HIGH TIDE



Parish Magazine

Weymouth St Paul with Fleet

SEP 2025

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Many thanks to all who have contributed to this issue of the Parish Magazine and to Liz Evans for the proofreading. The next Magazine will be published on ***Sunday 28th Sep.*** *Please, send all articles, information, news you wish to be publish by Sunday 21st Sep.*

Front cover: "Saint Roch showing off his plague spot" (1516)
Miniature; Prayer-book of Joanna of Ghistelles (Ghent); now in the British Library

This month's cover shows St. Roch, patron of pilgrims and the sick. His life of journey, healing, and trust mirrors our parish pilgrimage to Walsingham, reminding us that true travel leads to Christ, our refuge and destination.

From the Vicar

Dearly Beloved,

In the midst of recent weeks, many of us have felt unsettled by the growing tide of suspicion and resentment towards those who come to *our* (!) country seeking a home. Voices grow louder that would have us believe compassion is weakness, or that national strength lies in closing doors and hardening hearts. It is easy to feel discouraged when public life is filled with anger and fear rather than generosity and hope.

As Christians, however, we are called to a different vision. We are called to remember where our true home lies. It is not in political slogans, nor in the shifting winds of public opinion, nor even in the material security of our houses or our passports. Our home is in Christ. Our citizenship is in heaven. And our model is Our Lady, who opened her whole being to the Word of God and made room in her life for the Saviour of the world.

How fitting, then, that we as a parish prepare once again to make pilgrimage to Walsingham —"England's Nazareth." For some Walsingham is only a mere religious or historic curiosity, a sort of relic of medieval piety. For us, however, it is a profound reminder of the home of the Holy Family. Our Lady gave to England a vision of her own house in Nazareth, a place where the Holy Family dwelt together in simplicity, love, and prayer. That little house was not a palace or a fortress, but a home—welcoming, warm, filled with the presence of God.

To journey as pilgrims to Walsingham is to be reminded that the Church herself, and every Christian home, is called to resemble the Holy House of Nazareth: a dwelling where Christ abides, and where all may find shelter, belonging, and peace.

When we enter the Holy House at Walsingham, in spirit we step into Our Lady's dwelling, but we also step into a vision of what our hearts and our communities should be. A Christian home is not measured by the thickness of its walls but by the breadth of its welcome. It is in our openness to others, in our readiness to receive the stranger, the wounded, the lonely, and the lost, that the love of God shines most brightly. For did not the Holy Family themselves once flee as refugees into Egypt, finding safety and kindness in a foreign land?

Of course, at the same time, we must not be naïve. To say that Christians must be welcoming is not to deny the real challenges of migration and community life. Every society must balance compassion with order. Migrants, like myself (!) when I came to this country in 2016 to establish a new life and home, must be ready to adapt to the values and ways of this country, respecting its laws, its heritage, and its customs. I am not advocating

uncontrolled migration, nor trying to excuse those who would exploit generosity or abuse hospitality. Those who come only to harm or to take without giving cannot be defended. A household that never sets boundaries ceases to be a home.

But equally, we cannot accept the temptation to harden our hearts. To treat every stranger as an enemy, every migrant as a threat, every foreigner as a problem to be solved, is to betray the Gospel itself. For Christ came among us as a stranger. He was born away from home in Bethlehem, laid in a borrowed manger. He grew up in a despised town, and he died outside the city walls. The Son of God knows what it is to be unwelcome. And yet, by his death and resurrection, he has made his dwelling among us and made us into the household of God.

This is why Walsingham is so powerful. It is not a place of nostalgia or old-fashioned Marian devotion, but a living reminder that our real citizenship is in heaven, and our true home is with Christ. My own journey to this land has taught me how precious welcome can be, and how deeply renewing it is when you find a community that receives you (*or most of them but let's not go there*…) with open hearts. The parish is not simply a group of people who worship in the same building. It is meant to be a Nazareth, a house of Our Blessed Lady, where Christ is present and where all who enter may encounter God.

As we "walk" the road to Walsingham, let us ask Our Lady to teach us how to make our homes, and our parish, places where the light of Nazareth shines—places of welcome, prayer, and holy love. In an age when suspicion and division are loudly promoted, we are called to live differently: to be a community of faith that does not mirror the bitterness of the world but reflects instead the hospitality of God.

There is a great temptation today to give in to the clamour of anger, and to allow fear to shape our common life. But the witness of the Gospel is clear: to welcome is not weakness, but strength. To love is not naïveté, but courage. To open our hearts is not to lose our identity, but to discover it more deeply in Christ, who came among us as a stranger and yet made his dwelling with us.

