



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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REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY - 10 NOVEMBER 2024

32nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR B

1 Kings 17:10-16

The widow made a little scone from her meal and brought it to Elijah.

Psalm 145 Response

My soul, give praise to the Lord.

Hebrews 9:24-28

Christ offers himself only once to take the faults of many on himself.

Mark 12:38-44

This poor widow has put in more than all.

THIS WEEK

Saturday 9 November

St Luke's

5.30pm

(Mass Intention: Edward Langstone, RIP)

Sunday 10 November

St Bernadette's

9.45am

(Mass Intention: People of the Parish)

Abbey Church

10.30am

(Mass Intention: Josephina Maskrey, RIP)

Mon 11 – Sat 16 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 Brenninkmeyer · Pat Campbell · Luke Conlon · Mary Cox
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 Jennifer Gosse and 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,

This weekend we keep Remembrance Sunday. Last Sunday Father Abbot blessed the memorial stones outside St. Bernadette's and this Saturday I will do the same at St. Luke's.

Some years ago I was on duty at our monastery reception desk and saw one of the brethren engaged in deep conversation with a rather dishevelled looking man outside. After a few minutes the monk walked past me and I heard him go into the bursar's office and ask for his holiday money. I then saw him go to the man outside and hand him a wad of cash – his holiday money which he had just received. I was scandalised and mentally berated the monk for depriving himself of money he surely needed for his holidays! How foolish!

It was only later that I came to admire my brother's generosity and selflessness and to feel rather ashamed by my earlier reaction. My brother monk wanted to make a difference to someone's life and did so. Today's gospel reminds me of that incident.

If we are honest, few, if any of us, are in the same position as that widow, in today's Gospel. The widow gives her last coin to an institution that she trusts, to her God in whom she hopes. Of course, we gladly offer up portions of what we have, after some careful calculations, managing the risks. But more often than not, we let go of what we have only with guarantees in place, only after establishing fair transactional principles, or with the promises of our names etched on large stones.

This story is eerily spot-on when it comes to that which attracts our attention — and what doesn't. And, we are rarely, if ever, drawn to those persons whom we do not want to be.

In the end, none of us wishes to be destitute or dependent. The widow willingly gives all — and we know all too well that's something we are not going to do.

Sometimes we find ourselves walking that thin line between pity and empathy, between feeling good about ourselves and compassion, between a kind of mandated kindness and true mercy.

Today's Gospel is more than a pious lesson about being generous and trusting in God. There is indignation in Jesus' voice that shames any society that worships wealth while neglecting its widows and orphans, women denied equal pay for equal work, undocumented migrants who are paid under the table for feeding those who sit at the table, who do the dirty work at the ground level of every economy that supports others above them. It calls out government by the rich for the rich and public servants who serve themselves to stay in power. Like the scribes who devour the houses of widows while mouthing platitudes and prayers, they will be held accountable.

And, I think this story also tells a truth about God who sees right through our self-attentive ways, our tendency for self-preservation, our constant leaning toward the lure of all that might build up the self, especially at the expense of those who need our help the most.

The good news for us in this passage is that God cares about this woman and her sacrifice. He sees her plight and recognises her affliction. God sees her...and God cares about her. I doubt anyone else, including the religious elite parading around the Temple that day and dropping in their token offerings, noticed this woman. And I doubt the disciples following Jesus would have noticed her either, had not Our Lord lifted her up for their attention and sympathy.

But there's a challenge for all of us in today's Gospel. God is inviting us to look around and see each other, those in our local community we know and those we don't. And I mean really see each other – the pain of those who are struggling, those who are discriminated against because of their ethnicity, the desolation of those who are destitute, abandoned to fend for themselves, the despair of those who have given up on life and have lost hope, the anguish of those who have been exploited by 'the system'. God is inviting us to see them, to care for them, and to advocate for a system that does not leave anyone behind.

This week, let us remember that God not only sees our struggles and cares, but also that God believes in us enough to use us to make a difference, each in our own small ways to reach out to those in distress, to help them find comfort and relief, and to work for a more just world. In the coming week, how might you and I make a difference to someone else's life? No matter how small, we shouldn't underestimate its significance.

In 1966 the late American Senator Robert F. Kennedy gave an inspiring address in South Africa during which he declared: *Each time a person stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice, they send forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest wall of oppression and resistance.*

With my prayers and best wishes, Yours devotedly,

Father Alban OSB

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.

TIME FOR COFFEE?

We'd love to see you at St Bernadette's this Wednesday, **13th November** 10.30am-12noon, for a cuppa and chance to catch up together. A perfect midweek break!

RED WEDNESDAY

Red Wednesday, on **20th November**, is an annual initiative from Aid to the Church in Need that aims to highlight the daily suffering, oppression, violence, torture, and death endured by the Christian community the world over. There will be a Second Collection for Aid to the Church in Need next Sunday. Find out more [here](#).

OPPOSING ASSISTED SUICIDE

The Bill that is to be debated in the House of Commons on **29th November**, if passed, would legalise assisted suicide in this country. It is extremely important that concerned citizens write to their MP to make their voice known. This vote could go either way, and we know that MPs are getting many letters from the assisted suicide lobby. A template letter to send to your MP is available [here](#) or via the 'Right to Life' website [here](#).

RE-PRESENTING JESUS IN CONTEMPORARY CULTURE

As the Body of Christ, we are called to make Jesus present in every age to all people, but this isn't always easy. Today, we live in a time of greater connectedness than ever before. How can we use this to share Jesus more powerfully and effectively with others? We can be limited by language and culture — and yet the Lord sends us out to represent him.

Join Jonathan Roumie (The Chosen), Fr James Mallon (Divine Renovation), and Nicky Gumbel (Alpha) online at 8pm on Tuesday, **12th November** as they explore what it means to represent Jesus today and how the Church can embrace this moment to fulfil her mission of sharing Christ. Register [here](#).

CAFOD WORLD GIFTS FOR CHRISTMAS

Pick up a copy of the CAFOD Christmas catalogue at the back of the church to browse a selection of virtual World Gifts that make a real difference for our sisters and brothers facing the injustice of poverty around the world. Every purchase helps support CAFOD.