

OUR LADY OF LOURDES HARPENDEN

8TH MARCH 2026

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (A)



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This Sunday's Gospel places before us the moving encounter between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus arrives tired and thirsty. He asks for a drink. Yet, before the conversation is over, it is the woman — and indeed the whole town — who discover a deeper thirst within themselves.

In the first reading, we hear of the people in the desert who “grumbled” against Moses. They were thirsty and afraid. “Is the Lord among us or not?” they asked. Their complaint was not simply about water; it was about trust. In the harshness of the desert, they began to doubt the presence of God who had already freed them.

How familiar that sounds. When life becomes dry or difficult, when prayers seem unanswered, we too can begin to grumble interiorly. We may not say it out loud, but in our hearts we wonder: “Is the Lord really with me?”

The Gospel shows us a different path. The Samaritan woman begins cautiously, even defensively. Yet she stays in conversation with Jesus. She allows him to touch the deeper places of her life — her disappointments, her broken relationships, her longing. Instead of turning away, she opens her heart. And there, in that honest encounter, she discovers the “living water” only Christ can give.

These 40 days are a God-given time of opportunity. An opportunity to recognise what is lacking in our lives. Not our material needs, but our spiritual needs. But our need of the Lord, and what he alone can offer us. In other words, a time to recognise what is of genuine importance.

Lent invites us to notice our own thirst — and perhaps our own quiet grumbling. But it also invites us back to the well. The Lord does not abandon us in the desert. He stands beside us, waiting patiently, ready to quench our thirst with his grace.

LENT 2026

GETTING INTO LENT.....

Next Sunday, we will find ourselves at the mid-point of Lent. It might, then, be a moment, to pause and reflect how well we have, or perhaps have not 'got into Lent?' It's easy to start with good intentions, but we know where good intentions can sometimes lead! If you haven't got into Lent, or have fallen away from what you intended, it's not too late to start again, to renew your commitment. This Lent, you might consider:

- Setting aside time each day for Scripture reading and quiet prayer
- Participating in a weekday Mass
- Attending Stations of the Cross – 7.00pm each Wednesday
- Reaching out in charity to someone in need
- Joining a parish or diocesan Lenten retreat

May this sacred season renew our faith, strengthen our hope, and deepen our love as we prepare to celebrate the joy of Easter.

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 reminded of the journey that Jesus made to Calvary, out of love for every one of us.

LENT REFLECTION GROUPS 2026

The groups have started, but it's not too late to join. 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 contact Teresa Newham or myself, Julia Roche, if you would like to join a group.

[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

Thank you for your contributions, for CAFOD, so far, £1,165 has been donated. If you haven't done so it's not too late to make a donation. Donations can be handed into the Parish Office. If you wish to 'Gift-Aid' your donation, please use one of the CAFOD envelopes.

PRAY FOR PEACE

Operation Epic Fury and the Iranian fight-back are truly disturbing. As ever in the Middle East, events can easily spiral out of control, with more and more countries becoming involved. At his Angelus address on Sunday, Pope Leo said: "Stability and peace are not built with mutual threats, nor with weapons, which sow destruction, pain, and death, but only through a reasonable, authentic, and responsible dialogue." Lent is a time of prayer, self-denial and charity. This week, let us pray to the Holy Spirit, yes, for peace, but especially that as many innocent people as possible are spared and that there will grow up a renewed desire for diplomacy and dialogue.

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 this weekend 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, the next opportunity to reflect on these possibilities:

- 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.

EASTER FLOWERS COLLECTION

On the weekends of 15th and 22nd March there will be collections for the flowers which will be used to decorate the church at Easter. In addition, if anybody would like to purchase one lily per family in remembrance of a deceased loved ones at a cost of £5 please place the cash in an envelope with the names of the deceased family members in capitals on the front. These names will be written in the remembrance book which will be placed in the Easter Garden.



