



Our Vision is a Person, Our Vision is Jesus Christ
20th FEBRUARY 2022: SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Sister Gerard Fernandez

I have recently come across the story of an incredible Catholic nun, Sister Gerard Fernandez, who belongs to the Order of the Good Shepherds from Singapore.

Life for a number of prisoners would have ended very differently if it wasn't for her presence in Changhi's high security prison in Singapore. Sister Gerard was just 36 when she walked her first inmate, Tan Mui Choo (Catherine), to be hanged. On that final morning, Tan wore a blue dress with a sash and shoes to her execution. "She was very calm," Sister Gerard recalls, "as we held hands on the final walk to the gallows. I sang Tan's favourite hymn How Great Thou Art as she entered the hanging chamber."

It was Tan Mui Choo's story (Catherine) that brought about a dramatic turn in Sister Gerard's "calling for people who are broken." Back in 1981, Singapore was badly shaken by the brutal killings of two children by a temple medium Adrian Lim, his wife Tan and his mistress Hoe Kah Hong. The case affected Sister Gerard very deeply because she knew one of the victims Agnes (who was only nine years old), as well as one of the murderers Catherine. All three were sentenced to death. "When I walked in to visit Catherine for the first time - says Sister Gerard - she looked at me with her sad eyes which said: 'You haven't condemned me. Please help me change'." For seven years, until the three of them were hanged in 1988, Sister Gerard visited Catherine weekly to pray with her and guide her back to her Catholic faith. The story of their friendship inspired a short film, *Sister*.

A second high profile case involved a Filipino, Flor. She killed a fellow domestic worker and her four year old charge in 1991. "Flor was very angry when her request for clemency was rejected and she in turn rejected everyone else including me", explains Sister Gerard. "I asked my friends and fellow parishioners to pray to Mary for Flor to overcome her anger and when I visited her a week later, Flor was all excited and told me, 'Mother Mary came into my cell'. I asked Flor to describe their meeting and this is what she told me: 'Mary was dressed in white with a blue sash and said to me: Don't worry, don't be afraid, I am with you. Flor also went to her death in peace. "

Not everyone who sought Sister Gerard's support was Catholic. Kumar, a convicted murderer for example, only asked to speak to her the night before his execution. He told her how her presence in the prison had brought him comfort during his time on death row and that he had listened to her singing. His last words to her were: "I am going to see God in the morning and when I do, I will tell him all about you." "You see," explains Sister Gerard, "being allowed to journey with them and lessen their fear of death... is a very special vocation."

Sister Gerard doesn't shy away from admitting that working in the system as it stands is difficult and "very painful". When she wondered out loud to a priest, that she often asked herself, "What am I doing here, they are killing them, yet they are going so peacefully." He replied, "Sister it's because good has triumphed over evil."

We can learn a lot from the story of this incredible nun. She reminds us about the importance to be close to everyone, no matter what they may have done.

Fr Marco

GEM OF THE WEEK

This week's GEM is the "Letter of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI regarding the Report on Abuse in the Archdiocese of Munich-Freising" - you can find this on our homepage. If anyone has suggestions for GEMs please contact website.sswp@gmail.com



For the next Newsletter, items should be received into the Parish Office by 9.30am on Wednesday 23rd February, please email your messages/notices to: stswparish@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

LITURGICAL INDICATIONS



Sunday 20th February 2022: Year C - Year 2 - Psalter Week: 3

PSALM RESPONSE: THE LORD IS COMPASSION AND LOVE.

READINGS: 1st reading Samuel 26:2, 7-9, 12-13, 22-23 **Psalm 102** **2nd reading** 1 Corinthians 15:45-49 **Gospel** Luke 6:27-38

Sunday 27th February 2022: Year C - Year 2 - Psalter Week: 4

READINGS: 1st reading Sirach 27:4-7 **Psalm 91** **2nd reading** 1 Corinthians 15:54-58 **Gospel** Luke 6:39-45

PARISH GROUPS



Stars of Abraham (school years 3-6)

Tues, 4.00pm-5.30pm in St Edward's Cloister;

Tues, 4.15pm-5.45pm in St Andrew;

Sat, 10.30am-Noon in Holy Cross Resource Centre.

To join and for more info please click the Stars of Abraham Icon on our homepage. This group also prepares the children for First Holy Communion (usually in school year 3).

Grail Seekers (school years 7, 8, 9)

Meet in person on Saturdays in St Edward, 2.00-4.00pm. To join and for more info please click the Grail Seekers Icon on our homepage. This group also prepares the children for Confirmation (usually in school year 9).

Student Youth (school year 10 until sixth form)

Meet in person on Friday evenings at 6.30pm in Holy Cross Resource Centre. If you would like to attend please book your place on our website by clicking the Student Youth Icon on our homepage.

Communion & Liberation Groups

School of Community in Holy Cross meets every Wednesday, for more information please click the link on the homepage of our website. All are welcome!

School of Community in St Edward meets every Thursday at 8pm in St Edward's cloister. All are welcome!

