

# OUR COMMUNITY NEWS

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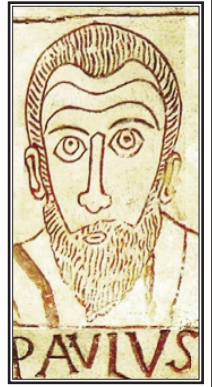
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## 21st June 2026 : "Day for Life" and "Happy Father's Day!"

Dear Friends,

Several themes for this fortnight. The country celebrates 'Fathers' Day'; the church asks us to celebrate 'Day for Life'; readings at mass tell us that we should not worry if we are persecuted for our belief in God - and then next week they offer us St Peter and St Paul as examples martyred for their belief in Christ.

My siblings and I are privileged to have had a wonderful father who encouraged all his children that they could be and do whatever they set their minds to and, although he is no longer with us in person, his spirit lives on through us in what we have achieved and in who we are today. When I walk past the rows of greeting cards and gift displays in the supermarket it is with mixed emotion, recognising the warm security our family knew growing up and the void that our Dad's passing left.

Not all children are as lucky as we were, and some only know the title 'father' as that of the person whose example is not one they would want to emulate and, sadly for a few, the perpetrator of their abuse. I especially think of those who have been abused when we offer God as "Our Father," as it must be very difficult for them to find any comfort in the name. I understand that Jesus gave God the title to explain to the followers of his day the other dimension of his existence, but I wonder at the contrast between the equality of human creation (Genesis 1:27), in the first chapter of the Bible, and the part our Christian faith has had in perpetuating male domination in society and scripture by continuing to use the title. I recall years back the Nottingham diocese being criticised by conservative Catholic press for using the title 'Creator God' in the prayer for their diocesan assembly, and the repercussions that followed for our then bishop.

There will always be those for whom any seeming deviation from Catholic norms and doctrine will cause offence, and their need to defend is witnessed amongst the comments on various social media sites promoting conservative Catholicity - very often with embarrassing venom. 'Life' issues are no exception.

On 'Day for Life' Sunday the emphasis does always seem to prioritise the subject of abortion: not that this isn't a most important area that needs challenging, but there are so many issues related to our understanding of a 'right to life.' (Over the page I give the story of a father I knew who had no 'rights' in his girlfriend's 'rights' over her body to abort his child). Abortion is such a challenging and sensitive subject and one I wrote about in an article on for the CWS book 'Visions and Vocations' - which I shall try and locate for our Watermead blog. All life is precious from conception to end of life and no one has the right to extinguish life whether by termination in the womb, euthanasia (assisted dying/suicide), war, etc. Yet, if we are to protect life, we also have to be sensitive in how we promote that ideal, recognising the limitations in education and the circumstances which dictate the actions of some of those facing unwanted pregnancies. We need to gain their trust by offering support and workable alternatives but, sadly, some 'life' activists have been too confrontational and judgemental. When a video of the growing child in the womb was first shared I remember, as a young mother, being overwhelmed by its creative beauty and wishing that similar images could be adopted by some of the more prominent pro-life organisations - instead of the aborted foetus photographs left on pews in our churches and posters on billboards.

So, on Sunday I pray for all affected by life issues around the world - those struggling with unwanted pregnancy, those helping decide what is best for dying loved ones and all those suffering the evils and consequences of war and conflict.

## SUNDAY READINGS REFERENCE

21st June 2026

### 12th Sunday of Year A (Prayer Week 4)

For a background to all the readings each Sunday see Watermead's **The Lord's Day** newsletter from <https://www.watermead-apostolate.co.uk/the-lords-day>

The bible references for this week are as follows:

1st reading: **Jeremiah 20:10-13**

2nd reading: **Romans 5:12-15**

Gospel according to **Matthew 10:26-33**

## WEEKDAY READINGS REFERENCE

12th Week of Year

Mon: 2 Kings 17:5-8,13-15,18 Matthew 7:1-5

Tue: 2 Kings 19:9-11,14-21,31-35,36 Matthew 7:6,12-14

Wed: **Isaiah 49:1-6 Acts 13:22-26 Luke 1:57-66,80**

Thu: 2 Kings 24:8-17 Matthew 7:21-29

Fri: 2 Kings 25:1-12 Matthew 8:1-4

Sat: Lamentations 2:2,10-14,18-19 Matthew 8:5-17

## NEXT SUNDAY READINGS REFERENCE

28th June 2026

### 13th Sunday of Year A (Prayer Week 1)

The bible references are as follows:

