



# 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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**4 MAY 2025**

## **THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER – YEAR C**

Acts 5:27b-32, 40b-41	<i>'We are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit.'</i>
Psalms 29 Response	<i>I will extol you, Lord, for you have raised me up.</i>
Revelation 5:11-14	<i>'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth.'</i>
John 21:1-19	<i>'Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and so with the fish.'</i>

### **THIS WEEK**

<b>Saturday 3 May</b>	<b>St Luke's</b> <i>(Mass Intention: Private)</i>	<b>5.30pm</b>
<b>Sunday 4 May</b>	<b>St Bernadette's</b> <i>(Mass Intention: Frank Szczeponek, RIP)</i>	<b>9.45 am</b>
	<b>Abbey Church</b>	<b>10.30 am</b>
<b>Mon 5 May</b>	<b>Abbey Church</b>	<b>11.30 am</b>
<b>Tue 7 - Sat 10 May</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 · Eileen Harvey · Marigold Norman · Babs O'Sullivan · Barbara Stocker · Also Don Hood, Fr Alban's father.

**Please pray for those who have died recently, especially Kevin McCormack, and keep their loved ones in prayer.**

## **MESSAGE FROM FR ALBAN**

Dear Parishioners,

It has been a momentous time with the death on Easter Monday morning of our beloved Pope Francis. We continue to pray for the repose of his noble soul, and for the Cardinals who meet in conclave on Wednesday May 7<sup>th</sup> to elect a new Pope.

Please also pray for our candidates for Confirmation who will be confirmed at St Bernadette's by Father Abbot on Sunday May 11<sup>th</sup>, for their families, and for their catechists, Anne-Marie McBrien and Lucy Gallagher, whom we thank for preparing them for the sacrament.

In today's Gospel, we see the disciples gathered by the Sea of Tiberias, in the early light. But very quickly, the camera homes in on one person, Peter. As events unfold, we see the emotions play across his face. From the opening, with a disconsolate and restless Peter saying 'I'm going fishing', to the sudden burst of enthusiasm as he recognises Jesus on the shore and jumps into the water, to the frantic dragging the fish ashore, and then that intense questioning where the screen only contains Peter and Jesus – Do you love me? Leading to that moving prophecy of Peter's mission, and that enigmatic call, with which the drama ends, 'Follow me'.

St John is using his genius to transmit some very profound truths, about Peter, about Jesus, and about what it is to experience the risen Lord. St John shows us what happens to a person when the risen Lord appears in his or her life. And the first and most obvious lesson is that it is not a remote, abstract, cosmological event.

No, the point of this gospel is all about the risen Lord churning up Peter. That impetuous, emotional, insecure, courageous man is buffeted by the experience of meeting Jesus; it turns him inside out. This is the man, remember, who had been given a role of leadership by Jesus, yet who had, at a critical moment, betrayed him. Peter, we are told, after his betrayal went out and wept at what he had done. That, for him, was the end of the story; in a life of unrealised dreams, of failed projects,

of impossible longings, this adventure, this meeting with the young preacher, had seemed to give meaning to his life, to fulfil him, to supply what he felt so deeply was missing. And it had ended in disaster – for Jesus, obviously, but also for Peter; this great gamble, this risk he took on Jesus, had ended, like all his other projects, in failure, self-hatred, despondency. So, we find him at the beginning of this morning’s gospel, back fishing. That’s all there was left for him. That life he had yearned to escape from, that was choking him and his potential. It was all there was to do.

That’s the reason for that fierce reaction when John sees a figure on the shore and says ‘It is the Lord.’ Peter is consumed; he throws himself at the water, desperate to believe, desperate to see if it is true. And then that curious interlude where nobody seems to know what to do. The disciples, we are told, knew it was Jesus, but were too nervous to say so. So Jesus does something magnificent. He has breakfast with them. Two things about this breakfast. Firstly, it is so banal, so ordinary - but it gives them time, time to process, to think through. Not a ghost. But Jesus, in the flesh. Eating breakfast. Secondly, as he shares the food with them, which of them would not remember the last time they had gathered for a meal, and he broke the bread and handed it to them? Jesus is joining up the dots for them, giving them the clues to who he is.

