



Parish of St Josephine Bakhita



ENGLISH MARTYRS



PARISH PRIEST

Very Rev Canon
Mark B Madden
KCHS FRSA

ST ROBERT BELLARMINE



Advent invites us to notice small beginnings. Isaiah tells us, “A shoot shall spring from the stump of Jesse.” It’s such a simple image—a tiny sprout growing from something that looks dead. Yet it reminds us that God often starts His work in quiet, hidden ways. Hope rarely arrives fully grown. It begins small.

John the Baptist helps us see those beginnings. He calls, “Prepare the way!” not to frighten us, but to wake us up a little. His message is really very encouraging: make a bit of space, clear a little room, and you will see what God is trying to grow. Repentance is simply the act of pulling up the weeds so that new life can take root.

As our Jubilee Year of Hope comes to an end, the Church invites us to keep that spirit alive. Advent is a season to look again at the parts of our lives that feel stuck, tired, or “wintry,” and to trust that God can bring life even there.

The story of Coventry Cathedral reminds us of this. Out of the ruins of a bombed church came a simple cross made of burnt beams. It didn’t look like much, but it became a worldwide sign of peace. God loves to begin with the small.

So this week, ask: Where is God planting a little hope in my life? It may be quiet, it may be tiny—but it is real.

Come, Lord Jesus. Grow your hope in us.

Fr Mark

Where is God inviting me to notice a small sprout of hope in my life this week?

PLEASE OFFER YOUR PRAYERS FOR THOSE PARISHIONERS WHO ARE CURRENTLY ILL



Joseph Mulhaney
Michael Lundon
Margaret Spencer
Peter Gibbons

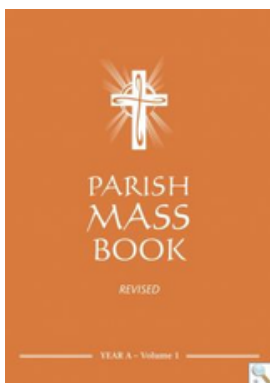
Mary Spofforth

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER



For Christians in areas of conflict

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.
Lord in your mercy...



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Readings for Mass today can be found on Page 85 of the Parish Mass Book

HOLY FAMILY MASS

Archbishop John will celebrate the 11:00 Mass at the Metropolitan Cathedral on Sunday 28 December, the feast of the Holy Family. This will mark the closing of the Jubilee Year within the diocese. All are welcome.

ARCHBISHOP SHERRINGTON FOR CBCEW - Life Issues Statement

Bishops' Conference have released a statement concerning the dignity and protection of human life. You can read the statement and watch an interview with Archbishop Sherrington here: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/assisted-suicide-and-abortion-life-issues-statement/>

Irenaeus and St Thomas' Oratory Gt George's Rd. Waterloo.

It's an outreach and Spirituality Centre which serves tea, coffee, toast and a pantry for people in need.

A few people live in cars. As we exist on donations please would you help us by placing tinned, packet food, sugar, toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap etc in the box at the back of St Robert Bellarmine's church.



FEAST OF THE WEEK

The Immaculate Conception

Today we celebrate one of those great feasts that reminds us God's grace loves to get in early. Before Mary ever spoke her brave "yes," before she ever cradled the Christ Child or stood in quiet faith at the foot of the Cross, God was already at work preparing her heart. The Immaculate Conception isn't about Mary setting personal bests in holiness; it's about God giving her the grace she needed for the mission ahead.



It's a bit like when we try to start the day with prayer before the emails, the to-do lists, and the lost car keys begin their assault. When grace gets in first, everything else seems just a little more possible.

Mary shows us what it looks like to live with uncluttered openness. Her life was not free of difficulty—far from it—but she carried a freedom from the inner tangle of sin that so often slows us down. Her Immaculate Conception is not a distant privilege but an invitation: let God begin His good work in you, too.

As we move through Advent, may we let grace get in early each day, clearing space for Christ to be born anew in us.

ENGLISH MARTYRS PENSIONERS GROUP

The Pensioners have a few spare places in their group if you would like to join them. They meet on a Tuesday in English Martyrs Parish Hall from 1-4pm.

LECTIO FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Every Friday at 6pm at St Vincent de Paul's Church, L1 5JN, there is a "lectio" prayer group for young adults. There will be a Mass at 6pm, followed by a short time of sharing the Sunday readings at 6.30pm.

It's a friendly group and sometimes they also organise trips and retreats. If you want more information please contact James: djmoroney@cantab.net or 07394 503 911

LOURDES YOUTH PILGRIMAGE 2026

Applications for the Lourdes Youth Pilgrimage with Sefton Coach 7 are LIVE now at liverpool Lourdes youth.co.uk. Young people aged from Year 10-age of 22 are invited to be part of Coach 7 this year (22nd-31st July 2026). The cost of the pilgrimage is £720 but fundraising will reduce this cost. For more information email coach7@rcaol.org.uk

BE A TRUST GOVERNOR:

Pope Francis Catholic Multi Academy Trust are looking for Governors to support leaders in providing the best Catholic education for pupils in our schools.

