



PARISH OF WOOLHAMPTON

Diocese of Portsmouth - Served by the Benedictine Monks of Douai Abbey

www.douaiparish.org.uk

Douai Abbey and St Mary's, RG7 5TQ

St Bernadette's, Pangbourne RG8 7JL St Luke's, Theale RG7 5AS

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SUNDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2024

31st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR B

Deuteronomy 6:2-6	<i>Listen, Israel: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.</i>
Psalm 17 Response	<i>I love you, Lord, my strength.</i>
Hebrews 7:23-28	<i>Because he remains for ever, Christ can never lose his priesthood.</i>
Mark 12:28-34	<i>This is the first commandment. The second is like it.</i>

THIS WEEK

Saturday 2 November	St Luke's <i>(Mass Intention: People of the Parish)</i>	5.30pm
Sunday 3 November	St Bernadette's <i>(Mass Intention: Theresa Stephen, RIP)</i>	9.45am
	Abbey Church	10.30am
Mon 4 – Sat 9 Nov	Abbey Church	7.45am

All are welcome to daily services in Douai Abbey Church:

6.20am Morning Office (Matins & Lauds)

12.45pm Midday Prayer

6.00pm Vespers 8.00pm Compline

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions)

Abbey Church: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 6.30pm -7.00pm
St Luke's: Saturday 4.45pm – 5.15pm
St Bernadette's: Sunday 9.00am – 9.30am

Please pray for the sick and housebound of our parish:

Monica Adams · Patricia Brennismeyer · Pat Campbell · Luke Conlon · Mary Cox
Jennifer Goss · Kevin McCormack · Marigold Norman · Babs O'Sullivan · Mary
Overington · Barbara Stocker · Also Don Hood, Fr Alban's father.

Please pray for those who have died recently, especially Don O'Sullivan, and keep their loved ones in prayer. Don's funeral takes place at St Luke's Church on Thursday 14th November at 12:30pm.

MESSAGE FROM FR ALBAN

Dear Parishioners,

During the month of November, we pray for the Holy Souls. At both St. Luke's and St. Bernadette's you will find a box into which you are invited you to put names of loved ones which you would like to be placed on the altar and prayed for at Mass during November. Holy Souls envelopes are also available for you to put in your intentions, especially if you would like a Mass to be said for a loved one.

In today's gospel Jesus reminds us of the two most important commandments of all: 'love God and love your neighbour.' Many of us find the first commandment easier than the second. God's very remoteness from us makes him more easily loveable. He does not elbow his way into our lives. He is not always sticking his nose into our business. It is we who come banging on his door when we need help. Otherwise, he keeps his distance. Our neighbour is so often just the opposite.

'Love your neighbour as yourself.' This can be a problem if we don't like ourselves very much. If we don't love ourselves, if we suffer from low self-esteem, how can we love someone else? On the other side of the coin if we are so full of ourselves and think the world revolves around us we have no room to love anyone. It is also difficult to allow yourself to love and be loved if you've been hurt in the past.

Our me-centred culture also makes keeping this commandment difficult, where everything is judged by whether it's fun for me. According to that philosophy it is easy to dump those who love us if they don't suit us. It is me that matters.

At the Last Supper Jesus washed his disciples' feet and as he did so he told them 'I give you a new commandment, love one another as I have loved you.' As I have loved you – can any of us hand on heart say that we know what this really means?

Each of us can probably think of someone whose love has changed our lives, someone who sticks by us through thick and thin, who has given us a glimpse of what God's love is like.

Those two commandments belong together. Wholehearted love of God finds its fullest expression in love of neighbour. When we practice love of neighbour, our love for God becomes deeper and more intense.

None of us is perfect. We are not angels. We are bound to hurt and wound one another. I live in a community of monks - people are often surprised that we too have our falling outs and our arguments. You soon learn that if someone is annoying you, then you most certainly annoy them. We have our whole lives to learn how to love God and how to love our neighbour, but the vital thing is not to think that the two things can be separated from one another. As St John puts it very plainly in one of his letters: 'those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen.'

With my prayers and best wishes,

Father Alban OSB

BAMENDA SUNDAY – SECOND COLLECTION

Bamenda Sunday this year marks a special anniversary, its golden jubilee. In the early years, priests from our Diocese worked in Bamenda, teaching the Faith, establishing parishes, schools, etc. Today we have the great privilege of welcoming priests from Bamenda into our own parishes and their mission to us is one of renewal at a time when our communities become daily more secular.

Please remember our brothers and sisters in your prayers this weekend and be as generous as you can in your donation for the many parishes, schools, health establishments and social projects we support in our twinned diocese in Cameroon. Donations can also be made online [here](#).

ALL SAINTS CHILDREN'S PARTY

After the 9.45am Mass at St Bernadette's this Sunday, **3rd November** there will be a party for the children as a late celebration of All Saints Day. You are welcome to come dressed as your favourite saint and ready to play a few saint-themed party games! Nibbles and cakes provided.

NOVEMBER – MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

During November we pray especially for the Holy Souls. You are invited to put the names of loved ones and friends you would like to be prayed for at Mass in the basket at the back of Church. If you would like to have an individual Mass said there are also envelopes provided for names and Mass offerings.

OPPOSING ASSISTED SUICIDE

Last weekend Bishop Philip issued a new Pastoral Letter about the bill before Parliament to legalise assisted dying (read it in full [here](#)). We are called to unite in prayer and compassionate action to fight the most profound ethical change in legislation for decades. A template letter to send to your MP is available [here](#) or via the 'Right to Life' website [here](#).

NEW PARISH CHARITY

Our new parish charity is **The Rainbow Trust**, that supports seriously ill children and their families. They have teams of Family Support Workers including a Thames Valley team. There were 100 votes cast, of which 43 placed the Rainbow Trust as their first choice. 68 forms include the Rainbow Trust in their top three selections. You find out more about their work at www.rainbowtrust.org.uk.

We now need to set up a steering group of parishioners who can lead the fund-raising events. Our next event is the **Christmas Raffle** and, as we are now in November, raffle tickets will be available at Masses this weekend. Please take some tickets and sell as many as you can to make it a great success.

BRIDGE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (FORMERLY YPACF)

As we switch our support to a new charity, I wanted to let you know how much we raised for our previous charity. The final amount of £9,500 due was paid over this week, which covers fund-raising, individual donations, Friday Self-Denial donations and St B's 100 Club money raised over the past 15 months or so.

This means that over the last 4½ years we raised a total of £23,900 and, in addition to this, the parish has donated £15,000 out of its funds, so a total of £38,900 has been donated. Congratulations and well done to everyone who gave their support!

NEW ENCYCLICAL LETTER

Dilexit Nos – He Loved Us – is Pope Francis' fourth encyclical. With this document, the Pope proposes a new reflection on the love of Christ represented in His Holy Heart. He calls for a renewal of “authentic devotion” to the Sacred Heart, recalling that in the Heart of Christ “we find the whole Gospel”. It is in His Heart that “we truly come at last to know ourselves and learn to love”. You can read it in full [here](#).

PASTORAL AREA ADVENT RETREAT

Taking place at 10am on Saturday **30th November** at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Hungerford. Led by Fr. Francis Preston SDB, assisted by two Salesian Brothers from Vietnam and Croatia. Concludes with Mass at 4pm. Bring your own lunch, all are very welcome.