So let us go forward with hope. Our Lady of Walsingham points us not to fear but to trust, not to suspicion but to love, not to walls but to home. May she guide our pilgrimage and our lives, until at last we reach that eternal dwelling where every tribe and nation will be gathered into one family in Christ.

Assuring you of my prayers, I am,
ever yours in Christ,



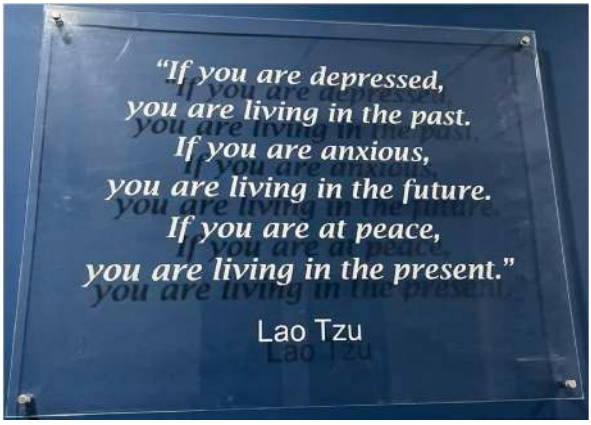
Finding peace at St. Paul's

Gerald Duke writes:

I have recently returned after a couple of more weeks in Malta trying to tie up loose ends with builders and architects and I may finally see light at the end of the tunnel. I can only hope it is not an oncoming train. When I am there, I always try to attend St Paul's Pro-Cathedral. On this occasion they had a visiting organist who made the organ truly sing, although members of the choir grumbled as he forgot they were there. The organ is originally from Chester Cathedral. Its body-tingling deep bass, executed during Vidor's Toccata at the end of the service, came with the forceful power of a petard at a Maltese festa.

I also took the opportunity to visit several other churches. One in particular was the Millenium Church, run by the Augustinians, with services in English. It is a modern building beneath the shadow of the Hilton Tower in St. Julian's (or San Giljan in Maltese). Sadly, the doors were closed but by chance I found the Millenium Chapel next door which was open. This little haven of peace is open from 8 until 2 in the morning every day except for Good Friday. They have a website which I encourage all to look at, particularly with regards to the videos of services and sermons on YouTube. It can be found at https://millenniumchapel.org/

In a corridor surrounding the small chapel are a series of pictures with thought-provoking quotes from various known sources, such as Pope Francis, the Q'uran, Dalai Lama, Nelson Mandela and St. Augustine. One in particular that struck me was by Lao Tzu which read —>



Lao Tzu was an ancient Chinese philosopher. This quote offers a profound perspective on our human condition. While the quote's exact origin is debated, its sentiment is deeply rooted in the philosophy of Taoism, a school of thought attributed to Lao Tzu. This simple yet powerful statement captures core Taoist principles, emphasizing the importance of living in the present moment to achieve inner harmony and peace.

Lao Tzu, believed to have lived in the 6th century BC, is credited as the author of the Tao Te Ching, a foundational text of Taoism. The Tao Te Ching, which translates to "*The Classic of the Way and its Power*," is a collection of poetic verses and paradoxical aphorisms that explore the nature of the Tao —the ineffable, fundamental principle of the universe. The philosophy it outlines is not about rigid rules or a structured religion but rather a way of living in harmony with the natural flow of existence. Central to this is the concept of wu wei, or "*effortless action*." Wu wei doesn't mean doing nothing; it means acting in a way that is in alignment with the natural order of things, without force or struggle. This aligns with the quote's message: to achieve peace, one must let go of the past and future and simply exist in the now, much like water effortlessly flowing around obstacles.

The quote's analysis of depression and anxiety is most poignant. Depression is often characterised by a preoccupation with past events—regrets, losses, and failures. Living in this state is akin to being tethered to what has already transpired, preventing one from moving forward rather like bearing grudges within a small community and failing to let them go. Similarly, anxiety is a state of constant worry about what might happen. It's a mental journey into a future that doesn't exist, filled with hypothetical scenarios and fears. Both states are forms of resistance to the present moment. They represent a mind that is out of sync with the natural rhythm of life, a mind that is either replaying old tapes or creating future ones.