If you are interested in using your skills to benefit our pupils, please contact: governance@pfcmat.org or go to <https://www.pfcmat.org/Governance/>



Pope Francis
Catholic Multi Academy Trust

CAFOD Christmas Fun Run – 27 December

Signup is open for CAFOD's annual Fun Run!

The run will take place on 27 December at Wavertree Sports Park and is open to all.

Run, walk, or wheel with family and friends to share the joy of Christmas and raise money for those in need!

Scan the QR code on the poster to sign up, or search CAFOD Fun Run.



THE LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL CHOIR PRESENTS A Celebration of Christmas – Saturday 13 December

A Celebration of Christmas returns this year on Saturday 13 December with a night of musical cheer, guaranteed to get you into the festive spirit.

Join the Metropolitan Cathedral Choir and some very special guests for what promises to be a magical event for all the family.

Sing along to classic carols, enjoy traditional readings and celebrate Christmas in the glorious surroundings of the Metropolitan Cathedral



Tickets: £10 each/ £18 family, available from www.ticketsource.co.uk/metcathedral

Archdiocesan Young Adult Group Faith Based Talk: Is Scripture Outdated? December 16th 6:30PM - 8:00PM

Join the archdiocesan young adult group, as they are joined at Pauline Book Centre by Fr Hugh Donleavy for a faith based talk - Is Scripture outdated? Anyone between the ages of 18 and 35 are welcome to attend.

WHAT CAN I BRING HIM? ADVENT EVENINGS

The Irenaeus Centre are hosting several Advent evenings - next one is on Wednesday 10 December from 19:00-20:30. For more information and zoom links please contact jenny@irenaeus.co.uk



Also on that day is their 'Songs we Remember' Christmas Celebration from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Go along and join in some loevley festive songs



THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone who joined us last Saturday for a wonderful few hours of festive entertainment. It is always lovely to come together and celebrate our community. The Irish Guards Choir certainly put us all in a lovely Christmas mood. The work they do for charities is fantastic. A big 'Thank You' to Jimmy and the 'boys'

Thanks also to everyone who helped make it a success. These things only happen because we have a wonderful team of helpers.



PARISH BEREAVEMENT GROUP

In every parish family there are times when someone's world changes overnight through the loss of a loved one. In those moments, the simple presence of a compassionate fellow parishioner can make all the difference. Fr Mark would like to form a new Parish Bereavement Team—a small group of volunteers who can offer gentle support to grieving families through prayer, listening, and practical help around funerals.

You just need a caring heart, a willingness to listen, and a desire to bring Christ's comfort to those who mourn. A training course within the deanery will begin at the start of February for those interested.

If you feel you could offer a little time to this quiet but essential ministry, please contact the parish office. Together we can ensure that no member of our community walks through grief alone.

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

CATHOLIC PIC

The December edition is now available, free of charge. The main story this month features a report from Adoremus 2025, the day of prayer, reflection and celebration of the Eucharist.

Fr Mark has also written an article celebrating the 60th anniversary of Vatican II's document *Nostra Aetate*.

MARY'S MEALS – DOUBLE THE LOVE

Mary's Meals' Double the Love campaign is now running, which means that any donations made will be doubled by a group of generous supporters, up to £1.1million. You can give hope this Christmas to hungry children, with life changing school meals. Your gift will help Mary's Meals keep our promise into 2026 and beyond to the world's poorest communities in countries such as Ethiopia, Haiti and South Sudan, where conflict and the devastating impacts of climate change mean our nutritious meals are needed more than ever. There are many ways to get involved, find out more at <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/>

MARRIAGE PREPARATION CATECHISTS NEEDED

Would you like to help engaged couples to prepare for marriage? The archdiocese is now recruiting catechists to join the marriage preparation team. The catechist training will be provided at St Monica's Church, Bootle, Liverpool, L20 9GA and consists of 5 sessions:

- Monday 23 February 2026 (6.30pm – 8pm)
- Monday 2 March 2026 (6.30pm – 8pm)
- Monday 9 March 2026 (6.30pm – 8pm)
- Monday 16 March 2026 (6.30pm – 8pm)
- Saturday 28 March 2026 (10am – 2pm)

Upon completion of training, the catechists will be asked to offer marriage preparation course for couples twice a year. If this is something you are interested in, please sign up here <https://forms.office.com/e/JGbP8AtZwn?origin=lprLink> For more information, please contact Moses at m.mui@rcaol.org.uk.