1st reading: **2 Kings 4:8-11,14-16**

2nd reading: **Romans 6:3-4,8-11**

Gospel according to **Matthew 10:37-42**

or the following (dependent on location)

### Feast St Peter & St Paul (Prayer Week 1)

1st reading: **Acts 12:1-11.**

2nd reading: **2 Timothy 4:6-8,17-18**

Gospel according to **Matthew 16:13-19**

## WEEKDAY READINGS REFERENCE

13th Week of Year

Mon: (See above for Ss Peter & Paul feastday readings)

Tue: Amos 3:1-8, 4:11-12 Matthew 8:23-27

Wed: Amos 5:14-15,21-24 Matthew 8:28-34

Thu: Amos 7:10-17 Matthew 9:1-8

Fri: Ephesians 2:19-22 John 20:24-29

Sat: Amos 9:11-15 Matthew 9:14-17

**Universalis - free resource** to obtain the daily readings at mass, Office of Readings and various other resources - [click here for England & Wales.](#)

## Focus on Saints & Feasts

Monday (22nd June)

St John Fisher

St Thomas More

Tuesday (23rd June)

St Etheldreda

Wednesday (24th June)

Birth of John the Baptist

Saturday (27th June)

St Cyril of Alexandria

St John Southworth



Monday (29th June)

St Peter and St Paul



Tuesday (30th June)

First Martyrs of the

Church of Rome



Friday (3rd July)

St Thomas the Apostle



Saturday (4th July)

St Elizabeth of Portugal



## "Music as Prayer"

### 'Song from the womb'

Anyone who came to the retreats we organised will remember the music meditations that concluded Fr John's talks. Attendees were given a hymn sheet, told the themes and people stories that inspired a hymn before being invited to listen and meditate on the music.

'Song from the Womb' had one of the most powerful impacts we witnessed, especially when used at retreats where Fr John's talks had just challenged 'life' issues. People who came to me afterwards would recount their own losses - including the pain that the former Catholic teaching of 'Limbo' caused to those women (and men) whose child had not had chance of baptism.

When the music came to me, as with all our hymns, it would give a physical clue as to its purpose and then once I had shared this with Fr John he would go to the scriptures for inspiration to write the lyrics. This melody was accompanied by the pain of my previous ectopic pregnancy, along with the awareness of a helpless situation a family I knew had found themselves - a baby fathered by their son was to be aborted by its mother and they could do nothing. I was witness to some of the pain and bitterness that destruction of life brought. When I composed this hymn I knew the music to be a cry from within me, a plea for life from my own unborn child on behalf of all unborn - and this was confirmed by many people's reactions over the years.

*'Ere he formed me in the womb  
the Lord knew me and called my name;  
and before I came to birth . . .  
God loved me.*

*O sing with me, stars of heaven, sing  
creation's song -  
holy, God's name.*

*'Ere he formed me in the womb . . .*

*God's forming and shaping me,  
I'm wonderfully made -  
holy, God's name.*

*'Ere he formed me in the womb . . .*

*I leap for joy in the womb,  
I recognise the Lord -  
holy, God's name.*

*'Ere he formed me in the womb . . .*

*I praise you, I honour you,  
my spirit glorifies -  
holy, your name.*

*'Ere he formed me in the womb . . .*

*O pray with me, all you peoples;  
marvels God has done -  
holy, God's name.*

*'Ere he formed me in the womb . . .*

*I cry to you, all creation:  
I am one with you . . .*

*God's Word made flesh.*

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Lyrics: John Daley IC, Music: Alison Kennedy

[Click here to listen to the original Watermead singers . . .](#)



[Click here to watch the video presentation . . .](#)



**A Warm Welcome**  
**EVERY FRIDAY 11.30 AM - 1.30 PM**  
at the Immaculate Conception Church Hall  
54 New Street, Oadby LE2 4LJ

All are welcome regardless of age, background or interests,  
to come and share warmth, company, activities, guest speakers.

## Prayer Box



*This week we especially remember in prayer*

Michael Jasper (RIP)

Helen, Pat, Anna, Claire, Patricia, Janet, Jennifer, Ann,  
Angie, Philomena, Sister Lelia, Anna, Oisín, Orla, Kate, Mary,  
John, Patrick, Catherine, Don, John, Matthew, Iain, Paul,  
Peter, Teresa, Pauline & Christine, Susan, Sylvia,  
Toni, Winefride, Joy

Kate and Gerry and all Madeleine McCann's family  
and for all families of missing children.

