

English Martyrs' Newsletter

FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT
SUNDAY 22ND 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/updating 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 22 nd March Sunday at 9.00am; 11.30am; 5.00pm Monday, Tuesday & Thursday at 9.30am Wednesday at 9.30am & 6.30pm Friday at 6.30am and 9.30am Saturday at 9.30am (Penitential Mass) and 6.00pm (Vigil Mass for Sunday)	CONFESSIONS From Sunday 22 nd March Sunday 30 mins before 9.00am, 11.30am & 5.00pm Masses Monday to Friday 15 mins before Mass Saturday during 9.30 Penitential 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.	

CALLED FROM THE TOMB: TRUSTING CHRIST WHO GIVES LIFE

As we approach Easter, the Gospel of St John (11:1–45) takes us to a powerful moment in Jesus' ministry: the raising of Lazarus. At its heart, this passage is not only about physical death, but about the deeper reality of faith, hope, and new life in Christ.

Martha's words echo our own struggles: "Lord, if you had been here..." How often do we feel that God is late, silent, or distant in moments of suffering? Yet Jesus reveals something greater than immediate relief - He proclaims, "I am the resurrection and the life." This is not simply a promise for the future, but a truth for the present. Even in the midst of grief, Christ is already at work.

Jesus' tears remind us that God does not stand apart from our pain. He enters into it. He weeps with us. But He does not leave us there. Standing before the tomb, He calls Lazarus by name, bringing life where there was death. As we journey through Lent, we are invited to hear that same call. What tombs bind us? Sin, fear, doubt, or despair? Christ desires to free us. Like Lazarus, we are called to step out into the light, trusting in the One who conquers death.




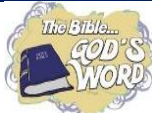




This Gospel prepares our hearts for Easter: a reminder that no darkness is too great for Christ's light, and no grave is final for those who believe. In Him, we are always being called to new life.

FR GASTON'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORDINATION: Monday March 30th will mark the 10th Anniversary of Fr Gaston's Priestly Ordination. We will offer a thanksgiving intention at next weekend's Masses and there will be light refreshments after the 6pm and 5pm Masses alongside the usual refreshments after the 9am and 11:30am Masses. Fr Gaston will celebrate his anniversary Mass on Monday 30th at the 9:30am. Your Priests rely so much on your prayers, so many thanks.

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:	5 th SUNDAY IN LENT	PALM SUNDAY
	First: Ezekiel: 37: 12-14 Psalm: 130(129); 1-8. Second: Romans: 8: 8-11. Gospel: John: 11: 1-45.	First: Isaiah: 50: 4-7 Psalm: 22(21); 8-9.17-20.23-24 Second: Philippians: 2: 6-11. Gospel: Matthew: 26: 14-27:66.
	RCIA/JOURNEY IN FAITH This week, we explored the story of the Raising to life of Jesus' friend, Lazarus. We watched and discussed a film of the Gospel account. In preparation for Holy Week, we walked round the Stations of the Cross in our church and reflected together on the Passion and Death of Jesus. Next Tuesday, we will experience a Passover seder with our priests. Please continue to pray for our Elect and also those preparing to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation and to be received into the Catholic Church at the Easter Vigil.	
	MONDAY 16th MARCH. We welcomed 6 guests overnight, plus 2 extra dinner guests. The delicious Choley Masala (chickpea curry), Bombay Tikka sandwiches and apple and blueberry crumble with custard were greatly enjoyed. Games were played, showers taken. After a peaceful night, our guests were treated to a full English Martyrs' hot breakfast. Thank you to all our volunteers and those praying for our guests, staff and volunteers. Then, on Wednesday evening, owing to a boiler breakdown at CIRDIC, we were pleased to enable their team to host the night shelter in our hall, so that the gentlemen could again relax, eat and sleep indoors.	
	EMMAUS GROUPS – HOW TO UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE. NEXT MEETING(S) WILL BE ON: Wednesday 25th March at 10.30am in the Bethlehem Chapel.	
	LENT FOOD BANK – HELPING PARISH FAMILIES IN NEED OF EXTRA SUPPORT Ends this week, but donations can still be made during the week. Please, bring only food items which are non-perishable. Thank you for your generosity.	
	STATIONS OF THE CROSS FRIDAY 27th MARCH @ 7.00pm Group Leading: Lourdes Volunteers Organiser(s): Gerard Rocks, Judith Crimmins and Roz Doctor	
	READING HALF MARATHON – THIS 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. Let us pray for all those taking part in the Reading half Marathon to raise funds for various charities. Let us keep in our prayers, parishioners Phil D'Arcy raising funds for Sue Rider Hospice and Nick Gurr raising funds for Hope Into Action. Please support them if you can.	
	The Bookstall will be closed this weekend after the 9.00am Mass because of the need to leave the church promptly due to the Reading Half Marathon. It will also not open after any Mass over the Easter weekend 4 th /5 th April. Normal service will continue the following week. As well as our normal stock we also have a number of second- hand books that can be taken for a small donation to CAFOD or Life.	

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: [Click here 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

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.

Last session before Easter break. Resumption date will be announced in a subsequent newsletter.

