



# PARISH OF WOOLHAMPTON

*Diocese of Portsmouth - Served by the Benedictine Monks of Douai Abbey*

[www.douaiparish.org.uk](http://www.douaiparish.org.uk)

*Douai Abbey and St Mary's, RG7 5TQ*

*St Bernadette's, Pangbourne RG8 7JL St Luke's, Theale RG7 5AS*

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## 9 FEBRUARY 2025

### 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME– YEAR C

Isaiah 6:1-8

*Here I am, send me.*

Psalms 137 Response

*Before the angels I will bless you, O Lord.*

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

*I preach what they preach, and this is what you all believed.*

Luke 5:1-11

*They left everything and followed him.*

### THIS WEEK

**Saturday 8 February**

**St Luke's**

**5.30pm**

**Sunday 9 February**

**St Bernadette's**

**9.45am**

*(Mass Intention: People of the Parish)*

**Abbey Church**

**10.30am**

*(Mass Intention: Roy Haslam, RIP)*

**Mon 10 – Sat 15 Feb**

**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 · Theodora Fernandez · Kevin McCormack · Marigold Norman · Babs O'Sullivan · 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,

Last weekend, our Confirmation candidates were on retreat at St. Cassian's Centre in Kintbury. Many thanks to the team at St Cassian's, as well as to Fr Gabriel who celebrated Mass for the candidates at St Cassian's and to Anne-Marie McBrien, Lucy Gallagher and Marc Servais who accompanied them. Please pray for all our *confirmandi* and their catechists as they prepare for the celebration of the sacrament in May.

In today's first reading we hear these stirring words: *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory,*

Holy. Perhaps, like me you instinctively cringe whenever that word is mentioned. Monks are especially wary of that word, following what St Benedict tells us in his Rule: Do not aspire to be called holy before you really are, but first be holy that you may more truly be called so. (*Rule of St Benedict* 4:62)

Many of us perhaps associate the word 'holy' with some kind of grimness. We think "holy" people are those who look as if they have been steeped in vinegar or soaked in embalming fluid. Yet the fact remains that each one of us is called to holiness. What does that mean?

It means that each of us is invited to deepen our awareness of the presence of the Triune God within us: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, in the seemingly mundane reality of our everyday lives, a relationship that is both personal and communal. We are called together, as God's people. In the words of Pope Francis, "growth in holiness is a journey in a community, side by side with others."

What does Isaiah's vision mean for us, here and now? Isaiah is very specific about the timing of his vision of the thrice holy God: "in the year that King Uzziah died." The reference to the timing anchors the vision in Isaiah's own life history. It was for him a defining moment. So often, encounters with God are interwoven with the events in our lives. Perhaps it's only with hindsight that we realise God was powerfully present to us at a particular moment – perhaps at a birth, a marriage, a death or some other significant milestone in our lives.

Some of us may have been fortunate to have had powerful experiences of God's presence – in my own life I can think of two early ones which had significant consequences for my later life. But that's another story.

Our passage from Isaiah ends with the words 'Here I am! send me!'"

"Here I am!, send me!" often is the first response of someone who senses a call from God, but once it becomes clear what God might have in store for them, "Choose somebody else" may be their response.

In a way, Isaiah's story, Isaiah's experience, happens to us all. Not necessarily in a dramatic and overwhelming way as it did for him, but usually in a quiet and ordinary way – not with a live coal wielded by a seraph, (thank goodness!) but in the ordinary experiences of life's ups and downs, frustrations and anxieties, disappointments and hassles.

'Who, me? I'm nothing special' we might respond when we are faced with a new challenge, either a promotion at work, or being asked to take on a new role or ministry within our church or local community. Yet the wonderful thing is that despite what we feel, God will provide what we need, he graciously rewards us for our years of faithful attendance at worship, for our attempts to live good Christian lives, for our acts of kindness and generosity to others. God will help us to bear fruit.

Today, may we all have the courage to make those words of Isaiah our own: 'Here I am. Send me!'

With prayers and best wishes,

Yours devotedly,

*Father Alban OSB*

## **YOUNG DISCIPLES GROUP**

This Sunday, **9 February**, 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!

## **FLOOR MAINTENANCE**

The floor at St Bernadette's Church has just been treated and should last ten years before needing another treatment. To help cover the cost of this much-needed work, there will be a second collection at St Bernadette's this Sunday, **9 February**. You can donate online [here](#). Your generosity and support are crucial to help us maintain the beauty and safety of our beloved church.

## **RAINBOW TRUST – OUR PARISH CHARITY**

In our parish churches this weekend Graham Hodge will explain the work of the Rainbow Trust, our parish charity, and how together we can help.

In England, there are over 86,000 children with life-threatening conditions. Rainbow Trust supports families who face the possibility of loss and daily struggles. See their website [www.rainbowtrust.org.uk](http://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk) for more information.

## **READY FOR A COFFEE BREAK?**

We would love to see you at St Bernadette's this Wednesday, **12 February**, 10.30am to 12pm, for a cuppa and chance to catch up together. A perfect midweek break!

## **SPRING FLOWER SUNDAY**

With crocuses, snowdrops and primroses appearing, Spring must be just around the corner. St Nicholas Church, Sulham, RG8 8EG, is inviting visitors to see the lovely flowers in the churchyard and enjoy tea and cake in the church on Sunday **16 February**, 2pm to 4pm. Everyone is welcome.

## **PILGRIMS OF HOPE MINI-RETREAT**

ADoRE spiritual mini-retreat takes place online on Saturday **22 February**, 10am to 1pm. Includes Mass, adoration, praise, prophecy and prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Guest speaker is Gerry Penfold, Leader of Called and Gifted UK, who will speak on 'The Holy Spirit Is Our Guide'. Please register for the free Zoom meeting in advance [here](#). More information at [www.altonrenewal.com](http://www.altonrenewal.com).

## **HEADTEACHER VACANCY**

St Paul's Catholic Primary, Tilehurst, is a vibrant and inclusive Catholic primary school seeking a Headteacher. For more information see the poster in the back of our churches For an application pack, please visit the [school website](#). Application closing date is Thursday **6 March**.

## **CERTIFICATE IN CATECHESIS**

Light of Truth are offering a two-year Certificate in Catechesis to equip parish catechists, parents, and grandparents to transmit the Catholic faith to others. Read the brochure [here](#). You can [apply now](#) to begin your studies in September 2025.