

OUR LADY OF LOURDES HARPENDEN

22ND FEBRUARY 2026
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT (A)



© Chloe Le Tissier

Parish Priest Canon Anthony Dwyer

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As we begin the Season of Lent, the Gospel leads us gently — but firmly — into the desert with Jesus. It is not a comfortable place. It is quiet, stripped back, without distraction. And perhaps that is precisely why the Church invites us there each year.

Each of us is invited to enter a desert of some kind over these forty days. For one person, it may be the desert of silence — turning off the noise, spending ten minutes each day in real, honest prayer. For another, it may be the desert of self-denial — fasting not only from food, but from habits that dull the spirit. For someone else, it may be the desert of forgiveness — facing a hurt long avoided, taking a first step toward reconciliation.

The desert can also be the place we would rather not go: the grief we have pushed aside, the anxiety we hide, the impatience that shapes our tone at home, the indifference to those in need. Lent is not about dramatic gestures; it is about courageous honesty before God.

We do not enter this desert alone. The Spirit leads us there, just as He led Jesus. And the Lord who was tempted is the Lord who strengthens us. Prayer anchors us. Fasting clears space within us. Almsgiving widens our hearts.

Perhaps the most important question at the beginning of Lent is not “What am I giving up?” but “Where is the Lord inviting me to grow?” If we dare to step into that place — gently, sincerely — these forty days can become a time of quiet transformation. And when Easter comes, we may find that the desert has blossomed in ways we never expected.

LENT 2026

SEASON OF LENT

We have now entered the Season of Lent, this time when we are invited to prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We are invited to engage with these long-established practises, in order to draw closer to the Lord, and to so to make room in order to allow his life to grow within us. As Lent begins, so the question is often asked: 'what are you giving up for Lent?' It's a good question, because self-denial is an important part of our Lenten observance. What we do for Lent, though, is a two-sided coin, so the other question might be: 'what are you going to do for Lent? In the parish there are different opportunities, such as making the Stations of the Cross, or joining one of the Lent groups. And, of course, there is Mass every day, except on Friday. Why not attend Mass on a weekday, a good thing to do, because we choose to, and not because we have to? However we mark this season, let us be wholehearted, so that it may be a fruitful, and grace-filled time.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

The Stations of the Cross are a long-established practise, which lead us through the last, momentous and sad events of Our Lord's life. Each **Wednesday of Lent, at 7.00pm**, the Stations take place in church. Do think about participating, and of being

LENT REFLECTION GROUPS 2026

The groups will commence tomorrow, **Monday 23rd February**. This year we will be following the programme 'Enlarging the Space of Our Tent'. As in past years, these will be friendly, faith sharing groups following a shared theme. Please do let either Teresa Newham or myself, Julia Roche, if you would like to join a group and let us know your 1st/2nd/3rd choice of day and time.

[email:-juliaandnigel057@gmail.com](mailto:juliaandnigel057@gmail.com) OR marbretherese@googlemail.com

LENTEN ALMS

It is customary during Lent to donate, what is saved by self-denial, to the Lenten Alms. As in recent years, the Lenten Alms will be donated to our Diocese. Any funds donated will be used to support key areas of the Diocese' Mission, such as youth and evangelisation, Social Action, Education and Family Life. Contributions can be made via the box, to the right of Our Lady's altar. Envelopes, for contributions, will be found in the porch, and can be returned to Parish Office.

CAFOD LENT FAMILY FAST DAY FRIDAY 27TH FEBRUARY

This Lent, live out the Gospel by loving your neighbour. By fasting on Fridays and giving what you save, you can help families around the world put food on the table—even in the toughest conditions.

Please take a **CAFOD** envelope as you leave church today and return it next weekend for our second collection, or donate online at cafod.org.uk/envelope, call 0303 303 3030, or text **CAFODLENT** to **70085** to give £10.

MEET THE ARCHBISHOP

Archbishop Richard, being new to our Diocese, is keen to meet as many of the people of the Diocese, in the coming weeks. To facilitate this the Archbishop will be coming to different areas of the Diocese, to celebrate Mass and meet priests, with whom he will concelebrate, and parishioners. The Mass for St Albans Deanery, of which we are a part, will take place with Watford Deanery, on Tuesday 3rd March, at 6.30pm, at Our Lady & St Michael's Church, Crown Rise, Garston, WD25 0NE. Everyone is very welcome at this Mass. The Archbishop will also be celebrating Mass in five other places, so if you cannot attend in Garston, you are very welcome at any of the other Masses. For details please contact the Parish Office.

