



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

SUNDAY 20th OCTOBER 2024

29th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR B

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| Isaiah 53:10-11 | <i>If he offers his life in atonement, he shall see his heirs, he shall have a long life.</i> |
| Psalms 34 Response | <i>May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you.</i> |
| Hebrews 4:14-16 | <i>Let us be confident in approaching the throne of grace.</i> |
| Mark 10:35-45 | <i>The Son of Man came to give his life as a ransom for many.</i> |

THIS WEEK

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| Saturday 19 October | St Luke's <i>(Mass Intention: People of the Parish)</i> | 5.30pm |
| Sunday 20 October | St Bernadette's <i>(Mass Intention: Ester Williams, RIP)</i> | 9.45am |
| | Abbey Church <i>(Mass Intention: Jim Foley, RIP)</i> | 10.30am |
| Mon 21 - Sat 26 Oct | 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 · Patricia Brennismeyer · Pat Campbell · Luke Conlon · Mary Cox
Kevin McCormack · Marigold Norman · Donald and Babs O'Sullivan · Mary
Overington · Barbara Stocker · Also Don Hood, Fr Alban's father.

Please pray for those who have died recently and keep their loved ones in prayer.

MESSAGE FROM FR ALBAN

Dear Parishioners,

A wise TV celebrity once famously said that he would never again work with children or animals. I must confess that I'm not very good with either! In a rare moment of courage, during a Sunday Mass with lots of children present I sat on the top step of the sanctuary and invited them all to come and sit at the front. I began telling a story to the children. I thought I was at a somewhat serious part of the story, and the children all appeared to be listening as best they could, but then I heard the rest of the congregation start to laugh. I turned around, and there was a little girl who had climbed up on the priest's chair and was sitting comfortably like the little princess she was. Her mother was really embarrassed and ran forward to rescue her daughter. She apologized to me afterwards, saying, "I'm really sorry she sat in your chair."

Well, it is not really my chair. It is just a symbol of the priest's position as leader of the people in prayer during the Mass. The chair is a symbol, but it is not the source of authority, real authority. In today's gospel Our Lord reminds us that in his kingdom, that authority doesn't mean domination, but service. One of the titles the Pope has is 'servant of the servants of God.' Yet we know today in many different situations there is often a gulf between those who rule and those who are ruled, that those who rule often dominate and mistreat those under them – be it a corrupt regime mistreating citizens, or a section of the population, or a power-crazed boss exploiting his workers, control freaks appear everywhere in life and cause much suffering. Those in authority often forget what it is like to be on the other side of the situation.

Now and again, it would be helpful if authority figures followed the example of Jesus at the Last Supper, where the Master showed himself to be the servant. How would it be for instance if the police officer had the experience of being arrested, or if the judge were to find himself in the dock, if the teacher were to experience the lot of being the pupil – if the priest were to sit in the pew? Might such a role reversal lead to a more caring and sensitive exercise of authority?

Of course – the opposite also happens: Those in authority are not always understood by those under them – those of us in positions of responsibility often find ourselves being harshly and on occasion, unfairly judged. It is always easy to criticise our political leaders, our boss, our teachers, our parents – even, dare I say it, our parish priest?

In a Christian community we should be especially careful the way we handle each other. We may disagree with something, but we must take care to express ourselves charitably and respectfully. There is always more than one way of viewing a situation – and all of us have different gifts to offer the community. In a Christian community we all exercise authority in some way or another. We are responsible for one another. There is no room for a ‘them and us’ scenario. We are all brothers and sisters together, in the service of one Lord and Master. No individual or group should ever dominate the rest.

One of the ‘jargon words’ sometimes banded around in the Church is the word STEWARDSHIP. Stewardship means the best use of the talents the Lord has given us for his people. All of us have different gifts. We have a responsibility to develop our gifts in service to the Lord. What can I do best? What do you do best? Some people can care for prisoners with mercy, compassion and justice. Others can do that for the sick. Still others for the poor. Some are capable of teaching. Others of being parents to those orphaned by the circumstances of their lives. We all have many talents. They are given to us to serve others. We are called to develop these talents.

That is how we give back to the Lord a little of what he has given to us. That is stewardship.

The Lord understands our failures, our limitations, our fears, the times that we lack confidence in ourselves to do His work. He sees this, but He also sees so much more. He sees our potential. He sees the efforts we make to love him. He sees our determination to seek Him out in others and serve His Presence. None of us has the right to feel that we are not good enough to bring Christ to others.

So, it is not the Priest's chair, the bishop's throne, the judge's bench or the hot seats in 10 Downing Street or the White House that confer true authority. True authority, true power comes from God. And that power, that authority has been given to us by the great high priest, Jesus Christ, who reminds us in today's gospel that there are no ‘places of honour’ in the kingdom. He abolished the distance between the master and the servant. In his kingdom, the two become one.

With my prayers and best wishes,

Yours devotedly,

Fr Alban OSB.

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY – SECOND COLLECTION

This Sunday, **20th October**, parishes worldwide celebrate World Mission Sunday. By supporting Missio, the Pope's charity for world mission, we stand united as God's global family in prayer, solidarity, and action.

Please pray for missionaries and give what you can to this vital collection, bringing God's compassion, peace and justice to those in need. More information at [Missio](#).

OCTOBER - MONTH OF THE ROSARY

Please join us at St Luke's at 5.00pm every Saturday during October to pray the Rosary together.

GARDEN TIDY-UP AT ST BERNADETTE'S

There is an autumn gardening session at St Bernadette's this Saturday, **19th October**, at 2:30pm. Please join for half an hour (or more!) if you can. Refreshments will be provided.

PARISH CHARITY SELECTION

Don't forget to vote for the new parish charity using the boxes at the back of our parish churches. Please only one voting slip per parishioner.

OPPOSING ASSISTED SUICIDE

A private members' bill on assisted suicide was introduced to the House of Commons last Wednesday. Listen [here](#) to Cardinal Vincent Nichols explaining why it's so important to inform ourselves about assisted suicide, to be fully engaged in the debate and to write to our MPs to oppose assisted suicide being rushed into law. Click [here](#) to contact your MP via the 'Right to Life' website.

Dr Dominic Whitehouse, a palliative care consultant, will be speaking on Tuesday **29th October** 7.30pm-9pm, at the Novotel Reading Centre, RG1 1DP, to explain why changing the law would be harmful to doctors, patients and society. Register at www.spuc.org.uk/assisted-suicide-lectures or contact spucreading@gmail.com.

'HEAL THE SICK' MINI-RETREAT

On Saturday **26th October** there is an opportunity to participate in a free mini-retreat for spiritual renewal. ADoRE will explore how we can have the confidence to realise that Jesus has chosen us to pray for healing, in God's will. Guest speaker is Joe Livingston, who will speak on "Heal the Sick – Ministering in the Charisms of the Holy Spirit".

Takes place via Zoom from 10.00am to 1.00pm with Mass, Adoration, prophetic reflection, praise, testimony, inspiring talk and prayer. Advance registration is required. You can find more information and register [here](#).