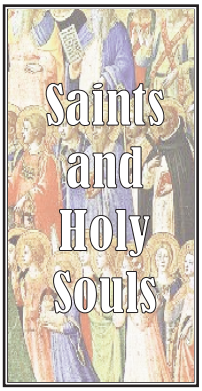


LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR AS YOURSELF

Our Community News

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25th October 2026 : *"A new Commandment - love is the message"*

Dear Friends,

Last weekend was World Mission Sunday and I was relieved to hear a homily that did not just focus on supporting the missionaries who continue to take Christ's message to far-flung corners of our world - winning souls for God (as I remember being told!). There was, of course, the usual 'Catholic' retiring collection, but the priest was also encouraging those present to look at how we reflected God's love to all we meet.

The week before, I had been walking through our local town and passed a man with a megaphone and a banner telling everyone they were sinners and they should repent their sins to be saved and follow Jesus, or they would be condemned forever to the fires of hell! I had to admire his conviction but I did find his message somewhat bigoted, there was no loving God in his message. It reminded me of the time I assisted Fr John with a weekly column he wrote for an international Catholic newspaper (under a pseudonym). We had to submit our contribution each Tuesday to be approved and ready for going to press the following day and, over the couple of years we had this responsibility, there were many subjects covered and many challenging areas of our Catholic faith explored. However, not all were appreciative of the column and the paper's editorial team would forward letters that they had received from some readers, possibly of a more conservative and literal understanding, who thought the 'Father' responsible for writing the column should be himself condemned to the "hell, fire and damnation" of past teachings that he was trying to reassure against.

I remember the column that caused the most dramatic wave of letters was when the paper's editorial team incorrectly changed one word in an article on 'Purgatory' where Fr John was explaining his understanding of purgatory (a similar reflection to his article over the page). In the last paragraph he had said that there was "no place purgatory" (the conclusion of his explanation that purgatory is a state of being and not a place), but the person tasked with editing the column each week removed the word "place" thinking Fr John had made an error. What a wave of particularly unpleasant letters that caused!

I have seen the same vile rhetoric on social media when people want to defend their cause or share opinion on a topical issue. There is nothing like belief or religion to divide opinion and, sadly, I have witnessed many such comments on threads belonging to Catholic social media sites. I wonder where the love of God is in the mentality that needs to believe fear of condemnation or punishment will keep us on the 'straight and narrow' - straight and narrow what? I prefer to think that the path to eternity is winding, not straight or blinkered by fear, and that faith in God offers us love with which to greet and measure the challenges we face 'en route.' Surely that is the updated message of the New Testament that we should be following and sharing? Jesus came *"to remove our hearts of stone and give us hearts of flesh"* (Ezekiel 36:26), trusting humanity with only two commandments - (1) *Love of God* and *(2) Love of neighbour*, being the basic Christian message. Unfortunately, there will always be those who want to judge others from the safety and security of a heart of stone and over centuries 'fear of God' has been misinterpreted and used by some in authority to frighten followers (in all religions) into a submissive compliance. A heart of flesh needs first to feel loved before it can know and share love and that is our Christian mission - to be love.

As a child growing up terrified of dying and finding myself in this so-called no-man's land (place) of purgatory for an indefinite period, I was really pleased to hear Fr John's understanding and I hope you are happy that I share it with you.

SUNDAY READINGS REFERENCE

30th October 2026

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:

30th Sunday of Year A *(Prayer Week 2)*

1st reading: **Exodus 22:20-26**
2nd reading: **1 Thessalonians 1:5-10**
Gospel according to **Matthew 22:34-40**

WEEKDAY READINGS REFERENCE

30th Week of Year

Mon: Ephesians 4:32-5:8 Luke 13:10-17
Tue: Ephesians 45:21-33 Luke 13:18-21
Wed: Ephesians 2:19-22 Luke 6:12-19
Thu: Ephesians 6:10-20 Luke 13:31-35
Fri: Philippians 1:1-11 Luke 14:1-6
Sat: Philippians 1:18-26 Luke 14:1,7-11

NEXT SUNDAY READINGS REFERENCE

1st November 2026

All Saints *(Prayer Week 3)*

The bible references are as follows:

1st reading: **Revelation 7:2-4,9-14**
2nd reading: **1 John 3:1-3**
Gospel according to **Matthew 5:1-12**

