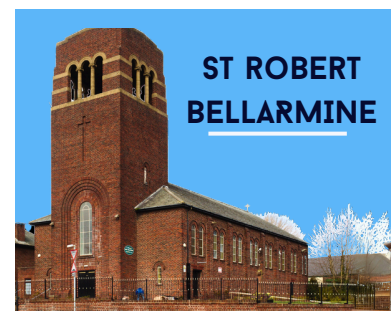




Parish of St Josephine Bakhita



ENGLISH MARTYRS



ST ROBERT BELLARMINE

Good Shepherd Sunday gives us one of the most comforting images in the Gospel: Jesus as the shepherd who knows his sheep, calls them by name, and never abandons them. It is a deeply personal image. We are not part of a crowd to Him, we are known, loved, and called.

That word “called” is important. Because this Sunday is also the Day of Prayer for Vocations. The voice of the Good Shepherd is not just something we hear for comfort; it is also something that invites a response. Every vocation in the Church begins there, with someone hearing, however quietly, the voice of Christ saying, “Follow me.”

We need vocations because the Church needs shepherds after the heart of Christ: priests to celebrate the sacraments, to preach the Gospel, and to walk with people in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of life. But vocations don’t appear out of nowhere. They grow in the soil of faith, in families and parishes where prayer is real, where faith is lived, and where young people are encouraged to listen for God’s voice.

That is why this day matters for all of us. Praying for vocations is not an optional extra; it is part of the Church’s life. It is also about creating a culture where a calling can be heard and trusted.

Perhaps the simplest thing we can do is this: to pray, to encourage, and to be open ourselves. Because the Good Shepherd is still calling, and someone, somewhere, is being invited to say yes.

Fr Mark

Where, in the ordinary moments of my life, might the Good Shepherd be quietly calling me, and how am I choosing to respond

PLEASE OFFER YOUR PRAYERS FOR THOSE PARISHIONERS WHO ARE CURRENTLY ILL



Mary Spofforth
Michael Lundon
Margaret Spencer
Peter Gibbons

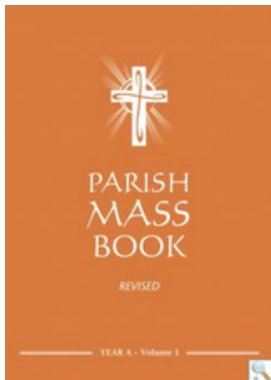
POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR APRIL



For priests in crisis

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

Lord in your mercy...



FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Readings for Mass today can be found on Page 262 of the Parish Mass Book



SANCTUARY LAMP

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.

Please note that Mass at 10am on Thursday at English Martyrs is a funeral mass for Elizabeth Jessie Kirkcaldy. There is also a funeral service at 12.00pm on Friday in St Robert's for Michael Size.
May they both Rest in Peace

Where, in the ordinary moments of my life, might the Good Shepherd be quietly calling me, and how am I choosing to respond

STEP INTO THE ELEGANCE OF THE ART SCHOOL RESTAURANT WEDNESDAY 1 JULY

The Cathedral is delighted to invite you to indulge in an unforgettable fine dining experience. Savour a beautifully curated seasonal tasting menu that celebrates the very best of British ingredients, thoughtfully crafted into dishes that are as refined as they will be memorable.

With a welcoming drink on arrival, impeccable service, and an atmosphere that blends sophistication with creativity this exclusive evening promises the perfect setting to relax, connect, and enjoy exceptional food in one of the City's most elevated dining destinations.

The date you need to keep in your diary is Wednesday 1 July 2026 from 6.30pm onwards. Dinner will be served in The Lantern Room. We hope that you will book some tickets and come and enjoy a convivial evening in surroundings that are timeless and yet modern enjoying the company of new friends and old ones, whilst raising money for the Cathedral. Tickets are £50 per person. To book your ticket and to arrange payment please contact Claire Hanlon at c.hanlon@metcathedral.org.uk

EASTER HOLY WATER- A SIGN OF NEW LIFE

At the Easter celebrations, the blessing of water is a quiet but powerful moment. This year, it took place both at the Easter Vigil and again on Easter morning, reminding us of our baptism—when we were brought into the life of the risen Christ.

Fr Mark blessed the Easter water with the new Paschal Candles—a beautiful sign of the light and life of the Risen Lord.

Each time we bless ourselves with holy water, we are not just recalling the past; we are renewing who we are now: people of the Resurrection.