Sacramental Preparation for Adults (RCIA)

Meeting on Wednesdays, 8pm in St Edward. If you would like to be baptised, confirmed or received into the Catholic Church (or know more about the Catholic faith) please email Deacon Paul

Owen: powen@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or alternatively please speak to a priest.

Growing In Faith Together (GIFT) Group

Tuesdays 10.15am to approx. 11.30am in the Holy Cross Resource Centre. We continue our series 'Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible'. On Tuesday 15th February we look at Maccabean Revolt: Messianic Fulfilment Part 1. All are welcome!

Fellowship Group

There will be no meeting on Wednesday 23rd February as it is Half Term week.

The Little Flowers Baby & Toddler Group

Wednesdays at 10am in the Holy Cross Resource Centre. The group is for 0-4 years and their families. More information is on the website or you can email: littleflowers.sswp@gmail.com

Afternoon Club - St Joseph's Parish Centre (26 Abbey Water), first Tuesday in the month. Come and join us for tea, games and good fun. All are welcome!

Knitting Club

Meets third Tuesday of the month, from 2pm-4pm in the Holy Cross Resource Centre. If you would like to join us for a knit and cup of tea please come along, all levels of knitting ability welcome!

Ark of Fellowship - Group for learning disabilities or learning difficulties, their families and friends

Thursdays at 6.30pm in the Holy Cross Resource Centre. We will have fun and games and meals together. If you would be interested in volunteering to help run the group or you know some young adults who would like to join the group, please contact Fr Luca at: arkoffellowship.sswp@gmail.com

CaFE

The CaFE programme will be starting again on Tuesday 22nd February, then on 8th & 22nd March and 12th & 26th April. Once again it will be at 2pm in the Parish Centre in Romsey and 7.30pm in St. Andrew's, North Baddesley. We will be following Belong and Believe, a series of 5 DVDs which look at how our Celtic past can help us today in refreshing our communities and renewing our mission. All are welcome, more information can be found by calling Ann Heslop on 02380 734429 or emailing ann.heslop@virginmedia.com

60 Club - Meet every fortnight on a Monday from 2pm-4pm at Holy Cross Resource Centre. Our next meeting is on 21st Feb. All are welcome!

MESSAGES



Parish Office Closure

Due to Half Term the Office will be closed on Friday 25th February.

St Joseph's Church Private Prayer times

Thursday (10am-6.30pm) & Sunday (10am-12 Noon).

MESSAGES



World Day of Prayer Bible Study

Thursday 24th February, 10am

Hosted by St Martin in the Wood Church, Queens Rd, Hiltingbury, Chandlers Ford, SO53 5AG.

Please join us for an informal time together, commencing with refreshments.

Parish Lunch at the Hunters Inn, Romsey on

Monday 28th Feb at 12.30pm. Menus are on church notice boards. All are welcome. If you would like to come, please let Rosemary (01794 522411) know your choice of meal before Monday 21st Feb as we have to pre-order.

World Day of Prayer Service - focus on England, Wales & N. Ireland

Friday 4th March, 1.30pm

Hosted by St Edward the Confessor Church.

World Day of Prayer in Romsey

The World Day of Prayer Service will be held in Romsey Abbey at **11.30am on Friday 4th March.** All are welcome. There will be refreshments after the service.

Parish Get2Gether - Sunday 6th March, 1pm-4pm

Pavillion on the Park, 1 Kingfisher Road, SO50 9LH
An event for all of the parish, especially families. We begin at 1pm, sharing a meal together. No cost, however we kindly ask you to give a donation to cover the hire of the Pavillion. Please bring some food, beverages or cakes to share with others. Please can you bring your own cups/plates/cutlery. To book your place please go to our parish website and click the link.

St Andrews, North Baddesley

Volunteers are needed to help our Cleaners, Flower Arrangers and Computer Clicking. If you are able to give some time to any of these tasks, we would like to hear from you. Please contact Eileen Smith by email: esmith734@sky.com

Mission Witness: Red Box Appeal

Next weekend (26th/27th February) we welcome priests from Mill Hill to give the five yearly appeal. Thank you to all our parishioners who already give to the Pope's official charity for overseas mission - Missio - and Britain's own missionary order, the Mill Hill Missionaries through the Red Box. There won't be a second collection, but if you do not currently have a Red box please consider taking one. It would be fantastic if every home had a Red box to help care for our Church family throughout the world. You can find more information or set-up a Direct Debit online at mission.org.uk/about-apf

Holy Cross Live Streaming

We have been experiencing a problem with the live streaming from Holy Cross. Live streaming is no longer on our YouTube channel but through Twitch (twitch.tv/stswithunwellsparish). People can access this through the homepage of our website by clicking on 'Mass Times' and Holy Cross 'Live Streaming'.

Message from Christine Watson

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to so many people who have been in touch by thought or word to ask after me, and to offer up prayers for my recovery from surgery. The many prayers have obviously worked as I am now back home!

Knights of St Columba

The Knights of St Columba in this parish fulfil some significant roles, but are increasingly in need of new members, because the majority of our members are less active, due to age.