What this gospel tells us is that when we meet the risen Lord, in our lives, in each Mass, we can’t expect things to remain the same. It is not a distant, purely objective reality that we bow down to from afar. The risen Christ interrogates us, challenges us with our past lives and our future hopes. He gets personal – he presents us with ourselves and asks us what we are going to do with our lives. He tells us that our destiny will be fulfilled in ways we cannot know and perhaps do not ask for – ‘someone will put a belt around us and take us where we would rather not know’. And this gives context, and depth to what he says next, so that we cannot answer glibly or lightly, but must bring to it all our fears, our hopes, our pains and our dreams; that little phrase that the risen Jesus asks each one of us today, persistently, desperately, imploringly - ‘Do you love me?’

With my prayers and best wishes,

Yours devotedly,

*Father Alban OSB*

## **POPE FRANCIS REQUIESCAT IN PACE**

Following the death of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, on 21 April, we mourn his death and celebrate his life and ministry. The Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales has produced prayer cards, available at the back of our churches. For those who wish to pay their respects, an online book of condolence is available [here](#). Bishop Philip’s Pastoral Letter, “May Pope Francis Rest In Peace” can be read [here](#).

## THE ROSARY IN MAY

As May is the month of our Blessed Mother Mary, we will be praying the Rosary at St. Luke's **every Saturday in May at 5pm** before Mass. If you are unsure how to pray the Rosary, leaflets will be available. Come and join us.

## CELEBRATION OF CONFIRMATION

Our eight candidates for Confirmation will receive the sacrament during the 9.45am Mass at St Bernadette's on **Sunday 11 May**. This special celebration marks a significant milestone in their faith journey and you are warmly invited to attend and welcome them into the fullness of the Church. Please keep them in your prayers.

## WHAT HAPPENS IN CONCLAVE?

The death of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, sets a chain of events in motion. After nine days of official mourning, the Cardinals will meet in Conclave on 7 May to elect a new successor of Peter. To help our understanding of this process, CTS has produced a free book *Conclave: Step by Step through the Papal Interregnum*. Read the [free download](#) or listen to the audio version via [YouTube](#).

## GARDEN SPRING CLEAN

Please give a hand with the garden spring-clean at St Bernadette's on Saturday **10 May**, from 2.30pm, even if just for half an hour. Refreshments provided.

## APPEAL FOR A CAFOD PARISH VOLUNTEER

Could you help to promote CAFOD's fast days at St Luke's? Your desire for a better world will help connect our community with those overseas and enable our sisters and brothers in the poorest places in the world to lift themselves out of poverty. "When people are in need, giving money is not the only way to help. With volunteering, you give your time and skills to make a difference." Please do contact Jo Lewry for more information, email [jolewry@cafod.org.uk](mailto:jolewry@cafod.org.uk) or call 07710 094447.

## LAUDATO SI' 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Join CAFOD and Caritas in a joint celebration for the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *Laudato Si'*. The session will be packed with practical information, ideas and resources to help make the changes we need in our lives and parishes. More information and to register visit [caritasportsmouth.org.uk](http://caritasportsmouth.org.uk). Takes place next Saturday, **10 May**, 10am–1pm at St Peter's, Winchester, SO23 8RY.

## INVITATION TO WESSEX HOUSE OPENING

*Bridge for Young People* (formerly YPACF) invite parishioners to the opening of Wessex House, which will home six young people and a further seven in one-bedroom flatlets. Join them for coffee, cake, and tour on Wednesday **14 May**, 11am - 4pm, Wessex House, Oxford Road, Newbury RG14 1PA.