True peace, according to the quote, is found in the present. This doesn't mean ignoring the past or failing to plan for the future. Instead, it means grounding oneself in the here and now, accepting what is, and responding to life as it unfolds. It is about cultivating a state of mindfulness, a concept that has become central to modern psychology and wellness practices. By focusing on the present, we can release the emotional burdens of the past and the speculative fears of the future. This is the essence of the Taoist path: to align with the Tao is to be fully present, to experience the world without the filter of past traumas or future anxieties. In doing so, we find a profound sense of tranquillity and an authentic connection to our lives as they are right now. The wisdom of Lao Tzu transcends centuries, offering a timeless prescription for a troubled mind: embrace the present, and in it, you will find your peace.

In terms of Christian thought, a comparable state of peace is found in the concept of trust in God's sovereignty and grace. While Lao Tzu's quote encourages a focus on the present by detaching from past regrets and future worries, Christian theology acknowledges the importance of both the past and future in a different and perhaps more complex way.

The past, in a Christian context, is where one finds grace and redemption. The past's mistakes and sins are not meant to cause depression but are rather a reminder of the need for forgiveness, which is offered through Christ's sacrifice. This allows a believer to be at peace with their past, knowing it is forgiven and redeemed. The future, while full of uncertainties, is not a source of anxiety but of hope. The promise of Christ's return and the eternal life to come gives believers a future to look forward to, a destination that anchors their present life with purpose and meaning.

Therefore, peace in Christianity is achieved by living in the present moment with trust and gratitude. This is exemplified in Jesus's teaching, "*Do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself*" (Matthew 634). It is a call to focus on today's needs, trusting that God, who has been faithful in the past and holds the future, will provide everything necessary in the present. This peace transcends human understanding, guarding the heart and mind against the anxieties of the world.

That I could find such strength from this one quote on a random wall gives me such comfort. Particularly with the ability to interpret the words of Lao Tzu into a Christian context. I will have to return to this special place.

(*While different beliefs and philosophies, such as Taoism, offer valid points to consider, the fullness of truth is revealed to us in Christ. So here are some final thoughts from Fr Gregory on the above topic.*) **Finding Peace in Christ: Past, Present, and Future** — When we speak about peace, many of us think of it as freedom from regrets about yesterday or worries about tomorrow. That is certainly part of it, but our Christian faith gives us something deeper and more lasting. Peace is a gift of God. St. Thomas Aquinas called it the *tranquillity of order*—a harmony that comes when our lives are directed towards God. As for the past: often we carry burdens from sins or missed opportunities. Human wisdom may tell us simply to "let go." But in Christ, our past is not forgotten—it is forgiven. We can look at the past without despair, because God has entered into it with His mercy.

And what about the future? It is natural to feel anxious about what lies ahead, especially in uncertain times. Yet the virtue of **hope** changes how we face tomorrow. Hope is more than optimism; it is trust in God's promises. Christ has prepared a place for us.

Finally, the present: peace is rooted in trust and gratitude. Jesus invites us to walk with Him now, confident that the Father who carried us yesterday and will provide tomorrow also gives us what we need today. Christian peace is not a technique or a mental trick. It is a gift rooted in faith, hope, and charity.

Legends and History of the True Cross

by Sandra Miesel (for CWR 17 Aug 2025):

Relics of Our Lord's Passion have always been dear to his followers. The True Cross, the actual wood on which Jesus was crucified, has attracted special veneration since the reign of the Emperor Constantine. After he legalized Christianity in 313, his devout mother, St. Helena, travelled to the Holy Land, visiting biblical sites and building churches. In 326, she discovered what was thought to be the original Cross in Jerusalem, the source of all the world's wooden relics. It was deeply buried under a temple of Venus/Aphrodite that the pagan Emperor Hadrian had built over Golgotha two centuries earlier, after the second Jewish Revolt.

Within a few years of St. Helena's return to Rome, there were mentions of True Cross relics spreading throughout the Empire. A woman named Egeria, who made a pilgrimage from Spain to the Near East (382-84), describes solemn rituals in Jerusalem honouring the Sacred Wood on Good Friday and on the anniversary of its finding, May 3rd.

Legends rich in symbolism grew up around St. Helena's find:

As Adam lay dying, his son Seth journeyed back to the gate of Paradise to beg Michael the Archangel for some remedy for his father. Michael gave him a branch from the Tree of Mercy. The angel promised that Adam would be healed on the day that the tree grew during this cutting would bear fruit.

