



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

Parish Priest: Fr Alban Hood OSB

Tel: 0118-971-5350 ahood@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Administrator: Kathryn Garden

Tel: 0118-971-5350 woolhampton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Safeguarding Minister: Kate Burke

Tel: 0118-984 2166 safeguarding.wool@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

SUNDAY 7 & 14 JULY 2024

14TH & 15TH SUNDAYS IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR B

WEEKLY MASS TIMES

Saturday	St Luke's <i>(Mass Intention: People of the Parish)</i>	5.30 pm
Sunday	St Bernadette's	9.45 am
	Abbey Church	10.30 am
Monday – Saturday	Abbey Church	7.45 am

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 Brenninkmeyer · Pat Campbell · Mary Cox · Frank Ferris
Kevin McCormack · Fr Boniface Moran · Marigold Norman · Donald and Babs
O'Sullivan · Mary Overington.

Please pray for those who have died recently and keep their loved ones in prayer.

REFLECTION FOR THE 14th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Paul speaks in this passage of 2 Corinthians about his experience of a “thorn in the flesh” – we don't know what he meant by that, but if the specifics mattered he probably would've told us. The important thing is he had some kind of physical discomfort, which was given to him to prevent him from becoming arrogant.

He goes on to say that it was an “angel of Satan”. So it could be that Paul was experiencing some kind of spiritual oppression, which he linked to a physical illness or weakness.

It's interesting, though, that Paul says the purpose that this was allowed by God was to prevent him from becoming “conceited” as the ESV has it, or from “getting too proud” in the Jerusalem version. This problem, whatever it was, reminded Paul constantly of his human weakness, his inability to do things by himself.

Let's not forget that this is the same Paul who was mistaken for the Greek god Hermes by the people of Lystra. Paul also tells us that he preached the gospel with power and with manifestations of the Holy Spirit. He was an apostle, who had tackled even Peter when he was in the wrong. But, most of all, as Paul says here, he had been privileged to receive revelations from and of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Taking these together it would be easy to see how Paul might have been tempted to think well of himself, of all that he had achieved and witnessed. After all, it must have been intoxicating to be mistaken for a god!

God, then, permitted this discomfort in Paul's life to keep him humble. This has been God's way since the beginning: he works most powerfully through outwardly weak and broken instruments. Think of his choosing of Jacob over Esau, of Gideon, of the shepherd boy David, of the poor betrothed Virgin Mary. The Lord explained this to Paul: “My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness.”

As I write this, the UK is going through a general election, the results of which you will have heard on Friday by the time you read this. Politicians do their utmost to conceal their weaknesses from the public. There can be no U-Turns, nothing but

conviction and a project of confident strength. When asked if they're ready for the job, the candidates say: "yes!" without a moment's hesitation.

This isn't the way of humility that Paul outlines for us here. Imagine a politician who made their weaknesses their "special boast" as Paul speaks of. Would they lose their seat if they did act as Paul acted? Would you be attracted to their character if they did speak openly of their failings?

But this is also true of each one of us, as well, of course. Do we hide our weaknesses? Do we try to project confident strength in our jobs, relationships, when we're simply out and about?

There's a pitfall here. It's not about avoiding fixing our problems. We should try, just as Paul tried to get rid of his thorn in the flesh. Sometimes it's God's will to do just that: he can heal us, either miraculously as we read of Jesus doing in the gospel today, or through natural means or medical intervention.

If, though, God's answer when we ask is "no" – it's not simply a refusal, it's a reminder that the struggle we endure is designed to work for us an exceeding weight of glory, to go back to Paul's discussions earlier in this letter.

In any case, God is good and kind and merciful. He gives us what is enough for us and tends us carefully to ensure that we grow and thrive.

So, seek humility, pursue it diligently, and cling to the Lord: whatever comes your way, his grace is enough.

Taken from [The God Who Speaks](#)

SECOND COLLECTION – STELLA MARIS

Sunday 14th July is Sea Sunday, when the Church prays for all those who live and work at sea. Next Sunday there will be a second collection for Stella Maris (the Apostleship of the Sea), the official maritime welfare agency of the Catholic Church.

This collection is vital to enable Stella Maris to continue its important work and ensure chaplains are there for seafarers and fishers in times of need. You can donate in church or online by visiting www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate.

PARISH OFFICE SUMMER BREAK

Please note that the Parish Office will be closed from Friday 5th July until 9.00am on Tuesday 16th July. Both answerphone messages and emails will be monitored. If you do have an urgent matter, please leave a voicemail message (0118-971-5350) and we will get back to you as soon as possible.

YOUNG DISCIPLES GROUP

This Sunday, **7th July**, the Young Disciples Group will meet up after Mass at St Bernadette's. The group is for children who have made their First Communion but have not yet been Confirmed. Bite-sized topics followed by doughnuts!

TIME FOR COFFEE?

Do come along to St Bernadette's on Wednesday **10th July** from 10.30am- 12.00pm for a chat and a cuppa. We would be delighted to see you!

ALTAR SERVERS' TRAINING

In the next few weeks there will be Altar Server training sessions for new servers, along with a refresher for existing servers, taking place at both St Luke's and St Bernadette's churches. If your child is interested, contact Marc on 0775 239 7671.

DO YOU HAVE A SPARE FRIDGE?

Do you have an under-the-counter fridge that you no longer need? St Luke's is in urgent need of a replacement. If you can help, please contact the Parish Office.

AFTERNOON TEA/SOCIAL FOR THE WHOLE PARISH

On Sunday **21st July** the whole parish is invited to get together from 3.00pm in the Dorman Room and grounds of St Bernadette's Church. There will be afternoon tea with cakes and scones, along with hot dogs and bacon butties cooked on the barbeque. Why not join in with outdoor games in the grounds, a quiz sheet and tombola.

Tickets are £10 per adult, free for under-18's. Payment can be made online using the [Donate](#) button on the parish website, using the card machine at St Bernadette's or via the Parish Office. All proceeds go to CAFOD. Please help by donating prizes for the tombola and baking cakes and scones. For more information and offers of help, please contact Lucy Gallagher 07949 997 663.

ADoRE SPIRITUAL MINI-RETREAT

Takes place on **27th July** from 10am to 1pm. This month's theme is "Holy, Holy, Holy: going deeper in Praise, Worship and Prayer." Including Mass, Adoration, Praise, Prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and inspiring guest speaker Ros Powell. Please register for the Zoom meeting in advance [here](#). More information can be found at www.altonrenewal.com.

AN INVITATION FROM BISHOP PHILIP

I invite all married couples in the Diocese who are celebrating their 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th (or longer) Wedding Anniversary to join me for this year's Significant Wedding Anniversaries Mass at St Bede's Church, Basingstoke on Saturday **7th September** at 2.00pm. If you would like to attend, please contact your parish office or email anniversaries@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk for an application form.