

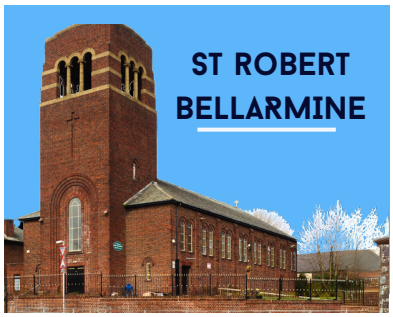
Parish of St Josephine Bakhita





PARISH PRIEST

Very Rev Canon
Mark B Madden
KCHS FRSA



As we enter the Fifth Sunday of Lent, the Church brings us to one of the most moving moments in the Gospel: the raising of Lazarus. It is a story full of grief, friendship, and, ultimately, hope.

What is striking is that Jesus does not rush in to fix things. He arrives after Lazarus has died. Martha meets him with a mixture of faith and disappointment: "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." It is a very human response — the kind of prayer we may recognise in our own lives when things do not turn out as we hoped.

And yet, into that moment, Jesus speaks words that change everything: "I am the resurrection and the life." Not just in the future, not just at the end of time — but now. Even in the midst of loss, confusion, and darkness, he is present as life itself.

Before he raises Lazarus, Jesus weeps. That detail matters. God is not distant from our suffering. He stands with us in it. He shares it. And then he calls Lazarus out of the tomb.
Lent invites us to hear that same call. Each of us has places in our lives that can feel closed off, buried, or lifeless — habits, hurts, fears, or struggles in faith. And Christ speaks into those places: "Come out."

As we move closer to Holy Week, this Gospel reminds us that Easter is not just something we remember. It is something God wants to do in us — bringing life where we thought there was none, and hope where we thought all was lost.

Fr Mark

What in my life feels 'closed off' or buried — and am I willing to let Christ call it back to life?

PLEASE OFFER YOUR PRAYERS FOR THOSE PARISHIONERS WHO ARE CURRENTLY ILL



Mary Spofforth
Michael Lundon
Margaret Spencer
Peter Gibbons

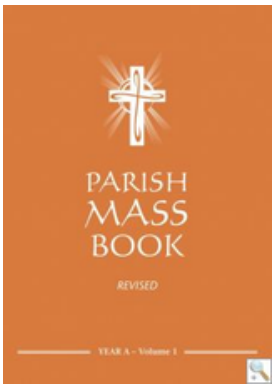
POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR MARCH



For disarmament and peace

Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.
Lord in your mercy...

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT



Readings for Mass today can be found on Page 170 of the Parish Mass Book

SANCTUARY LAMP



We are running a bit low on dedications for the Sanctuary Lamp at both Churches. If you would like to sponsor the lamp for a week please just write the dedication on a piece of paper and pass to the Parish Office or place in the collection bags with £5 offering. Thank You.

CHANGE TO MASS TIMES

Please note that Mass on Thursday will be at St Robert Bellarmine. Mass on Friday is a Funeral Mass for Bernard Dixon and will be at 10am at English Martyrs

What in my life feels 'closed off' or buried — and am I willing to let Christ call it back to life?

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Each Friday in Lent, we walk with Jesus on the road to Calvary. The Stations of the Cross invite us not simply to remember what happened long ago, but to stand close to the Lord in His suffering love. At every fall, every encounter, every moment of pain, we see how far God is willing to go for us.

The Stations teach us that we are never alone in our own crosses. Christ has walked this path before us. When we pray the Stations, we place our struggles, our families, our parish, and our world into His wounded hands. Lent gives us this quiet space to slow down, to reflect, and to let His sacrifice shape our hearts.

Stations are at English Martyrs on Sunday at 4pm.
There will be no stations at St Robert's this week.

CONTINUING ALONG THE PATH OF SYNODALITY

Pope Leo has invited us to continue to embrace the journey of synodality recognising that 'our relationships do not respond to the logic of power but to that of love.' As we journey through Eastertime towards the great feast of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost we have an opportunity to reflect on the document that came from the final session of the Synod on Synodality called by Pope Francis that Pope Leo is now urging us to embrace at every level in the life of the Church.