AFTERNOON TEA WITH FRANK SINATRA (DAVE ASHLEY) AND FRIENDS

The Irenaeus Centre is hosting a 'Songs We Remember (dementia-friendly) Christmas Celebration on Wednesday 10 December, 14:00-16:00. For more information, please contact the Irenaeus Centre.

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND GIFTS

Christmas stock is still available in English Martyrs Piety stall.

This year we have some wonderful olive wood and stained glass items which have come direct from the Holy Land.

Fr Mark's friend has an online shop and has provided a variety of items.

Proceeds from the sale of these go to support our friends in the Holy Land so please go in and have a browse.

St Robert's now have their Christmas cards and calendars available at the back of Church



LIVERPOOL HOPE UNIVERSITY - SUNDAY MASS

Sunday Mass will have recommenced at Liverpool Hope University. Mass will take place at 5.30pm in the Chapel on Hope Park Campus each Sunday during term time. This Mass is in addition to the weekly 12.15pm Thursday lunchtime Mass.

All members of the university community are welcome to attend.

Contact Fr Peter Murphy (p.murphy@rcaol.org.uk) for more information.



NICENE CREED

The 1700th anniversary of the Nicene Creed: Fr Mark Drew will give a talk on Mon 8th Dec at 7.00pm – 8.30pm at Holy Rosary Lounge. (L10 2LG) “The Nicene Creed: what is it; what does it mean and why does it matter.” All welcome.

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

STRUGGLING TO FIND A GIFT?

Why not send one of CAFOD’s World Gifts?

Each gift is more than a present - it is a way to stand in solidarity with our global neighbours.

There are gifts of education, farming, water and many more. Have a browse of one of the catalogues at the back of both churches and then order online at cafod.org.uk/worldgifts. Your loved one will receive a card confirming the gift that has been purchased in their name.



WHAT'S ON AT JOSPICE



Church service (indoor service):

This year, we have introduced a Light up a Life church service, which will take place at St. Peter's and Paul's Church in Crosby at 2pm on Wednesday 10th December. This will be perfect for anyone who doesn't want to take part in our outdoor service at the hospice, or who would prefer to attend a daytime event.

Virtual Christmas Tree:

If you cannot join us for one of our services, you can make a dedication online and light up our virtual Christmas tree.

Our Online Dedication Page allows you to make a donation and leave a personal message of dedication. These messages can be shared with friends and family across the country – and even further afield – helping to spread support and encouragement far and wide.

B&B STAYS AT CASTLERIGG MANOR

Castlerigg Manor is a Catholic retreat centre in the Lake District owned and operated by the Diocese of Lancaster. They work with more than 3,000 young people a year from around the north and beyond. When the building is empty, they offer B&B stays to individuals, families and small private groups and the money this raises supports their mission with young people.

Some B&B dates have opened up this January and February. Specifically, January 5-7th, February 9-11th, and February 16-18th. It's very affordable to book and a nice chance to spend a few days in the Lakes - head to <https://castleriggmanor.com/stay-with-us/>

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.



CHRISTMAS 2025

Times of Masses over the Christmas period:

Monday 22 December	10.00 Mass	English Martyrs
Tuesday 23 December	10.00 Mass	St Robert Bellarmine
Christmas Eve	6.00pm Christmas Vigil	St Robert Bellarmine
Wednesday 24 December	9.00pm First Mass of Christmas	English Martyrs
Christmas Day	9:30am Mass of Christmas Dawn	English Martyrs
Thursday 25 December	11.00am Mass during the day	St Robert Bellarmine
St Stephen's Day	12 Noon Mass	St Robert Bellarmine
Friday 26 December		
The Feast of the Holy Family		
Sunday 28 December	9.30am Mass 11.00am Mass	English Martyrs St Robert Bellarmine
The Feast of St Thomas Becket		
Monday 29 December	12 Noon Mass	English Martyrs
The 6th Day of Christmas		
Tuesday 30 December	12 Noon Mass	St Robert Bellarmine
The Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God		
Thursday 1 January 2026	12 Noon Mass	English Martyrs

No Mass on Friday 2nd January



Where is God inviting me to notice a small sprout of hope in my life this week?

Masses and Services for the coming week

DATE	English Martyrs	St Robert Bellarmine
Sunday 7th December Sanctuary Lamp	9.30am People of the Parish Healing (DP)	11.00am Alexander Briscoe Evans family
Monday 8th December	10.00am James Corcoran	
Tuesday 9th December		10.00am Sheila Morley
Wednesday 10th December	NO MASS	NO MASS
Thursday 11th December	10.00am Irene Garrette	
Friday 12th December		10.00am Paddy Murphy
Saturday 13th December	NO MASS	NO MASS
Sunday 14th December	9.30am Kitty & Joe Maloney	11.00am People of the Parish

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