The Easter water is available in both churches throughout the Easter season, and you are warmly invited to take some home. Let it be a simple, daily reminder: Christ is risen, and His life is alive in you.

Where, in the ordinary moments of my life, might the Good Shepherd be quietly calling me, and how am I choosing to respond

ST BENET'S CHAPEL.

St Benet's Chapel is a cherished part of our community's history—a place that has stood for generations as a testament to our shared heritage. We are now hoping to form a small group of local people who are interested in helping to preserve this special site and open it to visitors on selected days throughout the year.

By volunteering, you'll be helping others appreciate the chapel's unique story and ensuring it continues to be enjoyed for years to come. Whether you have a passion for history, enjoy welcoming visitors, or simply want to play a part in safeguarding our local heritage, we'd love to hear from you. If you're interested in joining the group or would like more information, please contact: Fr Grant Maddock @ g.maddock@rcaol.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.



GUILD OF ST STEPHEN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2026

The Liverpool Archdiocesan Council of the Guild of St Stephen will do 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

Where, in the ordinary moments of my life, might the Good Shepherd be quietly calling me, and how am I choosing to respond

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 June 2026:

Date: 11 June, 18 June, 25 June, and 2 July (all Thursdays)

Time: 6.30pm-8.30pm

Venue: St Monica's Parish Centre, Bootle, Liverpool, L20 9JD

MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER EXPERIENCE IN LIVERPOOL

The Marriage Encounter Experience offers the opportunity to refresh, enrich, deepen and bring love, joy and sparkle back into marital relationships. The experience is priest led with laity couple presenters, and offers precious quality time to support lifelong marriage, personal growth and spiritual growth in a Catholic faith context. The experience is also open to couples in long term relationships, who are often drawn into marriage as a consequence through the sessions on the power of the sacrament and convent love.

In partnership with the Archdiocese, a Marriage Encounter experience will be taking place at the St Margaret Clitherow Centre on Saturday 27th and 28th June 2026. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: 0151 522 1000

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.



63rd WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

In 1964, Pope Paul VI, launched the first Vocations Sunday, which since then has been celebrated on the fourth Sunday of Easter, also called as Good Shepherd Sunday. Today marks the 63rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations which gives us an opportunity to reflect on our own vocation as a baptised member of the Church but also gives us an opportunity to pray that others may find their vocation.

We know that God has a plan for each of us. He is calling us to grow in holiness and to live in His love. Some are called to live their baptismal calling through married life, some are called to the priesthood, the diaconate or religious life and others to live as single people. Everybody is called! It is good to have these conversations to stir hearts and minds, especially with the young to help them respond generously to the Lord. What is God calling you to?

Your donation to the Priest Training Fund today will support our Seminarians. Please give generously.

VOCATIONS SUNDAY PRAYER


God our Loving Father,
you called each of us by name through the Sacrament of Baptism to holiness.
Through the gift of the Holy Spirit, you made us the temples of the Holy Spirit.
Help us to listen to the cry of our Lord Jesus from the Holy Cross 'I thirst'
and respond to the call
'Go out to the whole world and proclaim the good news to all the nations.'
Guide us in every step we take in life
and lead us in every decision we make in responding to your call.
Make us and mould us into the living images of Christ your Son,
who was always close to those in need.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord,

Amen.

Where, in the ordinary moments of my life, might the Good Shepherd be quietly calling me, and how am I choosing to respond

Good Shepherd Sunday

The Sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them...



If you think the Lord is calling you to follow Him to be a future shepherd of His flock...

Archdiocese of Liverpool

Contact the Vocation Director
Tel: 0151 727 2493
Email: r.johnson@rcaol.org.uk

YOUTH PILGRIMAGE MEMORIES

This year marks 50 years of the Archdiocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Lourdes, and we'd love your help to celebrate this special milestone by sharing your memories.

Did you meet your partner on the pilgrimage?

Have several generations of your family travelled to Lourdes?

Were you part of the very first pilgrimage, or did you experience a moment there that stayed with you forever?

Whatever your memories or experience – we want to hear from you!

Please send your memories and/or photos – to communications@rcaol.org.uk by 13 May. Selected submissions may be featured in The Pic, on the archdiocese and Animate's website and social media channels, and in a special scrapbook of memories being created for the youth pilgrims travelling this year.

Please note: By sharing photos with us, you confirm that you are happy for them to be used in archdiocesan publications and that you have obtained permission from everyone pictured, or from their family if they are deceased.