Tuesday evenings 21, 28 April, 5, 12, 19 May, 7pm to 8.30pm
To join the zoom meeting:
Meeting ID: 899 8355 5285
Passcode: 981267

ROMERO ROSARY AND MASS
March 24th 2026 4:15PM (Mass at 5:00PM)

The Justice & Peace Commission invites all to gather in prayer and reflection on the Feast of St Oscar Romero for a Romero-inspired rosary for justice and peace! Mass will follow at 5pm.

Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King, Liverpool Mount Pleasant L3 5TQ

What in my life feels 'closed off' or buried — and am I willing to let Christ call it back to life?

If you are concerned about the safety of a child or vulnerable adult and feel they are in immediate danger, please call the police. If you wish to report any non-urgent concerns, please contact your local social services or our safeguarding team direct or Mark Robson 0151 522 1013 / 07585761965
Claire Newton 0151 522 1043 / 07384643237 or safeguarding@rcaol.org.uk

SVP and CAFOD WORK EXPERIENCE

The St Vincent de Paul Society and CAFOD are working together to offer a week of free residential work experience for 20 young adults in England and Wales. The experience will run from 21st – 26th June in London. Candidates must be aged 18-25 years old, but priority will be given to those in their first or second year at university. Apply here. Applications close on the 6th April. For any queries, please contact KeziaH@svp.org.uk

PENTECOST CELEBRATIONS/ 2 CATHEDRALS SERVICE

Sunday 24 May. 3.00 pm starting at the Metropolitan Cathedral.

This year, the stalls will focus on the Manifesto for Hope launched last November. CTMR Church Leaders have also extended an invitation to our Civic Leaders.

This year Pentecost falls on the May bank holiday weekend.



CELEBRATING ST GERARD, THE MOTHERS' SAINT -
Bishop Eton, Saturday 25th April 2026

April 6th 2026 marks the 300th anniversary of the birth of St Gerard Majella C.Ss.R., patron saint of a good confession and of mothers. To mark the occasion, Bishop Eton will be hosting a special day of events, including Mass with the Archbishop, Blessing services, Exposition and a Taizé service.

The church will be open all day and a team of Redemptorists and parishioners will be available to ensure that all those who wish may reverence the relic of St Gerard and receive medals and prayer cards. The first copy of the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour to leave Rome will be on display.

Light refreshments, crafts for children and young people, and information on St Gerard will be available in the parish hall.

We look forward to welcoming you and your families for this very special occasion
The full schedule and information on St Gerard can be found by visiting www.bishopeton.org.uk/a-day-in-honour-of-st-gerard.html.

LENTEN ALMS



During Lent the Church invites us to grow closer to God through prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Almsgiving reminds us to care for those who are most in need.
A Lenten Alms collection will be available in the parish throughout the season. Any donations received will go towards supporting charitable work and helping those who are struggling.

Thank you, as always, for your generosity and kindness.

COFFEE MORNING
Join us after mass at St Robert's on Sunday mornings for a cup of tea, coffee and a biscuit in the George Inch Hall. All are welcome.



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HOLY WEEK 2026

Palm Sunday

Sunday 29 March	9.30 am Mass	English Martyrs
	11.15 am Mass	St Robert Bellarmine

Please note the slightly later time at St Robert Bellarmine

Holy Monday

Monday 30 March	10:00 am Mass	English Martyrs

Holy Tuesday

Tuesday 31 March	10:00 am Mass	St Robert Bellarmine

Holy Wednesday

Wednesday 1 April	7:30 pm Mass of Chrism	Metropolitan Cathedral

Holy Thursday

Thursday 2 April	7:00 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper	English Martyrs

Good Friday

Friday 2 April	3.00 pm Solemn Celebration of the Passion of the Lord	St Robert Bellarmine

Holy Saturday

Saturday 3 April	8.30 pm The Easter Vigil and the First Mass of Easter	English Martyrs