MUSIC FOR LENT

The Cathedral Choir and the Britten Sinfonia will perform a concert of reflection on the ancient Marian hymn, *Stabat Mater*, contemplating the sorrow of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the foot of the Cross. Two musical pieces will be performed: MacMillan's *Stabat Mater*, and Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*. The concert will take place on Wednesday 18 March at 6.45pm in Westminster Cathedral. To include as many as possible from parishes in the Diocese, the Cathedral is offering tickets at a discount of 50%. Discounted tickets are available in Sections A, B and N at the following link, using the password below:

<https://www.ticketmaster.co.uk/event/1F00638BCD835BA6?did=50off> Password: WCSBDO. The performance will begin with Sir James MacMillan in conversation with Fr Patrick van der Vorst, the Cathedral Precentor, and founder of [Christian Art](#).

REPOSITORY

EASTER CARDS AND BOOKS

The Repository now has a good selection of Easter cards, children's books, and cards for Mother's Day and St Patrick's Day. Please visit before heading to the High Street. *Day by Day* books for Lent are also available, price £1.20.

DEVELOPING WORLD GROUP AND LIVE SIMPLY 'SPRING CLEAN'

'Tool and Equipment Collection'

Sunday 19th April

At Lourdes Hall Between

12 Noon And 4.30pm.

Enjoy A 'Spring Clean' And Help to Empower Young People in Africa.

Details of the wanted items are listed in our church entrance and attached to last weekend's Newsletter email.

These items will be refurbished by WORKAID and sent to Africa to help with the vocational training of young people. If an item is too large for you to transport we can come and collect it. Please email Elizabeth.hines@gmail.com or phone/text: 07905 797729



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PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM:

Celebrate the Feast of the Annunciation on Wednesday 25 March. Coach from St Bartholomew's, St Albans departs 7:45 am. Includes Mass at 12 noon in the Basilica, Adoration, Benediction, and

pilgrimage to the Holy House.

For details or to book contact Rosemary Roscoe (07723 546642, rosemary.roscoe@gmail.com) or Margaret Leahy (01727 763832, margleahy@gmail.com).

MARRIAGE THANKSGIVING MASS

Takes place at Westminster Cathedral, on 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.catholicchurchharpندن.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Parishioners-Registration-Form-2025.pdf> Completed forms can be emailed or posted into the Parish Office. harpندن@rcdow.org.uk

MASS INTENTIONS

<p>Saturday 7th March 12.00 Noon</p> <p>Vigil Mass 6.00pm Sunday 8th March 8.30am 9.45am 11.30am</p>	<p>Lent Feria Baptism Elbourne Family</p> <p>THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (A) Efrain Gonzalez RIP (Recently Deceased)</p> <p>Josie Penfold RIP People of the Parish Willie Dwyer RIP (Recently Deceased) Zoom Code 883 7014 5568</p>	<p>PLEASE PRAY FOR:</p> <p>Newly Baptised Heavenly Father, Bless these children as they begin their journey of faith. May they grow in Your love and always walk in Your light. Amen.</p>
<p>Monday 9th March 9.15am</p>	<p>Lent Feria James and Maureen Hanafin RIP (Anniv)</p>	<p>Recently Deceased Efrain Gonzalez RIP Willie Dwyer RIP</p>
<p>Tuesday 10th March 9.15am</p>	<p>Lent Feria Roberto Pino Rios RIP (Anniversary)</p>	<p>RIP Anniversaries James Hanafin RIP Maureen Hanafin RIP Roberto Pino Rios RIP Joyce Thomas RIP</p>
<p>Wednesday 11th March 9.15am 7.00pm</p>	<p>Lent Feria Michael O’Riordan RIP Stations of the Cross</p>	<p>Prayer for the Faithful Departed Loving God, we remember those who have died, especially those whose anniversaries we honour.</p>
<p>Thursday 12th March 11.00am</p>	<p>Lent Feria Joyce Thomas RIP (Anniversary)</p>	<p>Comfort the grieving, grant peace to the souls of the faithful departed, and bring us all to the joy of eternal life with You.</p>
<p>Friday 13th March</p>	<p>Lent Feria</p>	<p>Amen.</p>
<p>Saturday 14th March</p> <p>Vigil Mass 6.00pm Sunday 15th March 8.30am 9.45am 11.30am</p>	<p>Lent Feria</p> <p>FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (A) People of the Parish</p> <p>May Doyle RIP (Anniversary) Tony Taylor RIP (Anniversary) Teresa Metcalfe RIP Zoom Code 883 7014 5568</p>	

CONFESSIONS

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