Those injured and affected by the train crash in Bedford;  
Those killed and injured in the South Philippines earthquake;  
World wars and conflicts in all continents of our planet.

Please email your reminders & additional names for prayers  
[watermead-community@outlook.com](mailto:watermead-community@outlook.com)

## CHURCH & WORLD NEWS

**SSPX Ordinations / US-Iran / Future Visits** Pope Leo XIV said that although he is considering a final appeal to the traditionalist Society of St Pius X, the choice to splinter from the Catholic Church falls on them. Speaking to journalists outside his residence in Castel Gandolfo on June 16, the pope was asked about his feelings regarding plans by the traditionalist society, commonly known as SSPX, to proceed with the consecration of new bishops without a papal mandate.

Visit the NCR website for article . . .

**'On Eagle's Wings' turns 50** By the mid-1970s, Fr. Michael Joncas was a 24-year-old from Minneapolis who had temporarily left the path to priesthood, uncertain about his vocation, immersed in church music, liturgy and the turbulence of America after Vietnam. Five decades later, the hymn he wrote during a moment of private grief, has become one of the most recognizable religious songs in the English-speaking world, crossing denominational boundaries and accompanying funerals, memorial services and moments of national mourning, from parish churches to presidential speeches . . .

Read the full background to the hymn 'On Eagles wings' . . .

**Adoption: Church of England apologises** The Church of England has apologised for its role in historical adoption practices, particularly in mother and baby homes. Mothers and adoptees who came into contact with these homes have described the profound and lasting impact of these experiences. Published alongside new research into these homes, the apology recognises the impact on people affected and sets out the Church's commitment to listening, learning and responding with honesty and compassion.

Read the full details on the C. of E. website . . .

**Joint declaration against use of AI in warfare**

The World Council of Churches is among the 226 signatories of a document calling on technology companies and governments to "cease supplying" artificial intelligence systems for use in the "military kill chain" and to "take all necessary measures" to prevent violations of international humanitarian law and human rights . . .

Read the full article on the Vatican website . . .

**Parents of Nigerian girl call for justice and Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict**

Leah Sharibu was abducted when she was just 14 years old in February 2018. Eight years later, she is still being held as a 'slave for life' by the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), after refusing to renounce her Christian faith as a precondition for release. Ms Sharibu is one among thousands of women and girls from vulnerable communities in northern and central Nigeria who have suffered abductions and sexual violence at the hands of violent extremists. . . .

Read the full article on the ICN website . . .

## Fr John's Archive Letters

Francis (of Daily Prayers) has an archive of Fr John's letters to the parish, dating back to 2016. If you would like to read them they are free to view - [Click here](#) for a direct link

## DATES FOR DIARY

### LOCAL EVENTS

**Summer BBQ at Divine Infant of Prague, Syston**  
**Date changed - to be advised**

For more information and timing for this fundraising event [click here](#) to see the parish newsletter

### Root and Branch Community Event

**The Tablet New Hall Festival : Faith in Action  
Justice, Peace & the Future of the Church**

**10-11 July 2026** at New Hall, Boreham House, Chelmsford  
Organised by The Tablet with many core members of R&B  
being speakers and workshop leaders - more details on R&B website

<https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org/>

The R&B ZOOM evenings are always good and informative and are provided **free of charge!** Do consider attending and supporting - and also finding out more about Root and Branch.

### UK Coach Day Trips with Orbit

The company through which we book our pilgrimages coaches.  
Click for Orbit's brochure with details or ring Megan on **01445 823171**

*"Bless all fathers*

*as they care for their families.  
Give them strength and wisdom,  
tenderness and patience."*

## Watermead

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## ➔ Pilgrimages for 2026 ➔

### ROME/ASSISI

**21-28 NOVEMBER 2026**

**(4 nights in Rome and 3 nights in Assisi)**

**All places now filled**

We can ask for more rooms but because two hotels are  
hosting us, it may not be possible to link the two.

Contact Alison for details on 0116 2207880

For more general information on pilgrimages please do visit our pilgrimage  
page and read the conditions of travelling with us.

<https://www.watermeadapostolate.co.uk/pilgrimages>

## Last word from Fr John

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