



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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2 FEBRUARY 2025

THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD – YEAR C

Malachi 3:1–4	<i>The Lord you are seeking will suddenly enter his Temple.</i>
Psalms 23 Response	<i>Who is the king of glory? It is the Lord.</i>
Hebrews 2:14-18	<i>It was essential that he should in this way become completely like his brothers.</i>
Luke 2:22-40	<i>My eyes have seen your salvation.</i>

THIS WEEK

Saturday 1 February	St Luke's <i>(Mass Intention: People of the Parish)</i>	5.30pm
Sunday 2 February	St Bernadette's Abbey Church	9.45am 10.30am
Mon 3 – Sat 8 Feb	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 · Bill Bateman · Patricia Brennismeyer · Pat Campbell · Luke Conlon · Mary Cox · Theodora Fernandez · Kevin McCormack · Marigold Norman · Babs O'Sullivan · Barbara Stocker · Also Don Hood, Fr Alban's father.

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

MESSAGE FROM FR ALBAN

Dear Parishioners,

This Sunday we keep the feast of The Presentation of Our Lord, also known as Candlemas. In 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II named this feast of the Presentation of the Lord as a day of special prayer for those who have been consecrated to the Religious Life. Fifteen years ago today I was sitting in St Peter's Basilica in Rome and heard Pope Benedict XVI declare that the purpose of this Day is threefold: first of all to praise and thank the Lord for the gift of consecrated life; secondly to promote knowledge and appreciation of it among the whole People of God and lastly to invite all those of us who have dedicated our lives totally to the cause of the Gospel to celebrate the marvels that the Lord has worked in us.

Contrary to popular opinion, generations can work together well and help each other. In fact, both need the other. The young have so much to learn from the experience and wisdom of the old - the old can find much hope and inspiration from the young.

In an age pre-occupied by youth and newness, today's feast reminds us how important senior citizens are to the Lord as we meet Simeon and Anna - two senior prophets. Like many senior citizens they are wise and full of insights.

The older we get, the more we tend to reflect on the past - perhaps also we can sometimes feel there is nothing to look forward to - not so the senior citizens of today's feast. They are an unusual couple because their total concern is for the future. They don't live backwards, but forwards. Something yet to happen dominates their life. They are alive with hope and expectation, waiting for the one who will be the consolation of their own people and the light for the Gentiles. Their waiting is not in vain - for they meet the young Jewish couple with the child whom they recognise as God's sign of salvation for his people. Their hopes are fulfilled.

Notice how when Our Lord was presented in the temple in Jerusalem the temple accepted him as a child; but when he presented himself there as a man the temple said 'no' to the person he had become and the values he stood for. Today we are not being presented with a child who is a bundle of cuddle that no one can resist. Today we are presented with the one whom we all can resist and do.

So today we are presented with a challenge: whether we are old or young the challenge is the same: to take the Lord to ourselves, into our hearts and minds and lives and to pledge ourselves anew to his Gospel; to following his light rather than our own: If we can take Him into our hearts and lives, to say yes to who he is and the person he wants us to be, if we, like Simeon and Anna can hunger and thirst for God's presence in our world and be alive with expectation and hope, believing that there is always something for which to look forward, then we, like them, can go our way in peace.

With prayers and best wishes,

Yours devotedly,

Father Alban OSB

YOUNG DISCIPLES GROUP

Next Sunday, **9 February**, 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!

FLOOR MAINTENANCE

The floor at St Bernadette's Church has just been treated and should last ten years before needing another treatment. To help cover the cost of this much-needed work, there will be a second collection at St Bernadette's on Sunday **9 February**. You can donate online [here](#). Your generosity and support are crucial to help us maintain the beauty and safety of our beloved church.

CAFOD MEETING

Would you like to find out how your donations to CAFOD are making a difference to communities in Kenya? Come along and find out on Saturday **22 February**, 10.30am to 1pm, Christ the King Church Hall, Reading RG2 8NR. Please bring your own packed lunch and tea/coffee will be provided. Everyone is welcome.

