

NEWSLETTER



29th March 2026: PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registered Charity N. 1199568

PALM SUNDAY

Today we begin Holy Week, the most important week in our Church year. It is a time when we walk with Jesus on the way of the Cross and prepare to celebrate His Resurrection at Easter. Today's liturgy begins with the blessing and procession of palms, reminding us of Jesus' joyful entrance into Jerusalem. The same crowd that welcomed Him would soon turn against Him, and this reminds us how quickly hearts can change.

Recently, I had the opportunity to visit Rome. Walking through the great churches and places of prayer, especially in St Peter's Basilica, I was struck by the deep faith of those who have gone before us. It made me reflect on how generations of Christians have lived and celebrated this same Holy Week. That experience helped me to prepare my own heart, to slow down, to pray more deeply, and to enter into these holy days with greater meaning. In a similar way, we are all invited this week to make space for God and to walk closely with Jesus.

Today we hear the full story of Jesus' Passion. We will hear it again during the Triduum: on Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and at the Easter Vigil. These are not just stories we remember, but mysteries we are called to enter. They show us how much God loves us.

Jesus accepts suffering and death out of obedience to the Father. At the Last Supper, He tells His disciples that His blood will be poured out "for the forgiveness of sins." This reminds us that His suffering has a purpose: to save us and bring us back to God. The Passion shows us the depth of Jesus' love, a love that gives everything.

As we listen to the Passion, we can recognise ourselves in different people in the story. At times, we may be like Peter, who is afraid and denies Jesus, or like the disciples who fall asleep and fail to stay with Him. Sometimes we turn away from what is right or remain silent when we should speak. At other times, we are like Simon of Cyrene, helping to carry the cross in small but important ways. The Passion invites us to ask: how do I respond to Jesus in my life?

As a parish community, there is much we can learn from this. We are called to support one another, especially in times of difficulty. Just as Jesus shows love even in suffering, we are invited to care for those who are struggling, lonely, or in need. We are also called to be a forgiving community, letting go of anger and choosing peace.

Above all, we are people of hope. The story does not end with the Cross. We know that Easter is coming. The Passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus, what we call the Paschal Mystery, reminds us that love is stronger than suffering and life is stronger than death.

As we begin this Holy Week, let us take time to pray, reflect, and be present. Let us walk together as a parish family, staying close to Jesus, so that we may share fully in the joy of His Resurrection.

Deacon Emmanuel



GEM OF THE WEEK

read on our website: Pope Leo "Message for Lent 2026"

For the next Newsletter, items should be received into the Parish Office by 10am on Tuesday 31st 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: stswithunwellsparish.org.uk/financesdonations

LITURGICAL INDICATIONS



Sunday 29th March 2026 YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK 2

PSALM RESPONSE: MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

1st Reading Isaiah 50:4-7 **Psalm** 22(21) **2nd Reading** Philippians 2:6-11 **Gospel** Matthew 26:14-27:66

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

PARISH GROUPS



Voice of Praise - Catholic Charismatic Prayer Group

Join us every **Thursday evening, 7.45pm, at the Holy Cross Church** for an hour of lively prayer, music, Scripture, and fellowship. Our charism is evangelisation: sharing the joy of the Gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Please note there will be no meeting on 2nd or 9th

April, and will resume on 16th April. Whether you are new or experienced in charismatic prayer, all are warmly welcome! For info please email:

voiceofpraise.sswp@gmail.com

MESSAGES



Palm Sunday (29th March) - Holy Cross, 11am Mass

Please remember that the procession with palms will start outside The Point in Eastleigh at 11am.

Chrism Mass - Tuesday 31st March, 11am in St John's Cathedral, Portsmouth.

Bishop Philip would like to invite you to join him for this celebration (for this reason there will be **no Mass at St Andrew's on this day**).

Easter Sheet 2026

Available in all of our churches, please pick up a copy. Please note a slight change to the usual schedule - Good Friday Stations of the Cross will be held around the precinct and Leigh Road Recreation Ground, starting at **Holy Cross 10.30am, finishing at Holy Cross Church by 12noon.**

Rules for Good Friday - On Good Friday (3rd April)

Roman Catholics must fast and abstain from meat. Fasting means reducing considerably the amount of food we eat (e.g. having just one meal) and abstinence means abstaining from eating meat. The law of fasting applies to anyone aged 18-60. The law of abstinence applies to those who are over 14.

