

NEWSLETTER



5th April 2026: EASTER SUNDAY

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registered Charity N. 1199568

EASTER: THE LIGHT THAT CANNOT BE EXTINGUISHED

At the Easter Vigil, the Church gathers in darkness and waits. In that stillness, a single flame is kindled, and from it the Paschal candle is lit. This flame is more than a symbol; it is the sign of Christ himself, the Light who no darkness can overcome. From that one light, the whole church is gradually illuminated as each person receives the flame and shares it with another. What begins as a small fire becomes a great radiance, filling the space with warmth and hope. This is the mystery of Easter: that from the Resurrection of Christ, light spreads into every human heart willing to receive it.

In Baptism, this light is given personally and intimately. God speaks into the life of each baptised person the same words spoken at the beginning of creation: "Let there be light." Through Christ, we are drawn out of darkness into truth. We begin to see clearly, to recognise what is true and what is false, what leads to life and what leads us away from it, which are the values by which we should order our lives.

The light of Christ asks something of us. It invites us to shape our lives according to truth, to guide people around us with wisdom, and to choose what is good even when it is difficult. It calls us to become bearers of that light in a world that often feels divided.

There is a beautiful story told by Selma Lagerlöf about a medieval knight, a man who began as harsh, self-centred, and hardened by life. One day, he conceived a remarkable idea: he would carry a burning flame from the Holy Land all the way back to his home in Europe, and he would ensure that it never went out. At first, this might seem like a simple or even impractical task. But as his journey unfolds, something extraordinary happens within him.

The flame becomes the centre of his life. Every decision he makes is shaped by the need to protect it. He must walk carefully, endure hardship, and place the flame above his own comfort and desires. Slowly, almost without noticing, the knight begins to change. He becomes attentive where he was once careless, gentle where he was once harsh, and selfless where he was once consumed by his own interests. The flame demands everything of him, yet in giving himself to it, he discovers a freedom he has never known.

He is no longer driven by ambition or pride. He no longer measures his life by what he gains or achieves. Instead, his purpose is clear and simple: to carry the flame. And in this selfless service, he becomes whole. He becomes kind, warm, and truly alive. The man who began the journey is not the same man who completes it. The flame he carries outwardly has kindled something far deeper within him.

This story offers us a powerful image of the Christian life, especially in the light of Easter. Each of us has been entrusted with a flame—the light of Christ placed within us at Baptism. Like the knight, we are called to carry it faithfully through the journey of our lives. It is not always easy. Yet if we remain faithful to this light, allowing it to guide us and shape our choices, it will transform us.

Happy Easter to all of you!

Father Raffaele



GEM OF THE WEEK

PALM SUNDAY HOMILY BY POPE LEO XIV

For the next Newsletter, items should be received into the Parish Office by 10am on Tuesday 14TH April 2026, please email your messages/notices to: office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

If you wish to make a donation to our parish please go to: stswithunwellsparish.org.uk/financesdonations

LITURGICAL INDICATIONS



Sunday 5th April 2026 YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK: Office Proper
PSALM RESPONSE: THIS IS THE DAY THE LORD HAS MADE; LET US REJOICE IN IT AND BE GLAD.
1st Reading Acts 10:34a, 37-43 **Psalm** 118(117) **2nd Reading** Colossians 3:1-4 **Gospel** John 20:1-9

Sunday 12th April 2026 YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK: Office Proper
PSALM RESPONSE: GIVE PRAISE TO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD, HIS MERCY ENDURES FOR EVER.
1st Reading Acts 2:42-47 **Psalm** 118(117) **2nd Reading** 1st Peter 1:3-9 **Gospel** John 20:19-31

MESSAGES



OLQA Social event - An evening of music with the band Shantyhead, **Saturday 11th April at 7.15pm.** Tickets are £12 to include charcuterie board and a drink. There will be a raffle with a donated quilt which will be auctioned in aid of MVC group for dementia. All are welcome.

Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration and Service will take place this year on **Sunday 12th April at Holy Cross Church at 2.45pm.** We will start with the procession of the Image, followed by 3 O'Clock prayers, Chaplet, Readings from St Faustina's Diary, Veneration of the Divine Mercy Image and 1st Class Relic of St Faustina and Litany, ending with Benediction and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Confessions will be available to those who wish to obtain the Divine Mercy Sunday Plenary Indulgence. Refreshments and the sale of Divine Mercy devotional items will be available in the Resource Centre afterwards. Enquiries to Roz Monaghan on 0775 263 9593 or please speak to Fr Raffaele.

