



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

16 FEBRUARY 2025

6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME– YEAR C

Jeremiah 17:5-8

Cursed is the man who trusts in man; blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord.

Psalms 39 Response

Blessed the man who has placed his trust in the Lord.

1 Cor 15:12, 16-20

If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile.

Luke 6:17, 20-26

Blessed are you who are poor. Woe to you who are rich.

THIS WEEK

Saturday 15 February

St Luke's

5.30pm

(Mass Intention: People of the Parish)

Sunday 16 February

St Bernadette's

9.45am

Abbey Church

10.30am

Mon 17 – Sat 18 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,

These days, many of us are very dependent on our mobile phones. We are reluctant to switch them off or put them on silent just in case we miss something. And yet, a mobile phone can ring in the most inappropriate places such as a church, a theatre or cinema. When a phone does ring at such a moment, one's instant reaction is of indignant disapproval at someone's thoughtlessness. Then, like a wave of nausea, the awful truth sweeps over us: it's actually our 'phone! This, incidentally, was my own experience some years ago in the middle of Mass in a school!

Why is it that certain messages just don't sink in? Why can't we engage with '*Please turn off your 'phone*'? Because we feel intuitively, our default position, is that it's intended for other people.

So what about other messages? What about those we hear in today's Gospel, such as: *Blessed are the poor; woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.... woe to you who laugh now.* To whom are they directed? Truthfully, most of us would assume, someone else. Most of us feel this message is not directed at me, doesn't involve me. It's easier to do that because St Matthew's version of this same sermon, the version we are more familiar with, spiritualises Jesus' warnings: *Blessed are the poor in spirit; blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness.* There is a reassuring abstractness about that; we add it to the list of spiritual aims we that we keep somewhere down at the bottom of our religious handbag. Useful to mention in confession. But not to lose sleep over.

But here, in St Luke's version of the sermon on the mount, there is no guilt-absolving abstraction. It's brutal, bodily: *Blessed are the poor. Blessed are the hungry. Woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.* Our first thought is that

Jesus is speaking these words to those on the extremes: the very rich, and the very poor. And since most of us would consider ourselves neither very rich nor very poor, but somewhere in the middle, the message cannot be intended for us. It's a sermon for others; not me.

And yet, the Gospel wasn't written for other people. It was written for us, for me. Jesus often points out that things we think are all about other people, actually involve us. He spent much of his time debunking the Pharisees - who naturally assumed any message of repentance, any call to change and renew, referred to other people: It never occurred to them to question their own religious practice or motivation.

Blessed are the poor; woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation... I don't think our Lord is necessarily criticising our bulging wallets and stupendous bank balances – most of us don't have those things – as much as our supposition that we have done all that needs to be done, that our way of life is not lived at the expense of anyone else, that we are self-contained.

It's not good enough to be content. Jesus makes us uncomfortable about the way our faith impacts our lives. He turns usual standards upon their head; God has more compassion for those who are sleeping on the streets than those who are in church this morning. God gives more blessings to those who are struggling with benefit claims than to those who put food on the family table. God dislikes your partying when it means you have no thought for the misery of those around you.

Anyone who thought that Jesus was simply meek and mild is in for a shock. Anyone who thinks that faith in Him is simply about saying prayers and going to Mass is not heeding the warnings. Faith, especially Catholic faith, has to get involved, make a difference be political, it has to intervene in public life, it has to intervene in my life. Redemption does not just spread like 'flu, you sort of catch it, by osmosis. It has to be made real, and that can only happen if *we* make it real, by recognising the gospel message challenging us, changing us. Wake up, break into your usual pattern of behaviour - it's your 'phone that is ringing.

With prayers and best wishes,
Yours devotedly,
Father Alban OSB

THANK YOU!

A big thank-you to all who gave so generously to the special floor treatment collection at St Bernadette's. The cash amount is still to be counted, but card/online donations came to £540. If you missed the opportunity to donate, you can still do so [online here](#).

PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES

Our neighbouring parish of St Joseph's, Newbury, have organised a pilgrimage to Lourdes from **30 June – 4 July** and invite you to join them. Cost is £839 includes flights, transfers, full board, and daily programme of events. (£39 per night single supplement; 10€ Sanctuary supplement). Please contact Anne Paice for further information: annepaice62@yahoo.co.uk.

A FURTHER HEADTEACHER VACANCY

Along with the vacancy for Headteacher at [St Paul's](#) Catholic Primary School, Tilehurst advertised last week, there is also a vacancy for a Headteacher at St Anne's Catholic Primary School, Basingstoke. Closing date **10 March**. More information can be found [here](#).

HOW TO OBTAIN THE JUBILEE INDULGENCE

During the Jubilee Year 2025, the Holy Father encourages us to receive an 'indulgence.' But what exactly is an indulgence? Find a clear and simple explanation [here](#).

OPPOSING ASSISTED SUICIDE

The Catholic Union is holding a webinar on the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill on Thursday **3 April**. Chaired by Baroness Hollins, it will give members and supporters the chance to unpick the Bill guided by experts. Register to attend [here](#).

The Third Reading will take place on 25 April and it is possible that even MPs who voted in favour of the Bill at Second Reading may change their mind. Right to Life have highlighted serious concerns with the handling of the Bill, find out more [here](#).

HAVE YOU MISLAID A SIM CARD?

A SIM card was found amongst St. Bernadette's Sunday collection last week. If you think it belongs to you, please contact the Parish Office.

WORLD YOUTH DAY PILGRIMAGE

Join Bishop Philip and a group of young people from across the diocese aged 17+ on this pilgrimage to Rome and unite with thousands of young people from across the world (see posters at the back of church).

Takes place **28 July - 4 August**, total price £1,350. For more information and booking please contact youth@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or call 07780 221 686.

DOUAI ABBEY PASTORAL PROGRAMME

Take a look at the upcoming [Spring/Summer programme](#) of workshops and reflection days, offering the opportunity for spiritual and personal development.