Bishop's Waltham Churches Together Good Friday Walk of Witness, Friday 3rd April 2026

Please join members of Our Lady Queen of Apostles, the United Free Church and St. Peter's as we follow a cross, stopping at twelve places around the town for a short reading, hymn and prayers about Jesus' path to the resurrection. This allows participants to think and pray together about Jesus' suffering and death, and remind others of the importance of Good Friday. The Walk starts at St Peter's at 10am and finishes at the United Free Church, Basingwell Street, at about 11am. More info from angussomerville@hotmail.com

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

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

Upcoming Second Collections

Good Friday (3rd April) Collection: Holy Places

Portsmouth Roman Catholic Diocese is raising money for Christians in the Holy Land. Please do not use the yellow gift aid envelopes for this collection.

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/holy-places>

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>

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.

Bishop Philip's Letter on the Decriminalisation of Abortion

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



Baptism, Reception into the Church and Confirmation - Easter Vigil Please pray for Alex, Ivan, Vania, Callum, Kai, Rhiann, Ross, Sasha and Vita who will be baptised and for Conor, Emma Faith, Emma Jayne, Ethan, Jamie, Jonathan, Louis, Rebekah, Abel, Diana, Enrico, Peter, Samson and Valentino who will be received into Full Communion with the Church or Confirmed in our Parish this Easter.

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.

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.

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.

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!

Thank you to the Knights of St Columba for organising and counting the Mary's Meals currency collection. 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.

St Swithun Wells School Casual Minibus Driver Vacancy - We need your help! The future of our school minibus service depends on it. One of our wonderful drivers is retiring in July, and despite advertising for the past two years, we still haven't been able to recruit a replacement. If we can't fill the role before September, we may only be able to run **one** daily bus service – something we really want to avoid. St Swithun Wells are seeking to appoint a minibus driver to start as soon as possible. We're open to **flexible, part-time options** to suit different lifestyles – mornings only, afternoons only, or even just a couple of days a week. 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.

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 next week's newsletter changes.

OLQA Change of Mass Time - From **Saturday 21st March**, Mass at OLQA was moved from **6pm to 5pm** (with confession at 4.30pm).

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.

MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

* Livestreamed

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	MASS INTENTION
Sat 28th March	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross OLQA St Joseph St Edward	Deena Donny (Health and Wellbeing) People of the Parish Mary Connolly & Family (Special Intention)
Sun 29th March Palm 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> Mary McCormack RIP Vince Curmi RIP anniversary Beatrice & George White; David, Laura, Eduardo Fernandes FM Joseph Paulo RIP Alan Jones RIP (7 th Anniversary)
Mon 30th March	9.30am	Holy Cross	John Donnelly RIP
Tue 31st March	10.00am 6.00pm	St Andrew St Edward	No Mass Julia Jackson RIP FM
Wed 1st April	9.30am 10.00am	Holy Cross St Edward	Scaria Punmamchira Scaria Umberto Pugi RIP
Thur 2nd April Maundy Thursday	9.30am 7.00pm 7.30pm 7.30pm	Holy Cross St Andrew Holy Cross OLQA	No Mass
Fri 3rd April Good Friday	10.30am 3.00pm 3.00pm 3.00pm 5.00pm 7.00pm	Holy Cross St Andrew OLQA St Edward Holy Cross Holy Cross	Stations of the Cross will be around the precinct and Leigh Road Recreation Ground, finishing at Holy Cross Church by 12noon. Good Friday Service Good Friday Service Good Friday Service Good Friday Service Stations of the Cross (Traditional)
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 Święta</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)

CLERGY & PARISH OFFICE

Fr Raffaele Cossa (Parish Priest)

Tel: 023 8061 2430; rcossa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Fr Luca Speziale (Assistant Priest)

Tel: 023 8061 2430; lspeziale@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Fr Mario Toma (Assistant Priest)

Tel: 023 8061 2430; mtoma@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Fr Matteo Pagani (Assistant Priest)

Tel: 023 8061 2430; mpagani@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Fr Pietro Paiusco (Assistant Priest)

Tel: 023 8061 2430; ppaiusco@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Deacon Bob Birtles

Tel: 023 8069 2416; bbirtles@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Deacon John di Meo

Tel: 01794 515688; jdimeo@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Deacon Paul Owen

Tel: 023 8025 4806; powen@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Deacon Paul Wilson

Tel: 023 8061 6618; pwilson@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Deacon Emmanuel Chituh

Tel: 07915 379686; echituh@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

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

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

Parish Administrator: Sabrina Gardner

office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

Finance Administrator: Christina Geleji

accounts@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

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