st at 10:30 to 13:00p.m. This will be led by the Carmelite Friars.

DONATION FOR THE CELEBRATION OF FR RICHARD'S RUBY JUBILEE

We are looking forward to celebrating a wonderful milestone of 40 years of Fr Richard Maniak's service in the Priesthood. Our parish will need to purchase a lovely gift for Fr Richard and organise celebrations to mark this important moment. Please, contribute towards this celebration by using our Dona Machines or directly to our Parish online banking details in the newsletter with reference being *Fr Richard*.



PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL – MOTHER CHURCH OF OUR DIOCESE TURNS 150 IN 2032:

50% of our Parish Fundraising of 2026 will support this Project
*continued...*Situated in inner city Portsmouth, which has one of the highest IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) scores in England, since the 1880s the cathedral has been a beacon of the Light of Christ
To be continued – Read more at: <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/cathedral150-appeal/>
To offer support the Renovation Works in the Cathedral, use the QR Code on the left.



GOODBYE MASS/REFRESHMENTS FOR BARBARA POOLE

We will thank God for the work done by Barbara Poole, outgoing Parish Administrator, on Wednesday, 25th March. Mass will be at 6:30pm followed by refreshments in the hall.

MASS INTENTIONS: SATURDAY 14th TO SUNDAY 22nd MARCH 2026

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

<i>Saturday 14th (Vigil Mass for Sunday)</i>	<i>6.00pm</i>	<i>Regson do Rego, Thanksgiving</i>
<i>Sunday 15th</i>	<i>9.00am</i>	<i>Maeve Nolan RIP</i>
	<i>11.30am</i>	<i>Norah O'Dowd RIP</i>
	<i>Live Streamed</i>	
	<i>1.30pm</i>	<i>Cameroonian Mass</i>
	<i>5.00pm</i>	<i>Jamie Spreadbury RIP</i>
<i>Monday 16th</i>	<i>9.30am</i>	<i>Donald Wills RIP</i>
<i>Tuesday 17th</i>	<i>9.30am</i>	<i>William Bond RIP</i>
<i>Wednesday 18th</i>	<i>9.30am</i>	<i>John Diffley Intention</i>
<i>Thursday 19th</i>	<i>9.30am</i>	<i>Patrick Herbert RIP</i>
	<i>11.30am</i>	<i>Requiem of Dennis Proctor RIP</i>
<i>Friday 20th</i>	<i>6.30am</i>	<i>Darius Klijster Fernandes, Thanksgiving</i>
	<i>9.30am</i>	<i>Charles Philip Tima RIP</i>
<i>Saturday 21st</i>	<i>10.00am</i>	<i>Charles Philip Tima RIP</i>
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT		
<i>Saturday 21st (Vigil Mass for Sunday)</i>	<i>6.00pm</i>	<i>Anne Tudor RIP</i>
<i>Sunday 22nd</i>	<i>9.00am</i>	<i>Charles Philip Tima RIP</i>
	<i>11.30am</i>	<i>Harry Mullin RIP</i>
	<i>Live Streamed</i>	
	<i>5.00pm</i>	<i>People of the Parish</i>

GOING INTO HOSPITAL: If you or a loved one have to go into hospital, please let the Catholic Chaplaincy know. Hospital staff are not allowed to ask you. Ring the hospital on 0118 322 7105 to let them know that you or your loved one would like a visit from a priest.

RECENTLY DECEASED

Please pray for the souls of:

Dennis Proctor RIP. His Funeral will be here on Thursday 19th March at 11.30am

Anthony Howard RIP. His funeral will be here on Tuesday 24th March at 11.30am.

Selisa Lale Garcia RIP. Funeral 25th March at 10.30am

Please also keep their loved ones in your prayers.

KEY DATES FOR PARISH EVENTS 2026

We have now published the key dates for Parish events for the rest of 2026. Please check the noticeboard in the Colonnade, our Website and our Parish Facebook page.

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Fr Gaston will be away on Retreat at Buckfast Abbey from the evening of Thursday 19th March to Sunday 22nd March. The intentions of everyone in the parish will be offered in prayer during this retreat.

ADORE SPIRITUAL MINI-RETREAT 21st MARCH 10.00-1.00 ON ZOOM.

"THE SPIRIT OF LOVE." The Holy Spirit transforms us by opening us to God's love. Mini retreat morning Includes Mass, Adoration, Praise, Prophecy, and Prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, There will be an inspiring talk by guest speaker Daniella Stephens, a dynamic young Catholic evangelist and conference speaker.

Register in advance at bit.ly/ADOREMAR2026
More information at www.altonrenewal.com

THIS WEEKEND: THERE WILL BE A SECOND COLLECTION FOR THE CLERGY ASSISTANCE FUND.

The Clergy Assistance Fund contributes to the work of the Department for Clergy Team. The Clergy Support Team is responsible for looking after the welfare, ongoing formation and personal support of our clergy, such as the provision of spiritual direction, counselling, appraisal, ongoing formation and practical advice. It organises retreats, ministerial formation days, courses and sabbaticals.