ST PATRICK'S DAY LUNCH.

This very popular annual event will be on Tuesday 17th March from 12 noon in the Undercroft. Tickets, priced £15, will be on sale after all the Masses from next Sunday and will include a welcome drink, a traditional Irish meal and Irish coffee with barnbrack. Proceeds will go to the Barcelona Project in South Africa.

COME AND SEE

The Church continues to be very much in need of Vocations to the Priesthood and Diaconate. For any men who may be interested in the diaconate or priesthood, there are two forthcoming opportunities to reflect on these possibilities:

- Saturday 28 February, 10am-1.30pm - St Anselm's, St Anselm's Rectory, The Green, Southall UB2 4BE

- Saturday 14 March, 12 noon-3.30pm - St Bonaventure's Church Hall - 81 Parkway, Welwyn Garden City AL8 6JF (A short walk from Welwyn Garden City Station.)

Refreshments and a light lunch will be provided. To find out more and to register your attendance at one of the days, please contact: Canon Roger Taylor - Vocations Promoter rogertaylor@rcdow.org.uk or Deacon Tito Pereira – Assistant Director Permanent Diaconate 07977 599110 or titopereira@rcdow.org.uk.

FOR THE YOUTH OF THE PARISH
The Next Youth Friendly Mass & Youth Group will be NEXT Saturday
28th February at 6.00pm.



PATRICIA BROOKMAN RIP

We remember Patricia Brookman in our prayers who has gone home to the Lord. Patricia's Requiem Mass will be on Wednesday 4th March at 11.00am. We extend our heartfelt condolences to her family and loved ones.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The 2026 Harpenden World Day of Prayer service will take place on Friday 6th March at 11am at St Nicholas's Church. This year's service is written by the Christian women of Nigeria with the theme "I will give you rest, come".

The Harpenden service will be live-streamed on Zoom for those unable to

attend in person. Orders of service for anyone joining the live-stream will be available to collect from the High Street Methodist Church from 23rd February (Monday - Thursday 10am - 12 noon). The World Day of Prayer raises around £150,000 each year in the UK for distribution to charity - visit www.wwdp.org.uk for details or to make a donation. For more information on the Harpenden service and how to access the live-stream please see the postcards in the porch.

**ST DOMINIC'S SCHOOL
NURSERY, YEAR 1 and YEAR2 -
PLACES AVAILABLE**

St Dominic Catholic Primary School has spaces available in the nursery, year 1 and year 2 Classes for the current academic year and welcomes enquiries from parents St Dominic's has recently been assessed by OFSTED and rated as OUTSTANDING.

NURSERY OPEN MORNINGS

Please contact the school office on 01582 760047, for more information or to book a place on the tours.

Nursey applications open on 15th January 2026 and close on the 2nd March 2026

FAMILY MASS MUSIC

Children at the 9:45am Family Mass are invited to join the music group for the final hymn. After the announcements, head to the back of the church with your hymn book—helpers will hand out percussion instruments. First Holy Communion children should stay with their catechists and sing extra loudly!

Singers and instrumentalists are always welcome—regularly or ad hoc.

Speak to us after Mass or contact



Catherine Roche:
catherine2.roche@gmail.com.

**REPOSITORY
EASTER CARDS AND BOOKS**

The repository now stocks a wide selection of Easter cards and children's books for this very special season, together with cards for Mother's Day and St Patrick's Day. Come and see our stock before you go to the High Street. A further supply of Day by Day books for Lent is also available in the repository, price £1.20.

PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM:

Celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation in Walsingham on **Wednesday 25th March!** Join our coach from **St Bartholomew's, St Albans** at 7:45 am for a day of pilgrimage: **Holy Mass** at 12 noon in the Basilica, **Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction**, and a walk or ride along the **Holy Mile** to the original Holy House to pray the Prayer for England.

Cost: £27 adults, free for children. Please contact Rosemary Roscoe 07723 546642

Rosemary.roscoe@gmail.com or Margaret Leahy

margleahy@gmail.com 01727 763832 for further details.

There will be pick-ups in Hatfield and Letchworth.

**ANNUAL MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR
THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY
WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL, SATURDAY
23RD MAY 2026 AT 2:30PM.**

The Archbishop is inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese, who are celebrating their 5th 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th (and every year over 60) wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage in 2026. If you are



celebrating an anniversary, please give your parish office the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and contact email (or telephone number, if no email), by 19th April. Closer to the time, the Agency for Evangelisation will send out an invitation from the Archbishop.