ALL AGES PILGRIMAGE TO ASSISI: 26-30 October 2026

The Parishes of St Mary's Woolton and St John Vianney invite you to join us on Pilgrimage to Assisi Monday 26 - Friday 30 October 2026, led by Fr Peter McGrail and provided by Joe Walsh Tours.

This is a very special year to visit Assisi since Pope Leo XIV has proclaimed 2026 A JUBILEE YEAR OF ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI, which marks 800 years since his death Pope Leo announces the Franciscan Jubilee Year for 2026. - Centro Laudato Si.

The cost is £1,165.00 per person to include: Direct return flights from Manchester to Rome, 10kg bags included (optional 20kg at extra cost), all transfers and tours by private coach, 4 nights in Hotel Frate Sole – Assisi on a half board basis (drinks excluded), full religious programme led by Fr Peter McGrail, fully guided with tours and visits as per itinerary. Travel Insurance required at the time of booking.

For more information, contact Joe Walsh Tours: www.joewalstours.co.uk

Where, in the ordinary moments of my life, might the Good Shepherd be quietly calling me, and how am I choosing to respond

PRAY IN MAY – MARY’S MEALS

During the month of May, Mary’s Meals is inviting churches and schools to take part in their Pray in May campaign, encouraging prayer and reflection for children around the world who rely on a daily school meal.

Mary’s Meals provides nutritious school meals to children living in poverty, enabling access to education and long-term hope.



The charity website gives more information and resources for you to take: www.marysmeals.org.uk or you can contact Anna Houghton at: anna.houghton@marysmeals.org

MAY PROCESSION

You’re very welcome to join the Missionaries of Charity May procession on Saturday 30 May . Fr Peter Ross, assistant priest at St Wilfrid's parish in Widnes, will lead the procession, starting at St Peter's Square, before moving on to Bold Street, Church Street and Whitechapel, before finishing at the Blessed Sacrament Shrine on Queens Square. If you would like to volunteer at the procession, contact Jim Ross on jimmy.ross7@gmail.com.

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

Where, in the ordinary moments of my life, might the Good Shepherd be quietly calling me, and how am I choosing to respond

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE 2026

Tuesday 5 May marks the National Day of Prayer for Survivors of Abuse. We invite all parishioners to remember in their prayers those whose lives have been affected by abuse.

This year's theme is support for survivors of domestic abuse, and we hold in prayer all those who have suffered or continue to suffer as a result of this form of abuse.

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 at 0151 522 1013 / 07585761965 Claire Newton 0151 522 1043 / 07384643237 or safeguarding@rcaol.org.uk

FLOWER FESTIVAL 2027

A Flower Festival to celebrate the Cathedral's 60th Diamond Jubilee 2027 - Florists Needed

The Cathedral is at the very early stage of planning this event to mark the Cathedral's Diamond Jubilee. The dates they are looking at are: Friday 14 May 2027 - Monday 17 May 2027. The theme of the Festival will be 'Hope' in all its different forms.

They are reaching out to established and experienced individuals and groups who have a proven history of creating floral arrangements for their own parishes and similar settings. Their expertise, creativity and sensitivity would make a valuable contribution to this significant occasion.

If you are interested, please contact Claire Hanlon at c.hanlon@metcathedral.org.uk

CHOIR CHAPERONE OPPORTUNITY

The Department of Music within the Archdiocese of Liverpool is seeking Choir Chaperones to support their work with young singers.

This role involves supervising Cathedral choristers and ensuring their safety, wellbeing, and pastoral care at rehearsals, services, and performances.

Chaperones help with organisation, attendance, and communication with parents, while supporting a safe and welcoming environment in line with safeguarding policies.

A rewarding opportunity to support young people and the Cathedral's music ministry.

Closing date is 23 April. For more information, take a look at the job section of the Archdiocesan website: www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk

FIRST COMMUNION

There's a lovely sense of joy in the parish at the moment as we begin the season of First Holy Communions. This weekend, we were delighted to celebrate the first two Masses with our children, and over the coming weeks we look forward to two more special celebrations.



These are always beautiful moments in the life of the parish. For the children, it is a truly important step in their journey of faith as they receive, for the first time, the great gift of Jesus in the Eucharist. For their families, it is a time of pride, thanksgiving, and often renewed faith.

Please do keep all our First Holy Communion children and their families in your prayers during these weeks. Pray that this first encounter with the Lord in the Eucharist will be the beginning of a lifelong friendship with Him, and that they will always know His presence close to them.