WEEKDAY READINGS REFERENCE

31st Week of Year

Mon: *Isaiah 25:6-9 Romans 5:5-11 Matthew 11:25-30*
Tue: Philippians 2:5-11 Luke 14:15-24
Wed: Philippians 2:12-18 Luke 14:25-33
Thu: Philippians 3:3-8 Luke 15:1-10
Fri: Philippians 3:17-4:1 Luke 16:1-8
Sat: Philippians 4:10-19 Luke 16:9-15

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 (26th October)
St Chad : St Ched

Wednesday (28th October)
St Simon, St Jude

Monday (2nd November)
ALL SOULS

Tuesday (3rd November)
St Martin de Porres

Wednesday (4th November)
St Charles Borromeo

Friday (6th November)
All Saints of Ireland Wales - St Illtud

Saturday (7th November)
St Willibrord

Never measure the height of a mountain until you have reached the top. Then you will see how low it was.
Dag Hammarskjöld

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CHURCH & WORLD NEWS

Pope Leo XIV's doctors confirm 'no further treatment Following surgery which removed the lower lobe of his right lung, Pope Leo XIV's doctors reported on October 21 that the tumor removed on October 13 was a lung adenocarcinoma and that the disease was localized. Dr Luigi Carbone and Professor Stefano Margaritora issued a statement on Wednesday evening 21st October noting that a subsequent oncological assessment has confirmed that *"no further treatment is necessary."*

For more information see the Vatican News website . . .

'Lost Treasure' rediscovered On 14th November 1994, Georg Friedrich Handel's Messiah rang out in the Church of St Catherine at the Nativity in Bethlehem, despite the Nativity complex being under military protection amid fears of possible attacks. Israeli and Palestinian leaders, along with representatives of the three great monotheistic religions, gathered together to listen to the oratorio and applauded its message of faith and peace. Written more than 250 years earlier (1741), this oratorio had once again brought its message to a sacred place.

Read the article on Vatican News website . . .
Click to see trailer for 'Lost Treasure' . . .
Watch the original recording on YouTube . . .

Gunmen kill mourners at Christian funeral in Jordan On Friday 23rd October St George's Greek Orthodox church in the village of Hmoud in Jordan's Karak governate was attacked during a funeral for a community member. Gunmen opened fire, killing eight people and injuring 33 others. The attack lasted several minutes, with survivors describing chaotic scenes of people hiding, screaming, and fleeing. Security camera footage showed three gunmen approaching the church before opening fire.

Read the full article on the ICN website . . .

Irish synod marks 'end of an era' A synodal assembly in Ireland at which lay people, religious, clergy and bishops from across the island gathered to vote on proposals resulting from the synod process marked the "end of an era and the beginning of something new," said Bishop Niall Coll of Raphoe. The delegates voted on 35 proposals at the Oct. 17 gathering in Gormanston, County Meath, based on themes emerging from Ireland's five-year synodal way. Coll told OSV News the assembly highlighted a "clear recognition" of the need to prepare people for discipleship in a local Church that has been "chastened and challenged" by secularism and the abuse crisis . . .

For the full article see the NCR website . . .
Reflections on Synod from 'We are Church Ireland' . . .

Arundel & Brighton have a new bishop On Monday 19th October, Catholics across Sussex and Surrey welcomed their new bishop, when Bishop Stephen Wang was ordained as the sixth Bishop of Arundel & Brighton. Pope Leo XIV announced Bishop Stephen's appointment in July. Bishop Stephen converted to Catholicism as a teenager. Reflecting on his journey of faith in a speech at the end of the Mass, he said, *"I'd come to know Jesus and his Church; I knew I wanted to belong, but I had no idea where it would lead."*

Read about Bishop Stephen on the ICN website . . .

New documentary about St. Peter's long-lost remains In a new documentary produced in collaboration with the Vatican, actor Chris Pratt and Pope Leo XIV venture into the secret catacombs under St. Peter's Basilica, exploring how the long-lost remains were found. *'Pétros eni: Discovering the Origins'* premiered Friday 16th October at the Rome Film Festival ahead of the 400th anniversary of the consecration of St Peter's Basilica next month. It was released in Spain on 9th October and is expected to be available widely in early 2027. . . .

Read more on the NCR website . . .