FROM THE PARISH OFFICE

Any notices for the Newsletter please email the Parish office by lunchtime on Wednesday
Thank You.



NEW PARISHIONERS

If you are new to the Parish You Are Very WELCOME. If you would like to register with us please click on the link and complete the registration form
<https://www.catholicchurchharpenden.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Parishioners-Registration-Form-2025.pdf>
Completed forms can be emailed or posted into the Parish Office.
harpenden@rcdow.org.uk

KEYSTAGE HOUSING APPEAL

Huge thank you from everyone at Keystage Housing along with the donations from the Sing for 13 concert 25 duvets, and plenty of bedding has been donated. Please continue to donate to this appeal if you can.

Keystage Housing urgently need Single and Regular Double Duvets, in a good clean condition, no large stains or rips. Pillows, Sheets, Duvet Covers and Towels would be very welcome too. Please contact Cathy Seaton
cmann100@hotmail.com to arrange to drop off your donations.

NOAH APPEAL

Noah still need some winter coats, hats, & socks, please drop these donations off in the BLUE bin in the courtyard of the Church.

Thank you in advance for your generosity to supporting Noah & Keystage Housing.

SPACE SOUTHDOWN

SPACE is a Christian Performing Arts Centre in Southdown offering an affordable, inclusive, community space where you can explore life and faith through performing arts.

Some dates for your diary.

First Friday afternoons.

March 6th, Andy Smith, performance poet Tickets £5 inc. tea and cake

27th February 7.30pm Jazz, Latin and Blues with the Berkeley Band

25th to 28th March The Stranger by Agatha Christie directed by Margaret Cox Tuesday 31st March 7.30pm

Three Marys. An Easter Reflection

LOURDES HALL HARPENDEN

Available for Hire, and for one off Parties, for more details please contact:

Caretaker: Simon Lowe

Mobile: 07859943348

Email: harpendenct@rcdow.org.uk

MASS INTENTIONS

<p>Saturday 21st February</p> <p>Vigil Mass 6.00pm</p> <p>Sunday 22nd February</p> <p>8.30am</p> <p>9.45am</p> <p>11.30am</p>	<p>Lent Feria</p> <p>FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT (A) Teresa Metcalfe RIP (1st Anniversary)</p> <p>People of the Parish Bernard St John Glew RIP (Anniversary) Bridget Flanagan RIP (Anniversary) Zoom Code 883 7014 5568</p>	<p>PLEASE PRAY FOR:</p> <p>Recently Deceased Paddy Coneely RIP Pat Hanley RIP</p> <p>RIP Anniversaries Teresa Metcalfe RIP Bernard St John Glew RIP Bridget Flanagan RIP Nora & Michael Murphy RIP Denis Mann RIP</p> <p>Prayer for the Faithful Departed Loving God, we remember those who have died. Grant them the peace of Christ, and let Your perpetual light shine upon them. Comfort all who mourn and strengthen our hope in the resurrection. Amen.</p>
<p>Monday 23rd February</p> <p>9.15am</p>	<p>Lent Feria Paddy Coneely RIP (Recently Deceased)</p>	
<p>Tuesday 24th February</p> <p>9.15am</p>	<p>Feria Pat Hanley RIP (Recently Deceased)</p>	
<p>Wednesday 25th February</p> <p>9.15am</p> <p>7.00pm</p>	<p>Lent Feria Nora & Michael Murphy RIP (Anniversary) Stations of the Cross</p>	
<p>Thursday 26th February</p> <p>11.00am</p>	<p>Lent Feria Mary Hammond (Special Intentions)</p>	
<p>Friday 27th February</p>	<p>Lent Feria CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day</p>	
<p>Saturday 28th February</p> <p>12.00 Noon</p> <p>Youth Friendly Mass</p> <p>Vigil Mass 6.00pm</p> <p>Sunday 1st March</p> <p>8.30am</p> <p>9.45am</p> <p>11.30am</p>	<p>Lent Feria Baptism McClean Family</p> <p>SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT (A) Fr Raymond Pesez RIP</p> <p>People of the Parish Gillian Scarlett (Special Intentions) Linda Dwyer RIP (Anniversary) Zoom Code 883 7014 5568</p>	

CONFESSIONS

SATURDAYS 10.30AM – 11.00AM & AFTER THE 6.00PM VIGIL MASS