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)

EASTER GIFTS TO CHILDREN'S LITURGY GROUP

As we draw close to Easter Sunday, we would be very grateful for any donations which will be given to the children who attend on Easter Sunday as gifts. Please bring the donations in a bag labelled 'Easter Gifts to Children's Liturgy Group' and place them on the table outside the colonnade. Thank you.

HOLY WEEK: The climax of our Lenten Journey and our liturgical Calendar is fast approaching as next weekend (Palm Sunday) is the beginning of Holy Week. Palms will be given to us as we enter the church. All Masses will begin in the Hall and procession will be through the colonnade into the church with singing. Let us make full use of this 5th week of lent.

JOB VACANCY: PARISH FINANCE OFFICER

The HR of the Diocese has reopened this advert as no suitable candidate has yet been found. Please, share this advert with anyone whom you know works in finance and accounting. A more detailed advert is found in the Colonnade, Website, Facebook Page and Parish Email. You can find a detailed description of the role in our parish website as well.

To apply, the following link (found in the other platforms mentioned) could be used:

<https://catholicdioceseofportsmouth.peoplehr.net/Pages/JobBoard/Opening.aspx?v=d64d91da-e250-443a-a06b-d9575fe808fa>

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.



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.



Life in the Spirit is being run again in the Portsmouth Diocese starting on Thursday 23rd April. There are seven sessions with the last one being on the 18th June, due to Ascension Day and half-term. The Holy Spirit Day will also be at St Bede's Church, Basingstoke on 23rd May, the Eve of Pentecost, a brilliant time to receive an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. These sessions are being held online, but there are also live sessions at St Bede on the relevant dates. For more details and to register, please see <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Ontyh8dxTF6b72BXv1LByg> or use the QR code on the right.



MARRIAGE RETREAT JUNE 12th to 14th : ISLE OF WIGHT

This retreat is for engaged and married couples, wanting to strengthen the marital relationship rooted in the love of God. Arrive: Friday 12th. Depart: Sunday 14th. Children are welcome - child care can be arranged. Accommodation provided at centre. Price: £150 for cost of stay. Donations needed to support running event. For more information, please contact us at: verbumdei.iow@gmail.com

GOING INTO HOSPITAL: If you or a loved one has 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.

MASS INTENTIONS: SATURDAY 21st TO SUNDAY 29th MARCH 2026

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Saturday 21st (<i>Vigil Mass for Sunday</i>)	6.00pm	Anne Tudor RIP
Sunday 22nd	9.00am	Charles Philip Tima RIP
	11.30am <i>Live Streamed</i>	Harry Mullin RIP
	2.30pm	Vietnamese Mass
	5.00pm	People of the Parish
Monday 23rd	9.30am	Dr. Samuel, Margaret-Mary and members of the Nforgwei & Tantoh families RIP
Tuesday 24th	9.30am	Lena Morrisey RIP
	11.30am	Requiem for Anthony Howard RIP
Wednesday 25th <i>The Anunciation of the Lord</i>	9.30am	Carmina Barreto RIP
	10.45am	Funeral Service of Felica Mantinan RIP
	6.30pm	Mass of Thanksgiving on retirement of Parish Administrator Barbara Poole
Thursday 26th	9.30am	Reginald Cecil Powys Lybbe RIP **
Friday 27th	6.30am	People of the Parish
	9.30am	Living & deceased members of the Alookaran & Vithayathil families RIP
Saturday 28th	9.30am	Lenten Penitential Service

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Saturday 28th (<i>Vigil Mass for Sunday</i>)	6.00pm	Fr Gaston Afah, Thanksgiving on 10th Anniversary of his Ordination
Sunday 29th	9.00am	Paddy Davis RIP & Thanksgiving for 10th Anniversary of Fr Gaston's Ordination
	11.30am <i>Live Streamed</i>	Rita Lay Carceras RIP & Thanksgiving for 10th Anniversary of Fr Gaston's Ordination
	5.00pm	Lucy Hope RIP & Thanksgiving for 10th Anniversary of Fr Gaston's Ordination

RECENTLY DECEASED

Please pray for the souls of:
Anthony Howard RIP. His Requiem will be on Tuesday 24th March at 11.30am.
Felisa Mantinan RIP. Her Funeral Service will be on Wednesday 25th March at 10.45am

Please also keep them and their loved ones in your prayers.

**** 9.30am Mass on 26th March for Reginald Cecil Powys Lybbe RIP, who made a donation of £10,000, which enabled the land to be bought and English Martyrs Church to be built. Let us remember him especially in this, our Centenary Year.**



LIFE COFFEE MORNING – WEDNESDAY 25TH MARCH
In the Parish Centre after morning Mass. Teas, cakes, raffle, items for sale including Easter gifts
ALL WELCOME.

Parishioners from all parishes are invited to join together for an outing on Saturday 20th June to see 'THE LIFE OF CHRIST', details as shown on the poster in the colonnade.

Ticket prices are: Adult £40.00: Child (3-18 yrs) £20.00: Family ticket; (2 adults, 2 children) £110.00
Groups of 30 or more can enjoy a 15% discount on ticket prices. Bookings would need to be done by the end of May so please contact Mel on 0118 996 7208 as soon as you can.

Note: Other dates are also available for the discount.

Travel to & from the event is still to be finalised but do consider car sharing as a viable option.