But Adam was already dead by the time Seth returned home, so he planted the marvellous branch on his father's grave. It grew into a splendid tree that was still flourishing thousands of years later in the reign of King Solomon. (*Adam was buried under the spot where the Cross of Christ would be raised so that the Redeemer's blood would soak his bones. This is why traditional iconography places Adam's skull under the foot of the Cross on Calvary/Golgotha, which means "the Place of the Skull."*)

Solomon wanted to use the tree's wood in building his Temple. But its lumber never proved suitable because the boards shrank or stretched before they could be fitted into place. The frustrated king had the wood thrown across a pond to serve as a bridge. When the Queen of Sheba visited Jerusalem, she had a vision of the wood's salvific future and refused to step on it. After she explained that someday a man hanged on this lumber would terminate the kingdom of the Jews, Solomon had the wood buried deep in the earth.

But from this spot, a spring emerged that fed the pool of Bethesda, where miraculous healings sometimes occurred whenever an angel stirred the water. Here, Jesus healed a paralyzed man and forgave his sins (Jn 5,2-18). Shortly afterwards, the long-buried wood floated up to the surface of the pool. After being used to fashion the Cross for Jesus' Crucifixion, it was lost for three centuries.

When Constantine sent St. Helena to Jerusalem to search for the Cross, workers found three buried crosses. The True Cross was distinguished from the other two because its touch raised a young man from the dead.

At St. Helena's request, the Bishop of Jerusalem returned to Golgotha in search of the Nails of the Crucifixion. His prayer drew them up "like gold out of the earth." She put two of the four Holy Nails into a bridle for Constantine's war horse, embedded another in a statue of the Emperor at Rome, and threw the last into the Adriatic Sea to calm its waters.

How do pious fantasies about the True Cross fit into history?

Crucifixion was the ghastliest Roman punishment for criminals until Constantine banned the practice. Contrary to traditional imagery, the condemned man carried only the crossbeam (*patibulum*), not the entire structure, because the upright post already stood at the place of execution. He usually carried a placard (*titulus*) hung around his neck that stated his crime and would be fastened atop his cross. The naked victim was nailed through the wrists, not the hands. The feet were nailed individually, not overlapped. A supporting peg (*sedile*) ran between the legs. If needed, ropes around the body added further security.

The earliest surviving picture relating to Christ is an ugly *graffito* of a crucified man with the head of a jackass drawn on the wall of a military barracks in Rome, almost a century before St. Helena's excavation. An ivory plaque in the British Museum, carved around 420, is the oldest known Christian image of the Crucifixion. It shows Jesus clad in a loincloth, nailed through his hands, and standing on a platform (*suppedaneum*). But this devotional object cannot be taken as an accurate representation of the event.

Although Our Lord's body was to be laid in a new tomb, he did not die upon a freshly made Cross. Others had suffered on that wood before him and after him. Executions could not be carried out within the city so they ceased on Calvary after Jewish King Herod Agrippa I extended Jerusalem's walls beyond it in the years 41-42. A homily written by St. John Chrysostom in 398 suggests that local Christians saw what happened to the discarded crosses and later hid them. *The Quest for the True Cross* by Carsten Peter Thiede and Matthew d'Ancona (2000) argues that Christians preserved the memory

of where the Holy Wood had been buried despite persecutions and the two Jewish Revolts. Therefore, what St. Helena found in 326 could have been the actual Wood of Christ's Cross. Regardless of this theory's merits, Christians then and since believed that the relics were authentic.

History, however, does record the fate of the crossbeam portion that was revered in Jerusalem. In 614, it was carried away during a Persian invasion of the Holy Land. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius won it back after defeating the Persian king Khosrow II in 627. After keeping it in Constantinople for two years, he returned the precious Wood to Jerusalem, carrying it himself in penitential garb. This event is still commemorated by the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14.

Jerusalem's crossbeam relic was hidden when El Hakim, the mad caliph of Egypt, destroyed the Holy Sepulchre in 1009. It was recovered after the First Crusade reconquered the Holy City in 1099. Afterwards, Crusaders bore this piece of the Cross into battle as a talisman of victory until they lost it forever when Saladin annihilated the Christian army at the Horns of Hattin in 1187.



Anointing

In the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick the priest anoints the forehead and hands of those who are seriously ill or frail, using one of the approved forms. The new Roman Catholic form is: "*Through this holy anointing, may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit; may the Lord, who frees you from sin, save you and raise you up.*" The new Anglican form is: "*I anoint you in the name of God who gives you life. Receive Christ's forgiveness, his healing and his love. May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ grant you the riches of his grace, his wholeness and his peace.*" The old form, shared by the Roman and the Anglican Church, is: "*Through this holy anointing, may the Lord forgive you all the evil you have done.*" The 1662 Book of Common Prayer contains no option for the Anointing of the Sick.