Thank you to the Knights of St Columba for organising and counting the Mary's Meals currency collection which raised £2082. The Knights are especially grateful to 3 or 4 donors (you know who you are) for very significant donations. We will do something similar next winter; try to get your friends and relatives involved between now and then.

Vacancy for St Swithun Wells Parish Finance Administrator Maternity Leave (Part-time - 30 hours per week)

Salary £20,800 per annum (FTE £26,000). To be based at Holy Cross Church, Eastleigh and reporting to the Parish Priest.

Overall job purpose

- Management of parish and clergy finance;
- Car park finance administration;
- Property liaison with estate agents.

A full job description & applicant pack can be found on our parish website.

The closing date for applications is Thursday 16th April 2026, by 11pm.

Upcoming Funerals - Please pray for the repose of the soul of Teresa Jadwiga Isbell and for her family. Funeral Service takes place on **Wednesday 15th April 2026 at 3.30pm** at **Wessex Vale Crematorium.**

Please pray also for the repose of the soul of Evelyn McKay whose funeral Mass will be **Tuesday 14th April at 10am** at **St Andrew.**

The Easter Sunday Collection traditionally supports our parish priests, in recognition for all their dedication, guidance and care they give across our parish. For your convenience there are several ways of making these offerings:

- Loose cash or cheques in the collection basket at Easter Day or Easter Vigil Mass (please make cheques out to CDP St Swithun Wells with Easter offering on the back);

If you are a tax payer and wish to Gift Aid your offering please use the yellow envelopes provided in the reception area of each church. Please ensure all relevant information is included so we can reclaim the gift aid on your behalf;

- Bank transfer to the main parish account: CDP St Swithun Wells (Sort code: 30-93-04, Account code: 01786599 using ref: Easter);
- Please click the 'Priests Easter Offering' link on our website: <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/st-swithun-wells-catholic-parish-easter-collection-2026>

Due to a Diocesan Policy change our clergy **cannot** receive a proportion of direct debits or standing orders in the parish as part of their Easter & Christmas offerings therefore if you are a planned giver (those who pay by Direct Debit or Standing Order) and wish to contribute to the Priests Easter Offerings please use one of the methods listed above.

Volunteer Vacancies - We are looking for volunteers to help with the following positions: **Property Manager(s)** for one of our churches, **Chair of Property Managers Committee**, also **Gift Aid Co-ordinator for OLQA.** If you are interested in any of the above, please speak to Fr Raffaele or contact the parish office:

office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

These are essential roles for our churches to function. Please help us!

Changes to Mass (Monday 6th to Friday 10th April)

Our priests will be away after Easter, therefore there will be changes to Mass during that week. Please see the back page of this newsletter for the changes. There will be no confession during the week but there will be Eucharistic Adoration as usual.

Bishop Philip's Letter on the Decriminalisation of Abortion

- The House of Lords backed legislation to decriminalise abortions up to birth. You can read the Bishop's statement on our parish website.

MESSAGES CONTINUED



Pilgrimage to Lourdes - A group of parishioners from Our Lady Queen of Apostles are self-organising a pilgrimage to Lourdes and would welcome other parishioners who may like to join us. Dates are **Friday June 26th to Friday July 3rd**. Travel will be flights from Gatwick to Toulouse, with accessible coach transfers from the Winchester area to Gatwick, and from Toulouse to Lourdes. The cost for the week is c. £860 per person, including all travel and 7 nights full board in a 4 star hotel (costs will increase as flight costs increase over time). Each person must arrange their own travel insurance. We welcome interest from both able-bodied and less able pilgrims (we are travelling with a small nursing team and can provide care and support, subject to individuals being able to access a flight). For more information and to join our group, please contact Marianne at mwanstall@btinternet.com.

Parish Registration - Please make sure that you register yourself and your children to our Parish using the online form that you can find on our website. There is one form for adults and a separate one for children.

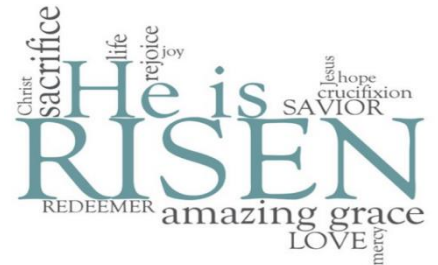
St Joseph Church Friday Lent Lunch raised £250 for CAFOD. Many thanks to all who helped and donated.

A huge thanks to everyone who supported the Lenten Lunches at St Edwards. £732.00 was raised to support CAFOD for its efforts in the needy areas of the world.

Holy Cross Coffee Stop will be taking its annual Easter Break. There will be no Coffee Stop on Thursdays 2nd April and 9th April. It will resume on Thursday 16th April.

