



# PARISH OF WOOLHAMPTON

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

[www.douaiparish.org.uk](http://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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**9 MARCH 2025**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR C**

Deuteronomy 26:4-10	<i>The confession of faith of the chosen people</i>
Psalms 90 Response	<i>Be with me, O Lord, in my distress</i>
Romans 10:8-13	<i>The confession of faith of believers in Christ</i>
Luke 4:1-13	<i>Jesus was led by the Spirit in the wilderness and tempted by the devil</i>

## THIS WEEK

<b>Saturday 8 March</b>	<b>St Luke's</b> <i>(Mass Intention: Fr Jim Keenan, RIP)</i>	<b>5.30pm</b>
<b>Sunday 9 March</b>	<b>St Bernadette's</b> <b>Abbey Church</b> <i>(Mass Intention: Theresa Flynn, RIP)</i>	<b>9.45 am</b> <b>10.30 am</b>
<b>Mon 10 – Sat 15 Mar</b>	<b>Abbey Church</b>	<b>7.45 am</b>

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 · Bill Bateman · Patricia Brennismeyer · Pat Campbell · Luke Conlon · Kevin McCormack · Marigold Norman · Babs O'Sullivan · Barbara Stocker · Also Don Hood, Fr Alban's father.

**Please pray for those who have died recently, especially Mary Cox and Theodora Fernandez, and keep their loved ones in prayer.** Theo's funeral takes place in the Abbey Church at 11.30am on Monday 10 March.

## **MESSAGE FROM FR ALBAN**

Dear Parishioners,

Welcome to Lent! I encourage you to try and attend one or more of the Lenten spiritual reflections being offered this year. Details are provided in the leaflet enclosed in this bulletin. I particularly commend to you the day being given by our Father Alex Austin at Douai on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

These five weeks of Lent prepare us for the celebration of Holy Week and the Easter Triduum, culminating in the Easter Vigil, the most important liturgy of the year.

This season of Lent is often summed up in three words beginning with 'r,' - Return, Relent, Repent.



We don't just turn away from sinful things; we turn TO the Lord.

God implores us to "re-lent," that is, to enter year after year into the spirit of Lent with our whole heart. We must relent - The word means to change one's mind, to yield, to give in, to surrender. Giving in, or yielding to God's will and direction, is often a tough first step. It means that we have to surrender our control and let God guide us.

Lent is about re-ordering our lives. Life can get out of balance. We allow our priorities to get confused. Some of the things to which we give high priority should have a place of lower priority. The three Lenten practices of fasting, prayer and almsgiving can help us to re-order our lives. They help us with revisiting our priorities and distinguishing between our needs and our wants. When we fast, we acknowledge that as important as food and drink are in themselves, we are giving them less priority. When we pray, we give time to God, and when we devote ourselves to charitable works, we think more about others than we do ourselves.

During Lent we are invited to 'repent.' "Repent" is a beautiful and sacred invitation to me. Not a command. Not a warning. And definitely not a form of punishment or condemnation to shame me into feeling bad or remorseful about my many sins.

Our Lord's call to repent is actually an invitation to experience his transformation. And from personal experience, I know that the transformation Jesus offers is a gift. It is good. It is healing, gentle, powerful. And, yes—it can also be corrective.

When Jesus preached about repentance, he was inviting us humans to allow our hearts and minds to be pliable and sensitive to God's Spirit. He was inviting us to cultivate an attitude of humility, so that our hearts remain soft instead of becoming prideful and hardened against what God wants us to understand.

And he invites because he can't force us to keep our hearts attuned to his Spirit. We have to be willing participants in the process of God's transformation. The truth is that often we're not!

Spiritual change is hard. Resisting change can become our *modus operandi*.

Do you remember the last time that Jesus invited you to repent or "change your mind"? Did you see it as an invitation, or as condemnation?

Repentance is an invitation from God borne out of his vast, deep, deep love for us. And when we embrace this invitation, we invite God to give us new hearts (Ezekiel 36:26) and restore our souls. May you experience the goodness of consenting to the presence and action of God in your life this Lent.

With my prayers and best wishes,

Yours devotedly,

*Father Alban OSB*

## **YOUNG DISCIPLES GROUP**

This Sunday, **9 March**, children who have made their First Communion but not yet Confirmed are invited to come along after Mass at St Bernadette's. Short topics, then doughnuts!

## **FAMILY FAST DAY**

CAFOD's Family Fast Day, on Friday **14 March**, is a day when we're asked to pray and make a Lenten sacrifice by eating simply and giving generously. Please donate to support communities suffering the impacts of war and poverty so they can build hope for the future. Collect a CAFOD envelope as you leave Mass to Gift Aid your donation, give [online](#) or call 0303 303 3030.

## **BIG LENT WALK**

The parish's Confirmation Group is taking part in The Big Lent Walk for CAFOD, so please support our young people by sponsoring them as they walk for those less fortunate than themselves. You can do so [here](#).

## **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

Stations of the Cross will be prayed at **6.30pm on Fridays** during Lent at St Luke's Church and at 12 noon on **14, 28 March and 11 April** at St Bernadette's Church, followed by a Lent lunch.

## **GIVING IN LENT**

In addition to fasting and prayer, almsgiving is equally important during Lent. We can make a real difference in our community by small acts of giving locally to help those facing food insecurity. Simply leave your donation in the green box in our churches or your supermarket's collection point. Our local foodbanks need:

Tinned tomatoes	Cooking oil	Tea bags	Shampoo
Tinned vegetables	Basmati rice	Coffee	Conditioner
Tinned fruit	Lentils	UHT Milk	Sanitary items
Tinned meat	Rice pouches	Squash	Hand soap
Baby Food	Pot Noodles	Long-life Juice	Shower gel

## **TIME FOR A COFFEE?**

Do come along to St Bernadette's on Wednesday **12 March** from 10.30am – 12pm for a chat and a cuppa. We would be delighted to see you!

## **CATECHISTS' DAYS OF PRAYER, FORMATION & NETWORKING**

The Vicariate for Evangelisation are hosting online events for Catechists, offering a chance to connect with others, share experiences and find inspiration to hand on the faith. Each event runs from 7.30pm-8.30pm. To sign up [click here](#).

Thursday **13 March**: Children's Liturgy and First Holy Communion

Thursday **20 March**: Marriage Preparation and Baptism

Thursday **3 April**: Confirmation and RCIA