Easter Day

Sunday 4 April	9.30 am Easter Mass	English Martyrs
	11.00 am Easter	St Robert Bellarmine



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EASTER BINGO AND RAFFLE



Easter Bingo will take place on
Wednesday 25 March in English Martyrs Parish Hall.
Doors open at 6.30pm for 'eyes down' at 7pm.
Tickets for bingo and raffle on sale at back of church. Last year was a sell out so get your tickets asap! Cost for both is just £1

Entry to Bingo will be ticket only

HELP US TO SHAPE A VISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CHURCH

We are currently reviewing youth ministry across our archdiocese, and we need your insight, enthusiasm, and ideas to help us live out the pastoral plan and become a Church where young people and young adults flourish.

Everyone is welcome and has a valued voice. Whether you are young or old, lay or ordained, a parent, carer or grandparent, have experience of working with young people or not. If you bring creativity, faith, enthusiasm, or simply a desire to help guide and shape the future of your local Church, then please join us and share your thoughts.

We especially want to hear from young people.
If you are in Year Seven or above, please come along- **YOUR CHURCH NEEDS YOU!**
Come along to ONE of our open meeting on **TUESDAY 21ST APRIL 7 - 9.30pm St Monica's Fernhill Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 9GA**

For more information, contact Sarah McGeehan on s.mcgeehan@rcaol.org.uk or 07415099048.

SOLEMN EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
April 11th 2026 9:00AM - 9:00PM

All are welcome as St John the Evangelist holds their annual Solemn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament will be out from 9-9, with Holy Mass celebrated at 6.30pm and Holy Hour with Benediction. at 8pm.

St John the Evangelist, Burscough, Chapel Lane, Lathom ,L40 7RA

FEAST OF THE WEEK

The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord



The Annunciation is a quiet moment that changes everything. There are no crowds, no miracles, no great signs in the sky — just a young woman, a simple home, and a message from God. And yet, in that hidden moment, the whole of salvation begins to unfold. Appropriate that this is the last feast to be celebrated this side of Easter.

Mary is troubled at the angel's greeting. She does not immediately understand what is being asked of her. There is uncertainty, even fear. But what stands out is her openness. She listens. She reflects.
She asks a question — not out of disbelief, but out of a desire to understand how God is at work in her life.

And then she gives her answer: "Let it be done to me according to your word."
It is one of the most powerful sentences ever spoken. God does not force his way into the world; he waits for a human "yes." Through Mary's consent, Christ takes flesh, and God steps into our history in a new and definitive way.

The Annunciation reminds us that God often comes to us not in dramatic or overwhelming ways, but in the ordinary moments of our lives — in a quiet prompting, a word of Scripture, a call to serve, a moment of decision. Like Mary, we may not see the full picture. We may feel uncertain or unprepared.

But faith is not about having all the answers. It is about trust. And each day, in our own small way, we are invited to echo Mary's response — to say yes to God, and to allow Christ to take shape in us.

LENT TALKS AT ST FRANCIS XAVIER

Join us for weekly sessions each Monday during Lent for a talk from Fr Chris McCoy on Lent. We will be discussing the meaning of Lent, how to make sense of Holy Week, and the Resurrection. The final session, "Standing up. What about the Resurrection", will be on Monday 23 March at 7-8pm.

What in my life feels 'closed off' or buried — and am I willing to let Christ call it back to life?

A PRACTICAL WAY TO LIVE THE FIFTH WEEK OF ractical Way to Live the Fifth Week of Lent

The Fifth Week of Lent marks a turning point. Churches loom bare without crucifixes and statues, everything looks bare and solemn. It takes us right to the edge of the tomb with Lazarus. It's less about "trying harder" now... and more about letting Christ come into the places we've closed off.

1. Name what feels "buried"
Jesus stands before a tomb this week. Gently ask yourself: What in me feels shut down, stuck, or lifeless? A habit, a hurt, a relationship, even a part of your faith. Don't fix it. Just name it honestly before the Lord.

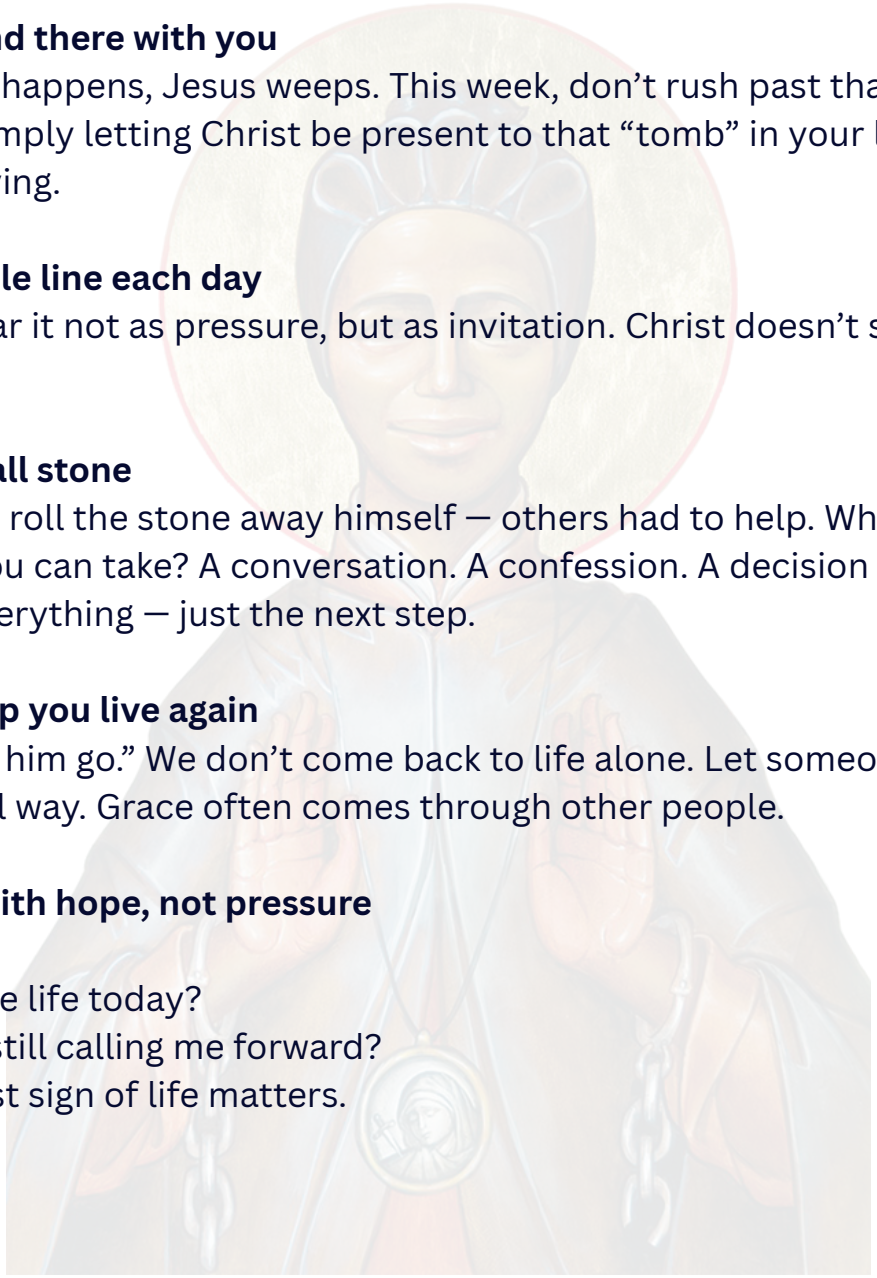
2. Let Jesus stand there with you
Before anything happens, Jesus weeps. This week, don't rush past that. Spend a few quiet minutes simply letting Christ be present to that "tomb" in your life — not solving, just staying.

3. Pray one simple line each day
"Come out." Hear it not as pressure, but as invitation. Christ doesn't shout in anger — he calls in love.

4. Move one small stone
Lazarus couldn't roll the stone away himself — others had to help. What's one small, practical step you can take? A conversation. A confession. A decision you've been avoiding. Not everything — just the next step.

5. Let others help you live again
"Unbind him, let him go." We don't come back to life alone. Let someone in this week — even in a small way. Grace often comes through other people.

6. End the day with hope, not pressure
Ask:
Where did I sense life today?
Where is Christ still calling me forward?
Even the smallest sign of life matters.



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MISSIONARIES OF CHARITY: CARRYING OF THE CROSS - SATURDAY 28 MARCH

The annual Carrying of the Cross will take place on Saturday 28 March 2026 at 2PM. Led by Fr Peter Ross of St Bede's Parish, Widnes, we will begin from Church Street, passing through Bold Street and finishing at St Luke's Church (bombed out church), and will be followed by a short service.
Please join us from 1:45pm at the junction of Church Street and Lord Street, Liverpool for a 2pm prompt start.
You are very welcome to join. We also need stewards – if you would like to steward, please contact Jim Ross on email: jimmy.ross7@gmail.com

CAFOD BIG LENT WALK

CAFOD are again running their 'Big Lent Walk' challenge to walk 200KM in 40 days to raise funds for life-saving water projects.

You can walk alone or with a group of friends or why not organise a group of parishioners?

Sign up online at CAFOD.org.uk

PILGRIMAGE THROUGH LENT

The Irenaeus Centre would like to invite you to a series of Lenten Evenings held on Tuesdays at 7pm on the following dates: 24 March.

EASTER RAFFLE

St Robert's are holding an Easter Raffle and tickets will be on sale at the back of church this weekend.



CONFIRMATION REGISTRATION IS OPEN

We encourage all young people who wish to be confirmed next year to visit the Liverpool Called website with their parents/guardians.

The details you provide the online form will be shared with the Dean of the area of which you have applied, your local parish, and the Diocesan administration team. It may be shared with other parties associated with Diocesan sacramental preparation and relevant and appropriate Diocesan bodies and authorities.

Your local parish will be in touch after registration period ends on the 13 February (you will not be contacted beforehand) with details about meetings in your local area. You will likely be contacted after Easter. Please do not worry if you are not contacted immediately. If you have any queries, please contact your own parish priest.

The information you provide will be held for the sacramental year (which ends on the day new application forms go online for the succeeding sacramental preparation year) and your contact information may be used to contact you by email, text, letter or phone. For more information on how your data may be used and our retention policy please see https://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk/privacy

ST ROBERT'S OVER 50's CLUB

The Over 50's Club meet in St Robert's parish centre on Thursday afternoons between 1.00 and 3.00pm. and is open to all.
Why not pop along and join in the fun - tea and coffee are available and, for a small charge, there is a raffle and a couple of games of Bingo for you to enjoy.
Regular members are asked to make a payment of £1.50 per week

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Masses and Services for the coming week

DATE	English Martyrs	St Robert Bellarmine
Sunday 22nd March	**9.30am** People of the Parish	**11.00am** Moira Hanton
Sanctuary Lamp	**Terry Ryan**	**Fr Barry McAllister**
Monday 23rd March	**10.00am** Terry Ryan	
Tuesday 24th March		**10.00am** Pauline Morley
Wednesday 25th March	**NO MASS**	**NO MASS**
Thursday 26th March		**10.00am** Angela Buckley
Friday 27th March	**10.00am** Funeral Mass Bernard Dixon	
Saturday 28th March	**NO MASS**	**NO MASS**
Sunday 29th March	**9.30am** Maureen Lynch	**11.15am** People of the Parish

English Martyrs Office 0151 928 3471 englishmartyrs@rcaol.org.uk
School Lane, Litherland,L21 7LX Office hours Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9.30am - 2.30pm
St Robert Bellarmine Office 0151 922 1352 strobert@rcaol.org.uk
Orrell Road, Bootle, L20 6DZ Office hours Tues, Wed, Fri 9.30am - 1.30pm

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