



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

Parish Priest: Fr Alban Hood OSB

Tel: 0118-971-5350 ahood@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Administrator: Kathryn Garden

Tel: 0118-971-5350 woolhampton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Safeguarding Minister: Kate Burke

Tel: 0118-984 2166 safeguarding.wool@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

23 FEBRUARY 2025

7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME– YEAR C

1 Sam 26:2 7-9 12-13 22-23 *The Lord gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the Lord's anointed.*

Psalm 102 Response *The Lord is compassionate and gracious.*

1 Corinthians 15:45-49 *Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.*

Luke 6:27-38 *Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.*

THIS WEEK

Saturday 22 February St Luke's 5.30pm

Sunday 23 February St Bernadette's 9.45am

(Mass Intention: People of the Parish)

Abbey Church 10.30am

(Mass Intention: Theodora Fernandez, RIP)

Mon 24 Feb – Sat 1 Mar 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 · Kevin McCormack · Marigold Norman · Babs O'Sullivan · Barbara Stocker · Also Don Hood, Fr Alban's father.

Please pray for those who have died recently, especially Theodora Fernandez and Peter Murphy, and keep their loved ones in prayer. Peter's funeral takes place at St Luke's Church on Monday 24 February at 12 noon.

MESSAGE FROM FR ALBAN

Dear Parishioners,

In the past week, the TV soap opera *Eastenders* has celebrated its 40th anniversary. Many TV soaps rely on the fact that people withhold forgiveness, or determine to get even, or plot the downfall of their former lovers; it's what gives us the famous cliff-hanger at the end of each episode. Any soap opera where characters said 'Don't worry, I forgive you' would very soon run out of material. So instead, soap operas chart natural justice; people who cheat get discovered, people with nasty secrets find them made public, people who hate other people tell them to their faces. It's only fair - they had it coming.

In today's Gospel we hear the stirring words: *Love your enemies*

I once concelebrated at a Requiem Mass for a wonderful lady of whom it was said during the eulogy: 'she had no enemies.' At first, I thought 'how marvellous,' but subsequently I've wondered how true a statement it was – at some time or another each of us makes enemies, whether real or imaginary.

Whom would we regard as our enemies? There are people with whom we may disagree or find that they get under our skin. And we are all probably guilty of sending little wish prayers up that sound something like: "Lord, I would be most grateful if you would ring so and so's neck." Or we might wish that the Lord "would move them on" to another community or country or even another planet.

Sometimes we see enemies where none exists. Sometimes enemies can be of help to us.

Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich was a Serbian bishop in the last century who spoke out courageously against Nazism until he was arrested and taken to Dachau. He penned a thought-provoking reflection entitled 'bless my enemies,' and I'd like to conclude by sharing with you an extract:

Bless my enemies, O Lord. Even I bless them and do not curse them. Enemies have driven me into your embrace more than friends have... Just as a hunted animal finds safer shelter than an un-hunted animal does, so have I, persecuted by enemies, found the safest sanctuary, having ensconced myself beneath your tabernacle... my enemies have punished me, whenever I have hesitated to punish myself. They have tormented me, whenever I have tried to flee torments. They have scolded me, whenever I have flattered myself. They have spat upon me, whenever I have filled myself with arrogance... Whenever I have made myself wise, they have called me foolish. Whenever I have made myself mighty, they have mocked me as though I were a dwarf. Whenever I have wanted to lead people, they have shoved me into the background... Truly, enemies have cut me loose from the world and have stretched out my hands to the hem of your garment. ...Enemies have taught me to know what hardly anyone knows, that a person has no enemies in the world except him or herself.

Love your enemies - this little phrase is one of the most difficult ever uttered. It has the potential to transform our world. It's not great drama - but perhaps we've had enough drama; soap operas belong on television, not in the real world.

With prayers and best wishes,

Yours devotedly,

Father Alban OSB

WELCOME IN BAPTISM

We welcome in baptism Hugo Dearn, who will receive the sacrament this Sunday, 23 February, in St Mary's Church. Please pray for him and his parents, Ella and Oliver, as he begins his journey of faith.

PARISH QUIZ TAKES PLACE THIS WEEKEND

A quick reminder that the Parish Quiz is this Saturday, **22 February**, in Pangbourne Village Hall (£1 charge for parking after 6pm). Doors open at 7pm for a prompt start at 7.30pm. Don't forget to bring your own drinks, glasses and nibbles.

YOUNG DISCIPLES GROUP

Next Sunday, **2 March**, 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!

MEDJUGORJE PILGRIMAGE

The Pope has officially granted a Plenary Indulgence to all faithful who visit the Parish of St. James the Apostle in Medjugorje as pilgrims during the Jubilee Year 2025. Sue Smith, of our neighbouring parish of Our Lady of the Assumption, Thatcham, has arranged a pilgrimage to Medjugorje from **12-19 May**.

The cost is £749 including flights, transfers, 4-star accommodation near the centre and the accompaniment of experienced guide, Svetlana. For more information see the poster at the back of church or email info@discovermedj.com.

THREE HEADTEACHER VACANCIES

Along with the vacancies for Headteachers at [St Paul's](#) Catholic Primary School, Tilehurst and at [St Anne's](#) Catholic Primary School, Basingstoke, this week there is a further vacancy for a Headteacher at Christ the King Catholic Primary School in Reading. Here's the link: www.christthekingreading.co.uk/staff-vacancies.

CELEBRATING A SIGNIFICANT ANNIVERSARY?

Are you celebrating a 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th, 60th or anniversary over 60 years? If so, Bishop Philip would like to invite you to a Mass of celebration. This will take place at St Bede's Church in Basingstoke on Saturday **21 June** at 11am, followed by a buffet lunch. It is a wonderful occasion to celebrate and witness to Marriage. Email anniversaries@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk to request a form.

JOIN CAFOD'S BIG LENT WALK IN THE JUBILEE YEAR

Join CAFOD's Big Lent Walk and journey as Pilgrims of Hope in this Jubilee Year - walking 200km over 40 days during Lent. Why not walk to one of the churches or shrines designated as places of pilgrimage in our diocese? Sign up here: walk.cafod.org.uk.

Our parish's Confirmation Group is taking part in The Big Lent Walk, so please support our young people by sponsoring them as they walk for those less fortunate than themselves. You can do so [here](#).

Your donations can change lives. Every £1 raised will help fight poverty globally in countries like Afghanistan, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan.

CAREBUS FOR PANGBOURNE

For those with mobility challenges, take a look at the poster at the back of St Bernadette's Church for details of a new monthly Carebus service from Pangbourne to Cobbs Farm and SavaCentre, starting on Wednesday **5 March**. If you can spare a few hours, Carebus is also looking for volunteer drivers, details on the poster.