✈ ROME/ASSISI ✈ NOVEMBER 2026

The Liverpool Group now have their pilgrim confirmation packs. The Leicester (Stansted) Group Pilgrim confirmation packs have been posted out to you.

Prayer Box



Daily Prayers
Prayer is Love, I want to Love

This week we especially remember in prayer
Pauline Noon (RIP)

Sr Hilda, Pope Leo, Casey, Chris, Sheila, Christine, Hannah & Tricky, Helena & Dean, Helen, Pat, Anna, Claire, Patricia, Janet, Jennifer, Ann, Philomena, Anna, Sister Lelia, Oisin, Orla, Kate, Mary, John, Patrick, Catherine, Don, John, Matthew, Paul, Peter, Teresa, Theresa, Susan, Sylvia, Toni, Peggy, Winefride, Joy

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

The People of France, Myanmir, Ukraine, Palestine

Please email your reminders & additional names for prayers
watermead-community@outlook.com

Saints and Holy Souls

An article by Fr John



The Feast of All Saints is 1st November, of the Holy Souls is 2nd November. What is the difference between a saint and a holy soul? The old answer was: *"A saint is in heaven, a holy soul in purgatory."* It is the wrong answer now - don't use it.

Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, the Catholic Catechism (published 1994, 691 pages) which they put together, in homilies they gave, books they wrote witness to the Church's understanding that there are no places heaven or purgatory or hell. They are "states of being" because all of them are in the presence of God who is everywhere in and by love.

Heaven is being with God, purgatory is being with God and longing for the purifying pain of forgiveness, hell is choosing not to accept God's loving purifying forgiveness. (Would, could, anyone refuse God's forgiveness?)

Our human life is completed in our dying. We all know the moment of that completion. In that final glorious moment (I know it doesn't look glorious, but it is) you have become the person you allowed yourself to become over the years. You always had the possibility of changing, and maybe you did - for better or worse - but in the moment of truth, the moment of dying, you have become you fully.

You come before our loving God, full of the love you have lived, the regrets that you carry, the wrongs you remember, and you see in God the love that was always open to you, hear the name God always had for you, and long to be forgiven. That longing to be forgiven in God's loving gaze is what Pope Benedict called "purgatory or purifying" and we know the pain it will bring us because we know that pain in this life. "I hurt you, and you love me," "How can you forgive me when I have hurt you so much?" "How can I ever forgive myself for what I said, did, to you?" You know the pain, have suffered and caused it. Love is the cause and brings terrible regret and heartbreaking sorrow.

That's purgatory. Not a place, but seeing ourselves reflected in God's loving gaze. Heaven is being purified, purgatory is longing to be purified.

Dear Lord, forgive us to know no more about our faith than what we learned and vaguely remember from our childhood, whether from school or pulpit.

© Fr John Daley IC

DATES FOR DIARY

Local Events

'Retreat Day for the Parishes of Leicester and Leicestershire led by Sr Marie-Kolbe Zamora, OSF, STD
organised by St Mary's, London, and held at St Joseph's, Leicester
Saturday 31st October 2026 10am-3pm
Contact **Jackie.williams@dioceseofnottingham.uk**

LACY (Leicestershire Active Catholic Youth)
invite people to share their music ministry on
the Feast of Christ the King
at St Mary's, Countesthorpe Road, South Wigston, LE18 4PG
22nd November 2026 from 3.00 p.m. - 5.00 p.m.
Light refreshments will be served afterwards.
More information from Pauline on 07885 187374

ONLINE EVENTS

Root and Branch
'Being a Leader in Tough Times'
Speaker : Jamie Manson
(Journalist, academic, author, speaker, retreat leader, commentator)
Thursday 12th November 2026 8.00 pm
See **https://www.rootandbranchsynod.org** for more detail

PAX CHRISTI - 'AI, Security and Peace'
online - Thursday 12 November, 7.00pm – 8.30pm
Offered by Pax Christi members
Aaron Humphriss and Emmanuel Fisseh
for more information see Pax Christi's website

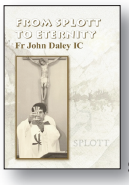


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Please do share our shop links with your friends
Fr John's book can be purchased through either of our internet shops

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"We were born to love;
We live to love
and we will die
to love still more"
St Joseph Cafasso

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

Last word from Fr John

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with your email address requesting to subscribe to Fr John's homilies (no cost).



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