St Swithun Wells School Casual Minibus Driver Vacancy - We need your help! The future of our school minibus service depends on it. If we can't fill the role before September, we may only be able to run **one** daily bus service. St Swithun Wells are seeking to appoint a minibus driver to start ASAP. We're open to **flexible, part-time options** to suit different lifestyles. Ideally, we'd love to build a small bank of staff to help keep the service running smoothly. Please share our job advert with anyone who might be a good fit. It would be such a shame to reduce the service, and your help could make all the difference. The successful candidate will work as required, Monday to Friday. There will be the opportunity to help with school trips. More details and the application procedure can be found on our website <https://www.st-swithunwells.org.uk/Casual-Minibus-Driver/> or you can phone the school on; 02380 266210.

Cultural Friday - Save the date for the next Cultural Friday, which will take place on **15th May at 7 pm at St Edwards**. The topic is "Is it possible to be Christian and work in a hospital?". We will invite some guests to share their personal experiences. This meeting is particularly relevant for anyone working in the NHS, including doctors, nurses and staff.



MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

*** Livestreamed**

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	MASS INTENTION
Sat 4th April Holy Saturday	9.30am 8.30pm 8.30pm 8.30pm	Holy Cross OLQA St Joseph St Edward	No Mass Mrs Tren Ginevra RIP FM People of the Parish
Sun 5th April Easter Sunday	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA Holy Cross * St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Świąta</i> Layzell Family (Special Intention) Eustacio Guia (Snr) and Flotilda Guia RIP Hugh & Mary Ann Mcternan RIP Mary Webber RIP FM Helsa Rayment RIP Anniversary Márie (Wellbeing)
Mon 6th April	9.30am	Holy Cross	Liturgy of the Word & Distribution of Holy Communion
Tue 7th April	10.00am 6.00pm	St Andrew St Edward	No Mass Liturgy of the Word & Distribution of Holy Communion
Wed 8th April	9.30am 10.00am	Holy Cross St Edward	Liturgy of the Word & Distribution of Holy Communion Mass

Thur 9th April	9.30am 12 Noon 6.00pm	Holy Cross OLQA St Joseph	Mass: Intention for Rena Horn RIP No Mass Liturgy of the Word & Distribution of Holy Communion
Fri 10th April	10.00am 10.00am 12 Noon	St Joseph St Edward OLQA	Liturgy of the Word & Distribution of Holy Communion Liturgy of the Word & Distribution of Holy Communion No Mass
Sat 11th April	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross OLQA St Joseph St Edward	Phyllis Altman RIP 25 th Anniversary Tadeusz Bubien RIP Anniversary Mrs Tren Gineva RIP FM Marie Fodero RIP
Sun 12th April Second Sunday of Easter (Divine Mercy Sunday)	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA Holy Cross* St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Mrs Edward Christian FM Jesus Ocaya & Francisco Villaver RIP People of the Parish Deena Donny (Special intention) Janet Cooke RIP Anniversary Julie Marie RIP & McVeigh family (Wellbeing)
Mon 13th April	9.30am	Holy Cross	Catherine & James Pearson RIP
Tues 14th April	10.00am 6.00pm	St Andrew St Edward	Funeral Mass Evelyn McKay RIP George, Gertrude & Mary Lawton RIP Anniversary
Wed 15th April	9.30am 10.00am	Holy Cross St Edward	Brenda Tarrant (Wellbeing) Peter Ashcroft RIP FM
Thurs 16th April	9.30am 12 Noon 6.00pm	Holy Cross OLQA St Joseph	Maguire & Richard Family FM Sebi Devassy RIP Anniversary
Fri 17th April	10.00am 10.00am 12 Noon	St Joseph St Edward OLQA	Paul Gardner RIP Sean O'Grady RIP
Sat 18th April	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross OLQA St Joseph St Edward	Liam Haugh RIP Sr Monica Tywang (Wellbeing) Ollie RIP & Laura
Sun 19th April Third Sunday of Easter	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA Holy Cross* St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> People of the Parish Ann Brockway RIP FM John Gare RIP John Davies RIP

CLERGY & PARISH OFFICE

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Open on: Mon, Tue, Thu & Fri 9.30am - 5.30pm
Wed 9.30am-2.30pm

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Events & Communications Coordinator: Faye Harris

events@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

Website Contact: website.sswp@gmail.com

Parish Safeguarding: please see Safeguarding posters in each of our churches for details of the Parish Safeguarding Reps.

Diocesan Safeguarding: rattfield@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk