



Our Vision is a Person, Our Vision is Jesus Christ 1st March 2026: THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

THE TRANSFIGURATION

This 2nd Sunday of Lent the Church proclaims the Gospel of the Transfiguration, that extraordinary moment when Our Lord takes Peter, James and John up a high mountain and is transfigured before them. His face shines, his clothes become dazzling white, and Moses and Elijah appear in conversation with him. Overwhelmed by the beauty of the moment, Peter exclaims: "Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here!" He wants to remain there, to build tents and stay within that radiant encounter. Yet the disciples cannot remain on the mountain. They must come down again.

The Church gives us this Gospel during Lent because it reveals two essential dimensions of our Lenten journey: prayer and charity.

The ascent of the disciples invites us to detach ourselves from worldly distractions and seek attentive, prayerful listening to Christ, the beloved Son of the Father. Lent challenges us to slow down. In the busyness of modern life here in England — work commitments, family pressures, endless digital noise — the Lord gently calls us apart: "Come up the mountain." We are invited to rediscover the peaceful and regenerating silence of meditation on the Gospel, allowing the Word of God to create inner beauty and joy within us.

Prayer need not be complicated. A simple and faithful pattern can guide us: begin with a Glory Be, a Hail Mary and an Our Father; read the Mass readings of the day; reflect quietly on one word or phrase that touches your heart; and conclude with a personal prayer. Just fifteen minutes each day can open space for God to speak and for our hearts to be renewed.

Thérèse of Lisieux beautifully illustrates this simplicity. As a child, she would slip behind her bed curtain and simply "think about God... about life... about eternity." Only later did she realise she had been making mental prayer all along. She wisely observed, "It is better to talk to God rather than to talk about God." Lent is a providential season to deepen this personal, loving conversation with the Lord.

Yet the Transfiguration does not end on the mountain. After encountering Christ in glory, the disciples descend transformed. Their experience was not for themselves alone. In the same way, our prayer must overflow into charity. To meet Christ in silence should lead us to recognise him in others — especially the lonely, the struggling, the sick and the poor. Charity is not limited to grand gestures; it is found in patience at home, kindness at work, forgiveness in families, and welcome within our parish community. St Thérèse reminds us, "It isn't enough to love; we must prove it."

A powerful witness of charity is the spirit we bring into daily life. The Gospel should make us joyful people. St Thomas More said: "Give me, Lord, a sense of good humour... Grant me the grace to discover a little joy in life and to share it with others." A cheerful, welcoming presence can itself be a work of mercy.

As we continue our Lenten journey, let us commit ourselves to daily prayer, attentive listening to the Word of God, and concrete acts of love. May our time "on the mountain" renew our hearts, so that we may come down ready to serve. And may this Lent lead us together towards Easter, with hearts transfigured by the light and love of Christ.

Fr Raffaele

GEM OF THE WEEK

MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FOR LENT 2026

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 **10am on Tuesday 3rd March 2026**, please email your messages/notices to: office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

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

LITURGICAL INDICATIONS



Sunday 1st March 2026 YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK 2

PSALM RESPONSE: MAY YOUR MERCIFUL LOVE BE UPON US, AS WE HOPE IN YOU, O LORD.

1st Reading Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 33(32) 2nd Reading 2nd Timothy 1:8b-10 Gospel Matthew 17:1-9

Sunday 8th March 2026 YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK 3

PSALM RESPONSE: O THAT TODAY YOU WOULD LISTEN TO HIS VOICE! 'HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS'.

1st Reading Exodus 17:3-7; Psalm 95(94) 2nd Reading Romans 5:1-2, 5-8 Gospel John 4:5-42

PARISH GROUPS



Awake My Soul - A group for young adults (aged 18-25) in the parish. We meet every other **Wednesday** from 7pm to 9.30pm in the presbytery of Holy Cross (53 Leigh Road, Eastleigh - the house next to the church). We start with dinner together, followed by a discussion on how our faith relates to our daily lives. Next meeting: **Wednesday 11th March**. If you would like to participate, please email Fr Matteo: mpagani@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

School of Christianity in Bishop's Waltham - A course about the basis of the faith using the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Next meeting will be **Friday 13th & 27th March** at 6pm in the hall of Our Lady Queen of Apostles Church.

MESSAGES



Last Mass at St Swithun Wells Church

The last Mass at St Swithun Wells Church will be celebrated on **Saturday 14th March** at 5pm. We warmly invite parishioners from across the parish to join us on that day as we give thanks for the many graces received there: baptisms, marriages, funerals, and countless quiet moments of prayer. Please take time to read the Bishop's full letter on our parish website.

Lenten Lunch in aid of CAFOD will take place every **Friday in Lent** at St Edward's, from 12 Noon until 1.30pm. All donations will go to CAFOD'S funds helping all who are in need due to famine, climate change, wars and disasters. Your support will be greatly appreciated.

Romsey Lent Lunch in aid of CAFOD - It will be held in the United Reformed Church hall on **Friday 6th March** from 12Noon - 1.30pm. For this event to raise money for CAFOD we desperately need helpers. No cooking involved. If you can volunteer please contact Rosemary (01794 522411) or speak to Rosemary Peacock or Jean Prescott after Mass.

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. You can also use the QR codes below that will take you to the online form directly. Thank you to those who have already completed this. For queries, please contact Christina at accounts@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk



Adult Parishioner Registration



Child Parishioner Registration

Lent Parish Retreat - We will hold a Parish Retreat for Lent on **Saturday 7th March**, 2.30pm-4.30pm at St Edward. Open to everyone. There will be a talk about Lent, some time for private prayer in the church and a time for questions and sharing of thoughts.

Stations of the Cross During Lent

St Andrew: Tuesdays at 9.30am (before Mass);
Holy Cross: Thursdays at 9am (before Mass);
St Joseph: Fridays at 9.30am (before Mass);
St Edward: Fridays at 9.30am (before Mass);
OLQA: Fridays at 11.15am (before Mass).

Weekday Masses & Eucharistic Adoration

One of the pillars of Lent is prayer. A simple way to do this is to attend Mass on weekdays or to participate in one of our Eucharistic Adorations. On Tuesdays in St Edward for example, there is Mass at 6pm with Eucharistic Adoration afterwards. On Wednesdays there is Mass in Holy Cross at 9.30am followed by Eucharistic Adoration. At St Joseph there is Mass every Thursday at 6pm and Eucharistic Adoration one hour before from 5pm-6pm. At OLQA there is Eucharistic Adoration (after Mass) at 12.30pm every Thursday.

Penitential Services - A number of priests will be available during these times:

Saturday 14th March, 4.00pm at OLQA
Friday 20th March, 7.30pm at St Andrew
Saturday 21st March, 10am at Holy Cross

OLQA Social event postponed - Originally announced for Friday 27th March, this even has been postponed until April, date to be confirmed. Apologies for any inconvenience.

New parish blog - We now have a blog on our website. We are also on Facebook and Instagram and you can follow us at [@stswithunwellsparish](https://www.facebook.com/stswithunwellsparish) for all the latest news and events in the parish.

MESSAGES CONTINUED



CAFOD Lent Appeal - Family Fast Day collection

Family Fast Day is on Friday 27th February.

Please donate using a CAFOD envelope in church or online at cafod.org.uk/envelope or call 0303 303 3030. You will be able to hand in your donation during the second collection on **28th Feb/1st March**. Please do not use the yellow gift aid envelopes.

Parish Get2Gether - Sunday 1st March 1-4pm

Pavilion in the Park. An event for all of the parish, especially families. We begin at 1pm, sharing a meal together followed by some activities and a discussion. No cost, however we kindly ask you to give a donation to cover the hire of the Pavilion. Please bring some food, beverages or cakes to share with others. Please can you bring your own cups/plates/cutlery. Please include a list of ingredients so those with allergies can make an informed decision. To book your place please go to our parish website.

Safeguarding Coordinator Needed – Holy Cross Church

Holy Cross Church is seeking a volunteer to serve as Safeguarding Coordinator. This is an important role in helping to ensure that our church remains a safe and welcoming place for children, young people, and vulnerable adults. The coordinator acts as a point of contact within the church and works alongside the diocesan safeguarding team. The volunteer must be a regular member of the congregation at Holy Cross Church. If you are interested speak to Fr Raffaele or contact the parish office: office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

Volunteer Property Manager(s) Needed

Our parish is seeking volunteers who may be interested in serving as a Property Manager for one of our churches. This important role involves helping to oversee the care and maintenance of church buildings and grounds, liaising with contractors where necessary, and ensuring that our properties are kept safe and well maintained. If you feel you may be able to help, we would be very pleased to speak with you about which church and what the role would involve. If you are interested please speak to Fr Raffaele or contact the parish office: office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

Chair of Property Managers Committee Needed

Our parish is seeking a volunteer to serve as Chair of the Property Managers Committee. This important role involves coordinating and supporting the work of the Property Managers of the different churches, helping to ensure good communication, shared planning, and the careful stewardship of our parish properties. Support and guidance will be provided. If you are interested, or would like to find out more about what the role involves, please speak to Fr Raffaele or contact the parish office: office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

Suggested reading - for the next couple of months we suggest the following book: *Catholicism: A Journey To The Heart of The Faith* by Bishop Robert Barron.

World Day of Prayer - (formerly the Women's World Day of Prayer) is on **Friday, March 6**. On this day the same prayer Service will be held all over the world. This year the Service has been prepared by Nigeria. In our area, the service will be held at the **United Reform Church in Romsey at 2pm**. Another service will be held at **St Martin in the Wood in Chandlers Ford at 10.30am**. All are welcome and refreshments will be served afterwards.

Cultural Friday – 13th March at 7pm at St Edwards.

We will listen to some pieces of classical music linked to Lent (Mozart and Gabriel Fauré) and we will also be introduced to some paintings that help us to deepen our Lenten journey (Caravaggio and Fra Angelico). Cheese and wine from 7pm. The presentation starts at 7.30pm. Suggested donation £3.

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.

Visit of St Carlo Acutis Relic - We invite you to this rare opportunity to venerate up close to the First Class relics of recently canonised St Carlo Actuis, as part of its worldwide tour, exclusively at **St John's Cathedral, Portsmouth. Wednesday 11th March and Thursday 12th March**. Welcome Mass on **Wednesday 11th March at 6pm** celebrated by Bishop Philip. On **Thursday 12 March** we will especially welcome schools for veneration.

TIMES A PRIEST WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MEET

Tuesdays:	Fr Raffaele, 3.30pm-5.30pm, Holy Cross Resource Centre, Eastleigh;
Wednesdays:	Fr Luca by appointment, 3.30pm-5.30pm, Holy Cross Resource Centre, Eastleigh;
Fridays:	Fr Mario 10am-12 Noon, OLQA, Bishop's Waltham;
Fridays:	Fr Pietro, 11am-12.45pm, 26A Abbey Water, Romsey;
Fridays:	Fr Matteo, 11am-12.30pm, Holy Cross Resource Centre, Eastleigh.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)

Tuesday:	9.30am-10.00am (before Mass) St Andrew
Tuesday:	6.30pm-7.30pm (after Mass) St Edward
Saturday:	10.00am-10.30am (after Mass) Holy Cross
	5.30pm-6.00pm (before Mass) OLQA
	5.30pm-6.00pm (before Mass) St Joseph
Sunday:	8.30am-9.00am (before Mass) St Edward
	8.30am-9.00am (before Mass) St Andrew

MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	MASS INTENTION
Sat 28th February	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross St Swithun Wells OLOQA St Joseph St Edward	Selby & Kathleen Fawcett RIP People of the Parish John Whitcher RIP
Sun 1st March <i>Second Sunday of Lent</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLOQA Holy Cross (& livestreamed) St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Denis McCormack RIP Angela and Alfredo Pantanella RIP For the protection of all children Tony Kelly RIP
Mon 2nd March	9.30am	Holy Cross	Ann Siby (Special Intention)
Tues 3rd March	10.00am 6.00pm	St Andrew St Edward	Richard Stubbs RIP
Weds 4th March	9.30am 10am	Holy Cross St Edward	Kelly & Magee Families FM Mrs Edward Christian FM
Thurs 5th March	9.30am 12 Noon 6.00pm	Holy Cross OLOQA St Joseph	Deceased members of the lampietro family Anthony Sloane RIP
Fri 6th March	10.00am 10.00am 12 Noon	St Joseph St Edward OLOQA	John Crowther RIP Anniversary
Sat 7th March	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross St Swithun Wells OLOQA St Joseph St Edward	Antonio Cicu RIP FM Mary Monahan RIP Kornelia & Marcin Koronkiewicz (18 year Wedding Anniversary) Mary Mcdermot (Wellbeing) Stephanie van Willigenburg (Health and Wellbeing)
Sun 8th March <i>Third Sunday of Lent</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLOQA Holy Cross (& livestreamed) St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Bernadette Keenan RIP For a friend in need of healing Colette Reynolds FM People of the Parish

CLERGY & PARISH OFFICE

Fr Raffaele Cossa (Parish Priest)

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Parish Office Holy Cross Church, 53 Leigh Road, Eastleigh,
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Mon, Tues, Thurs & Fri 9.30am - 5.30pm; Wed 9.30am - 2.30pm

Parish Administrator: Sabrina Gardner

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Finance Administrator: Christina Geleji

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Events & Communications Co-ordinator: Faye Harris

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

Safeguarding: Ruth Attfield rattfield@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk