

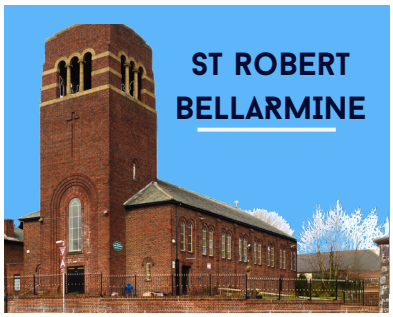
Parish of St Josephine Bakhita





PARISH PRIEST

Very Rev Canon
Mark B Madden
KCHS FRSA



On the First Sunday of Lent, we are taken into the wilderness with Jesus. Before He begins His public ministry, before the miracles and the crowds, He faces temptation.

The desert is not just a place on a map. It is the place of hunger, loneliness, and testing. After forty days of fasting, Jesus is tempted in three familiar ways: to turn stones into bread, to grasp power and glory, and to test God's protection. In other words, He is tempted to put Himself first, to take shortcuts, and to avoid the slow path of trust.

The temptations are subtle. Bread is not wrong. Authority is not wrong. Trusting God is not wrong. But each suggestion invites Jesus to step outside the Father's will — to choose control instead of obedience.

Lent places us in that same wilderness. We may not hear dramatic voices, but we know the quiet pull to comfort, recognition, or self-reliance. We know how easy it is to justify small compromises. The Gospel reminds us that temptation often sounds reasonable.

Jesus answers each temptation with Scripture. He anchors Himself in the Word of God. He chooses trust over spectacle, service over dominance, faithfulness over convenience.

That is our Lenten invitation. Not simply to give something up, but to learn again how to trust. To feed on God's Word. To resist the urge to live on our own terms.

The desert is not a place of defeat. It is where faith is strengthened. And when Lent is lived well, it leads us — step by step — towards the joy of Easter.

Fr Mark

Where in my life right now is God inviting me to choose trust over control?

PLEASE OFFER YOUR PRAYERS FOR THOSE PARISHIONERS WHO ARE CURRENTLY ILL



Mary Spofforth
Michael Lundon
Margaret Spencer
Peter Gibbons

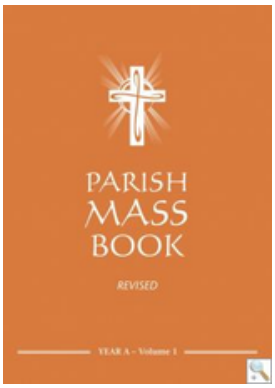
POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR FEBRUARY



For children with incurable diseases

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.
Lord in your mercy...

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



Readings for Mass today can be found on Page 151 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.

Where in my life right now is God inviting me to choose trust over control?

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.

The Stations of the Cross will be prayed each Friday after the 10:00am Mass at St Robert Bellarmine and on Sundays at 4:00pm at English Martyrs.

There will be some occasions when Fr Mark is unavailable. If you would be willing to lead the Stations on one of those days, please give your name to the Parish Office.

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 February and 3, 10, 17, 24 March.

CAFOD Lent Appeal – Family Fast Day collection

This Lent, live out the Gospel call to love your neighbour. By fasting and giving what you save, you join in Christ's compassion and help another family put food on the table. Your donation can help families around the world grow food in difficult conditions – such as on flood-resistant floating gardens or using solar-powered water pumps in times of drought.

Collect a CAFOD envelope to bless others with your support, donate online at cafod.org.uk/envelope or call 0303 303 3030. Text CAFODLENT to 70085 to donate £10.

Where in my life right now is God inviting me to choose trust over control?

EUCHARISTIC MINISTRY TRAINING DAYS

The Irenaeus Centre will be leading a Eucharistic ministry training day on 14 March 2026. Speak to Fr Mark if you are interested and we can get you registered for the training for this important ministry

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

NATIONAL NOVENA TO ST JOSEPH

This annual event will take place from 10-18 March at St Joseph's Church in Maidenhead. Every year, the Mill Hill Missionaries prepare for the Feast of St Joseph, their Society Patron, with a special Novena of Masses and prayers.

You can be part of the Novena by sending your petitions and requesting a Novena booklet. Please write to the Novena Director at 6 Colby Gardens, Maidenhead, SL6 7GZ, or email novenamhm@gmail.com

You can also donate by picking up a 'Red Box' and fill that with all your loose change. Every little helps!



Speak to either office if you would like a box

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE

Are you planning to get married in a Catholic church? Are you looking for some time out from the busy wedding planning, providing you and your partner with an opportunity to focus on your relationship and to learn more about each other?

The Liverpool Archdiocese is now offering a marriage preparation course for engaged couples. The course will involve four sessions, meeting in group with other couples. To be led by trained lay facilitators, the course will help the couples develop skills which could facilitate good communication within their relationship and an understanding of unconditional love set within a Catholic faith.

The next course will be available in April 2026:
Date: 30 April, 7 May, 14 May, 21 May (all Thursdays)
Time: 6.30pm-8.30pm
Venue: St Agnes & St Aidan Church, Huyton, Liverpool, L36 5SQ

There is a fee of £50 per couple to help towards materials and other expenses. Please book online here at https://forms.office.com/e/hgy2JbUpy3?origin=lprLink For enquiries, please contact Moses Mui, Training Coordinator at m.mui@rcaol.org.uk

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"9th Bootle and Litherland, English Martyrs Brownies, currently have spaces for any girls aged between 7 and 10 who wish to join. They meet on a Thursday evening in the Parish Hall, School Lane 6.15pm to 7.45pm.
If you wish for your daughter to join, please register their name on the following website:



www.girlguiding.org.uk/information-for-parents/register-your-daughter.

If you have any queries or questions please email:engmartbrownies@outlook.com

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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.



‘COME AND SEE’

On 7th March, we welcome Ronan and Joanne Johnston to lead our ‘Come & See’ day at the Irenaeus Centre, Great Georges Road L22 1RD.

Faith has been a constant inspiration in Rónán’s life, leading him to co-found the Emmaus Christian music band and community. The band has released 15 albums of worship and contemporary Christian music, and Rónán has become an international conference speaker and teacher on praise and worship.

It all began for Rónán – also affectionately known as Rojo – growing up in a musical family in Cabinteely, Co. Dublin.
“It was all about music from an early age,” Rónán says. “I played piano from the age of six and started writing songs from the age of seven. Dad and granddad were both musical, but everyone in the house played and we would sing in the car – music was part of who we were.”

Rónán is married to Joanne, a session vocalist and primary school teacher. They have two children, Naoise and Siún, and they live in Co. Wicklow where Rónán has a music studio.

GUILD OF ST STEPHEN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2026

The Liverpool Archdiocesan Council of the Guild of St Stephen will doing their annual pilgrimage to Lourdes in October. It is open to everybody - prices start at £650 per person, and £750 for solo travellers. For more information, please contact Rose Curry 07932 729896

Catholic Family Retreat at Castlerigg Manor // March 27-29th // £160-230 per family- For the first time since Covid, Castlerigg Manor are bringing back their popular family retreats. There will be streams for different ages and fun activities for everybody including Mass in the evening and time to explore Keswick. For more info >> castleriggmanor.com >> events

May Half Term B&B Stays at Castlerigg Manor - In May half-term, Castlerigg Manor (Catholic retreat centre in Keswick, Cumbria) will once again be opening their doors for B&B stays. A great way for families, groups of friends, and individuals to get an affordable stay in Keswick. Mass will be provided on site. For more info >> castleriggmanor.com >> stay with us

Where in my life right now is God inviting me to choose trust over control?

FEAST OF THE WEEK

Blessed Josepha Girbes (1820-1893)



Josepha Naval Girbés was born at Algemes in the Archdiocese of Valencia, Spain, on December 11, 1820. As a very young woman she consecrated herself to the Lord by a perpetual vow of chastity. Josepha's life was simple. She stood out for her ardent love, and she made progress along the way of prayer and evangelical perfection, while dedicating herself generously to apostolic works in her parish community. In her own home she opened a school where she taught needlework, prayer, and the evangelical virtues. She formed many young girls and women and shared with them her wisdom and spiritual understanding. She was a member of the Third Order Secular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and Saint Teresa of Jesus, and had a special love for the Virgin Mother of God. Her holy death took place on February 24, 1893. She is buried in her parish church of Saint James in her native city.

MARY'S MEALS – UNWANTED CURRENCY APPEAL

Thank you to everyone who donated their unwanted foreign currency. We have now sent off the first batch of coins and notes. The process takes approximately six weeks for the currency to be converted into the donation to provide meals for children in school.
We will be advised how much we have raised after the conversion.

The appeal is continuing so, if you are travelling abroad again this year, please hold on to that loose change and pass it in to the office when you return.

Mary's meals does amazing work in some of the world's poorest countries. Any small donation helps to provide food for the schoolchildren. You can donate at marysmeals.org.uk

IRENAEUS CENTRE

Irenaeus are again asking for help with donations. They are in desperate need of all personal cleansing products e.g. soaps, shampoo, women's' items, etc plus tinned and packet food and cereals. They are also asking for warm coats, hats, scarves and gents socks
The box for donations is still at the back of St Robert's if you can please help

Where in my life right now is God inviting me to choose trust over control?

FREE CHILDREN'S CHOIRS – OPEN TO ALL CHILDREN IN YEARS 2–8!

Exciting opportunities for young singers to join a Catholic children's choir in your area! Open to all children in school years 2 to 8, our choirs offer free musical training led by DBS-certified musicians from the Archdiocese of Liverpool.

Rehearsal Information:
• Knowsley Catholic Children's Choir - Wednesdays, 4–5pm
Space Centre, St Columba's Catholic Primary School, Hillside Road, Huyton, L36 8BL

• Widnes Catholic Children's Choir - Mondays, 4–5pm
St John Fisher Parish Centre, 55 Moorfield Rd, Widnes, WA8 3JA

• Liverpool Catholic Children's Choir (Central) – New from March 2026! - Mondays, 4:30–5:30pm
Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral, Mount Pleasant, Liverpool, L3 5TQ

• Liverpool Catholic Children's Choir (South) – New from March 2026! - Tuesdays, 5–6pm
St Mary's Church – Parish Hall, Church Rd, Liverpool, L25 5JF

Choir members will have the chance to perform locally and further afield, developing their musical skills while enjoying a fun, supportive environment.

Sign up here:

https://liverpoolmetrocathedral.us8.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=7578a4f8bc41ae198517aea33&id=34918afeaf

CENTRING PRAYER DAY - SATURDAY 21st MARCH

Led by Fr Richard Sloan, this day focuses of teaching and practice of this beautiful way of silent, simple, meditation prayer in the presence of God, lovingly active within you.
Saturday 21st March, 10am – 4pm in St Teresa's Church, Norris Green, L11 3BW including simple lunch.
No charge: places must be booked by contacting: st.teresasng@rcaol.org.uk

LENTEN PRACTICES

Lent has a very particular feel to it — and that is quite deliberate.

From Ash Wednesday, the Church gently changes her tone. The sanctuary looks simpler. The rubrics are clear; flowers disappear, and we won't see any until Easter, although some pink flowers are allowed on the 4th Sunday. The Gloria falls silent. Even the music becomes more restrained and can only be used if it includes people singing. It can feel a little stark at first — especially if we're used to colour and celebration — but this simplicity is not about gloom. It is about focus.

The absence of flowers is not because beauty doesn't matter. It is because we are creating space. Just as we might clear a room before beginning something important, the Church clears away what is decorative so that we can concentrate on what is essential: prayer, repentance, and renewal. When the flowers return at Easter, they will speak all the more powerfully of resurrection and joy.

You may also notice that the Gloria is not sung during Lent (except on certain feasts), and the word "Alleluia" disappears entirely from the liturgy until the Easter Vigil. Music remains an important part of our worship, but it is simpler and more reflective. The organ is used more sparingly. Silence is allowed to breathe.
All of this helps us enter more deeply into this sacred season.



Lent is not meant to be miserable. It is meant to be intentional. The Church, like a wise mother, adjusts the environment so that our hearts can adjust too.

Over these forty days, may the simplicity of our liturgy help us rediscover what truly matters — and prepare us to rejoice with full hearts when Easter dawns.

ARCHDIOCESAN YOUNG ADULT GROUP

The Archdiocesan Young Adult Group meet fortnightly at the Pauline Book Centre (Church Street, L1 3AY) in Liverpool City Centre. Anyone aged 18-35 is most welcome.

For enquiries, please contact Moses Mui at m.mui@rcaol.org.uk.

Where in my life right now is God inviting me to choose trust over control?

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 You will also find an article in this month's Catholic Pic

EASTER RAFFLE

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

Masses and Services for the coming week

DATE	English Martyrs	St Robert Bellarmine
Sunday 22nd February **Sanctuary Lamp**	**9.30am** People of the Parish **Bob Lambert & Nicola**	**11.00am** Mark Smith **Shauna O'Connor**
Monday 23rd February	**10.00am** Joseph Corrigan	
Tuesday 24th February		**11.30am** Funeral Mass Anne Hunter
Wednesday 25th February	NO MASS	NO MASS
Thursday 26th February	**10.00am** Peggy Molloy	
Friday 27th February		**10.00am** Thomas & Esther O'Shea
Saturday 28th February	**NO MASS**	**NO MASS**
Sunday 1st March	**9.30am** Michelle McMullen	**11.00am** 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

Where in my life right now is God inviting me to choose trust over control?