JUBILEE 2025: LIVING FULLY WITH VALUE AND HOPE

A pilgrimage to Rome for people with disabilities has been organised from **26 April - 1 May**, offering accessible events and a morning with Pope Francis. Bishop Paul Hendricks will celebrate Mass each day. Be part of the official Jubilee events for people with disabilities on 28/29 April. All abilities welcome – individuals and groups. More info email kairosforumevents@gmail.com or see our noticeboards.

DOUAI ABBEY PROGRAMME - Spring & Summer 2025

- **Workshops & Reflection Days:** 10.30am to 4pm. (arrivals & coffee from 10am).
- **Contribution** £30 made on the day please (lunch, coffee & tea incl.) or £15 bring own lunch.
- **All booking & enquiries:** Email: pastoral@douaiabbey.org.uk
- **How to arrive** see: www.douaiabbey.org.uk/contact-us.php

Saturday 22 March *Lent Day of Prayer* - led by Fr Alex Austin OSB. St Benedict mentions joy in his Rule only to describe Lent! 'Preparing for the favourable time' calls for eager engagement, so that we do not stumble through Lent, but embrace its invitation to journey towards Easter.

**** Holy Week Retreat** (Thursday 17 - Sunday 20 April) is this year reserved for a YouCAN group of young adults. We kindly request those usually here for our Holy Week please to make way this time for a younger generation to explore & celebrate this Great Week. Thank you for understanding!

Saturday 10 May *Reflection Day: The Sabbath Day and the Lord's Day'*. Led by Caroline Farey. The day will focus on bible texts to see how links with the Lord's Day open up unexpected riches & to Sunday Mass. For anyone interested: no previous knowledge needed.

Saturday 17 May *Workshop: Living in a Sainted Land* led by Br Simon Hill OSB. Discovering great saints of the Thames Valley & Wessex: Birinus, bishop of Dorchester; Frideswide, foundress of an Oxford monastery c.700; Swithun, Anglo-Saxon bishop of Winchester; Edmund Rich of Abingdon, archbishop of Canterbury c.1250 & Hugh Cook Farringdon, last abbot of Reading.

Saturday 31 May *Reflection Day: Bible Alive—Scripture Speaks: Contemplating Mary's visit to Elizabeth:* Led by Br Aidan Messenger OSB. Come & ponder, like Mary, on her visit to Elizabeth which we celebrate today, so we can discern once again Christ's saving action for us. In *Lectio Divina* we find we can discern with the Scriptures how this Word plays out in our lives.

Saturday 7 June *Workshop: The Afternoon of Christianity* led by Fr Peter Bowe. In his recent book of this name (summary available) the Czech Tomas Halik sees new generations, shy of the Church institution of power & control, seeking simplicity & authenticity. Might the Church better present faith in a vulnerable God, close to us, & met in shared contemplative places?

Saturday 14 June *Reflection Day: Rumours of Light* - Led by Barbara Priest. An introduction to the approachable and beautiful poetry of Gideon Heugh, a contemporary poet, which reflects spiritually on the natural world and relates its wisdom to our own humanity & faith.

Saturday 28 June *Workshop: Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity-Is it?* led by Fr Peter Bowe OSB. Come to this Bible workshop: the *Book of Ecclesiastes* is a message of hope!.. that we rely not on our efforts alone, but trust in God. We shall look at the 3 main poems of this great book.

Saturday 5 July *Workshop: Contemplative Photography* Led by Roddy Maddocks. Encountering the divine through image making; exploring theological reflection & 'visio divina' in photos; photography as unrushed contemplation. Bring a digital camera or smartphone if possible.

MIDWEEK PERSONAL RETREATS

We regret we cannot offer weekend retreats this season, but you are welcome to come for a midweek personal retreat of 2 or 3 days if we have space; a monk may be available to listen. Email to: pastoral@douaiabbey.org.uk

Flyers with details & more information on request - ALL WELCOME !

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