The old form, because of its brevity and exclusive focus on the forgiveness of sins, was surrounded and complemented by various other prayers. The most famous one — "*Holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, in pouring out the grace of your blessing on the bodies of the sick, you show your loving care for your creatures…*" — became part of both the new Roman and the new Anglican rite.

All rites, Roman and Anglican, make reference to (the) grace (of the Holy Spirit). What is this grace (of the Holy Spirit) that we receive through this Sacrament? How does Jesus use this Sacrament to help us?

When you are a child, getting sick sometimes seems like fun. You get to stay home for school, maybe watch some extra TV or get some screen time; your mum might make you a nice warm drink; hold her hand on your forehead to feel your temperature and assure you that you will feel better soon. These gestures of love make you feel warm and safe. They might not make your cough go away just yet, but they remind you that you will be ok and will get better. Even if that means that you have to go back to school.

Of course, some illnesses have nothing cozy about them. We can feel overwhelmed, unsure of what will become of us. Life-threatening sickness might tempt us to despair, thinking we will never recover from this meaningless torment.

Through the Sacraments, Christ comes to meet us at every moment of our lives; in sickness and in health. In the Sacrament of Anointing Christ comes to us like a loving mother comforting her child. Through the hands of the priest Jesus gently touches our forehead and our hands, anointing them with the Oil of the Sick. This outward gesture (the visible gesture of anointing) is an instrument of interior, invisible grace. Through this

Sacrament we are strengthened to bear with what we are given, to live our lives well even if it has now become the hour of our death.

The letter of James gives us a detailed description of the anointing of the sick in the early church: "*Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven*" (5,14-15).

Through this holy anointing the Lord in his loving mercy helps us with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Just as we are anointed with the Oil of the Catechumens and with the Chrism at the beginning of our Christian life, the Oil of the Sick strengthens us as we struggle with life-threatening illness, reminding us that we are not alone in our distress. Through our Baptism we become temples of the Holy Spirit. Through the Anointing of the Sick the same Holy Spirit strengthens us to place our trust in God even as our bodies are wracked by pain and our eyes are sunk in with grief. The grace of anointing conforms us to the suffering Christ, giving meaning to our misery, as we offer our bodies as a living sacrifice.

This anointing helps us to say with St. Paul: "*It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me*" (Gal 2,20). The church is Christ's body. If one member suffers, the whole body suffers. Through the Sacrament of Anointing we are strengthened to offer our suffering for the Church. The patient acceptance of our physical wounds can contribute to the healing of the spiritual wounds of the Church: the wounds of sin. Disunity, jealousy which disfigure the human face of the Bride of Christ.

The grace of anointing also helps to heal our personal wounds of sin. Although anointing should normally be preceded by the Sacrament of Confession if we are aware of grave sin, anointing can be an instrument of God's forgiveness, especially for those who are unable to verbally confess their sins.

The Lord Jesus has gone before us in life and in death. He is the Lord of both of the dead and of the living. Anointing is primarily ordered to heal our soul but if it is God's will, it can also heal or strengthen the body. Through the grace of anointing, Jesus configures us to his loving providence. If we live, we live to the Lord. And if we died, we die to the Lord.

The *special grace* of this Sacrament, then, is: 1) the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his own good and that of the whole Church; 2) the strengthening, peace, and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age; 3) the forgiveness of sins; 4) the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his soul; 5) the (remote) preparation for passing over to eternal life.

Marian Devotion Day

Shelagh Hansford writes:

Starting with Holy Rosary followed by High Mass and Procession, then lunch and ending with the Guild Office, Litanies and Benediction. Well, is that it? I can hear you say – not very impressive, and I have to say I agree with you. Well Fr Gregory has asked me to write an account of this special day, and so I must do my best to tell you all what the day was really like.

It did indeed start with the Holy Rosary, it was very well attended both by our regulars and visitors for the day. This wasn't undertaken just for this day because as you know we pray the Holy Rosary every Saturday, but it felt special to all of us.

We had a very commendable attendance of Servers from the Guild of the Servers of the Sanctuary and their friends. Even a little, very well behaved, dog who sat in the choir stalls. They came from as far away as Taunton, Crewkerne, Bournemouth and Bridport.