Over 18 and male? Then you're welcome! We meet once a month and serve the parish in various ways, including raising funds by undertaking assorted physical tasks during the year. See this recent YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/YvqkVtIKUek>

Job Opportunities - Catholic Home Care

The Catholic Home Care service is expanding it's work with the elderly & frail of Southampton. In addition to domestic support & shopping roles, we want to include a sitting service and basic gardening. If you, or someone you know, is looking for a flexible part-time job helping people to stay in their own homes for longer, then this is the job for you! Volunteering positions also available. Work from as little as 3 hours per week; car driver an advantage, but not essential. Full training & support given. For more information & an application form ring Anne or Marina on 023 8017 0498. Closing date for applications is **4th March '22**, interviews W/C 14th March '22.

TIMES A PRIEST WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MEET

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|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Tuesdays: | Fr Raffaele, 3.30pm-5.30pm, Holy Cross Resource Centre (back of Holy Cross Church), Eastleigh |
| Wednesdays: | Fr Luca, 4.30pm-6.30pm, Holy Cross Resource Centre (back of Holy Cross Church), Eastleigh |
| Fridays: | Fr Raffaele, 10.30am-11.30am, Parish Office (26 Abbey Water), Romsey |
| Saturdays: | Fr Marco, 9.30am-12.30pm, Parish Office (26 Abbey Water), Romsey |

CONFESSION

(SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION)

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|------------------|-----------------|------------|
| Tuesday: | 9.30am-10.00am | St Andrew |
| | 6.30pm-7.30pm | St Edward |
| Saturday: | 10.00am-10.30am | Holy Cross |
| | 5.30pm-6.00pm | OLQA |
| | 5.30pm-6.00pm | St Joseph |
| Sunday: | 8.30am-9.00am | St Andrew |
| | 9.00am-9.30am | OLQA |

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

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|-------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Tuesday: | St Edward's - after Mass (6.30pm-7.30pm) |
| Wednesday: | Holy Cross - after Mass (10.00am-11.00am) |
| Thursday: | St Joseph's - before Mass (5.00pm-6.00pm) |

MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

| DATE | TIME | CHURCH | MASS INTENTION |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Saturday 19th Feb | 9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm | Holy Cross (also live streamed) St Swithun Wells OLQA St Joseph St Edward | Raymond Kelly RIP Agnes Carter RIP Sr Mary McGrath (Diamond Jubilee) The People of the Parish |
| Sunday 20th Feb <i>Seventh Sunday In Ordinary Time</i> | 8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am | Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA (also live streamed) Holy Cross (also live streamed) St Joseph | <i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Cyril Molloy RIP Winnie Fung RIP Anniversary Maureen Westwood RIP Phyllis Boyle RIP |
| Monday 21st Feb | 9.30am | Holy Cross (also live streamed) | Michel Matar RIP |
| Tuesday 22nd Feb <i>The Chair of St Peter</i> | 10.00am 6.00pm | St Andrew St Edward | Margaret Martindale RIP |
| Wed 23rd Feb <i>St Polycarp</i> | 9.30am 9.30am 10.00am | Holy Cross (also live streamed) OLQA St Edward | Geraldine Kelly (Intentions) Michael Hickson RIP Mary McCormack RIP |
| Thursday 24th Feb | 9.30am 12 Noon 6.00pm | Holy Cross (also live streamed) OLQA St Joseph | Mike Walsh RIP Sr Mary Michael RIP |
| Friday 25th Feb | 9.30am 10.00am 10.00am | OLQA St Joseph St Edward | Pat & Johnny Eagar RIP Johannah Hughes RIP |
| Saturday 26th Feb | 9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm | Holy Cross (also live streamed) St Swithun Wells OLQA St Joseph St Edward | Cheryl Robinson RIP 1st Anniversary Andrew Bates RIP Noel Baker (Wellbeing) |
| Sunday 27th Feb <i>Eighth Sunday In Ordinary Time</i> | 8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am | Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA (also live streamed) Holy Cross (also live streamed) St Joseph | <i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Raymond Harrison RIP The People of the Parish |

CLERGY & PARISH OFFICE

Fr Raffaele Cossa (Parish Priest)
Tel: 023 8061 2430; E: rcosa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Fr Luca Speziale (Assistant Priest)
Tel: 023 8061 2430; E: lspeziale@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Fr Marco Vignolo (Assistant Priest)
Tel: 023 8061 2430; E: mvignolo@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Fr Bruce Barnes (Assistant Priest)
Tel: 01489 890947 (OLQA Office)

Deacon Bob Birtles
Tel: 023 8069 2416; E: bbirtles@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Deacon John di Meo
Tel: 01794 515688; E: jdimeo@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Deacon Paul Owen
Tel: 023 8025 4806; E: powen@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Deacon Paul Wilson
Tel: 023 8061 6618; E: pwilson@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Office: Holy Cross Church, 53 Leigh Road, Eastleigh,
SO50 9DF
Tel: 02380 273882

Holy Cross Resource Centre & Finance Admin: Linda Roberts
Email: lroberts@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Secretary: Sarah Goodfellow
Email: stswparish@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Website Contact: website.sswp@gmail.com