NOTRE DAME SCHOOL REUNION

Did you attend a Notre Dame School in the Archdiocese of Liverpool? There will be a reunion on 17th May for all ex-pupils & teachers, consisting of Mass at 11.00am followed by a complimentary light lunch & a social finishing at 3.00pm, at the Irenaeus Centre, Waterloo. A donation for our current charity & a raffle prize would be appreciated.

Please try to attend, all are welcome.

Reply by 3rd May to Bernie Shaw, 0161 483 0173 or berniemshaw@hotmail.com

GENERAL CATECHIST COURSE 2026

Beginning from 6 May until 27 June, a General Catechist Course will be provided by the archdiocese. The course will be taking place over 8 weeks at St John Fisher Church, Widnes. We will talk about the key elements of Catholic faith and how they can be explored through

Catechesis. If you are considering being catechist or are existing catechist (e.g. RCIA, first holy communion, confirmation etc) looking to refresh your knowledge, this course is for you. If you are interested, please sign up here

<https://forms.office.com/e/vXWAjbxJdc?origin=lprLink>. For more information, please contact Moses at m.mui@rcaol.org.uk

FEAST OF THE WEEK

Blessed María Guggiari Echeverría (1925-1959)



Born in 1925 in the Guairá province of Paraguay, the first of seven children. She was baptised on 28 February 1929, and from an early age showed a deep love for God and a generous concern for others. In 1941, as a teenager, she joined the Catholic Action movement, despite her parents' opposition. There she dedicated herself to serving the poor and the suffering, and worked as a catechist with children. It was during this time that she met Saúa Angel, a medical student. They fell in love, and María began to wonder whether God might be calling her to marriage, but she waited patiently for the Lord's will to become clear.

In May 1951, Angel told her that he felt called to the priesthood. María responded with great generosity, putting aside her own hopes and offering him her full support. She even helped him to keep his plans hidden from his father, who was a Muslim. In April 1952 she said goodbye to him as he left for Madrid to continue his studies and discernment. Later that year, in November, he decided to pursue the priesthood.

This became a turning point for María. In supporting his vocation, she began to recognise her own. Despite strong opposition from her parents, she entered the Discalced Carmelite Order on 2 February 1955. Six months later she received the habit and made her first vows, taking a new religious name. During her time in Carmel, she wrote around forty-eight letters to Angel, now Father Angel, reflecting a deep spiritual friendship rooted in faith.

Her religious life was marked by simplicity, prayer, and quiet fidelity. In 1959, she became seriously ill with infectious hepatitis and was moved to a sanatorium. As her condition worsened, she faced her suffering with remarkable peace and trust. In the early hours of 28 April 1959, surrounded by her family, María prepared to meet the Lord. Propped up on cushions, she sat up and spoke her final words as: "Jesus, I love you! What a sweet encounter! O Virgin Mary!"

She was beatified on 23 June 2018, recognised by the Church as a witness to faithful love and total surrender to God. Her feast day is Tuesday 28 April.

Blessed María reminds us that holiness often grows quietly, in faithful choices, in patient waiting, and in the courage to let go of our own plans so that God's purpose may unfold.

Where, in the ordinary moments of my life, might the Good Shepherd be quietly calling me, and how am I choosing to respond

Masses and Services for the coming week

DATE	English Martyrs	St Robert Bellarmine
Sunday 26th April Sanctuary Lamp	9.30am Marie Smith Our Lady & St Rita	11.00am People of the Parish The Pennington Family
Monday 27th April	10.00am Andy Matthews	
Tuesday 28th April		10.00am The Family of Leila Bromilow
Wednesday 29th April	NO MASS	NO MASS
Thursday 30th April	10.00am Funeral Mass Elizabeth Kirkcaldy	
Friday 1st May		10.00am Sheila Morley 12.00pm Funeral service Michael Size
Saturday 2nd May	NO MASS	NO MASS
Sunday 3rd May	9.30am People of the Parish	11.00am Janet Fowler

English Martyrs Office

School Lane, Litherland, L21 7LX

St Robert Bellarmine Office

Orrell Road, Bootle, L20 6DZ

0151 928 3471 englishmartyrs@rcaol.org.uk

Office hours Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri 9.30am - 2.30pm

0151 922 1352 strobert@rcaol.org.uk

Office hours Tues, Wed, Fri 9.30am - 1.30pm

Where, in the ordinary moments of my life, might the Good Shepherd be quietly calling me, and how am I choosing to respond