High Mass followed at Noon. It all looked perfect from where I was sitting in the congregation. Lovely singing and great to see the choir stalls full of people. Then the procession in which Our Lady was borne on her new carrier out of the church, along Abbotsbury Road and back into the car park with us all singing and rejoicing. I sometimes wish we could have a longer walk as it really is very eye catching and people stop and think 'what is going on here?' It takes our church out of the four walls and into the wide world. Or Westham to be more exact!

Lunch was then served. And I have to say here, that St Paul's always comes up trumps when it comes to catering. Sue Biles and her team did a grand job, it really was a splendid spread and I know our visitors were really appreciative of all the work that went into providing such a lovely meal.

To finish our Devotional Day, the service for the Guild Office, Litanies of Our Lady and Benediction were undertaken by the Guild members, our own servers and Fr Gregory.

To conclude, I just have to say that my few words do not fully do this special day justice. It really is a truly lovely day spent in fellowship with people from other churches together with our own congregation.
Although I do wish there were more of you there!

At St Paul's, and I think it would be fair to say, that no other C of E church in Weymouth holds Our Blessed Lady in such high devotional esteem, and has a special day to commemorate her like we do. We are very fortunate that we can do so. And long may it continue.

Please then do come along next year, I shall be looking out for you!

Unusual English words you probably didn't know (1)

Jeanne James writes:

1. Agog – eager or excited to see or hear something
2. Bumfuzzle – to confuse or fluster
3. Cacophony – a harsh, discordant mix of sounds
4. Callipygian – having well shaped buttocks!
5. Cattywampus – crooked or askew
6. Collywobbles – stomach discomfort or anxiety
7. Defenestration – throwing someone out of a window



8. Discombobulate – to confuse or unsettle
9. Doodle Sack – an old word for bagpipe
10. Erf – a plot of land in a town (South African English)
11. Fipple – the mouthpiece of a wind instrument
12. Flibbertigibbet – a frivolous, talkative person
13. Gardyloo – warning shouted before tossing waste (historical)
14. Gobbledygook – nonsensical or technical sounding language
15. Hullabaloo – a noisy fuss or commotion
16. Impignorate – to pawn or mortgage something
17. Jiggery-pokery – deceptive or dishonest behaviour
18. Kerfuffle – a disturbance or fuss
19. Limerence – intense romantic infatuation
20. Lollygag – to dawdle or be lazy
21. Malarkey – nonsense or foolish talk
22. Mumpsimus – a person who insists on making a known error
23. Nudiustertian – referring to the day before yesterday
24. Oxter – armpit (Scottish/Irish English)
25. Pandiculation – stretching and yawning simultaneously



I'll Remember you

Eileen Galling writes:

I'll remember you, for all the pain and courage
and all the lost and suffering
and how you soldiered on.

I'll remember you, from the letter's grandma showed me
There were time that you were lonely
All those nights that you were gone.

I'll remember you,
It will always stay that way
You gave us your tomorrow
so we could live today.
We'll never say goodbye to all your sacrifice
I will remember you

I'll remember you,
with this photograph beside me
that's what I have to remind me for all the children to see,
they will remember you
and how you fought for freedom,
there's a hundred million reasons
why your memory must live on.

I'll remember you, it will always stay that way
You gave your tomorrow, so we could live today.
We'll never say goodbye to all your sacrifice
I will remember you, I will remember you,

I'll remember you, it will always stay that way
You gave your tomorrow, so we could live today.
We'll never say goodbye to all your sacrifice
I will remember you, I will remember you, I will remember you.



Calendar, Service times, and Prayer Intentions

Anniversaries of death

Order of Morning and Evening Prayer

Calendar for September 2025

MON	1st	*St. Giles Abbot*	—
TUE	2nd	St. Stephen, King of Hungary	—
WED	3rd	St. Pius X Pope	—
THU	4th	*Feria*	—
FRI	5th	St. Lawrence Justinian Bishop	5pm
SAT	6th	*Of Our Lady*	9.30am
SUN	7th	**12TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**	10.30am, 4pm
MON	8th	**Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary**	12pm
TUE	9th	*St. Gorgonius, Martyr*	9am
WED	10th	St. Nicholas of Tolentino	10am
THU	11th	*Sts. Protus & Hyacinth, Martyrs*	6pm
FRI	12th	The Most Holy Name of Mary	—
SAT	13th	St. John Chrysostom, Bishop & Doctor	—
SUN	14th	**EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS**	10.30am
MON	15th	Seven Sorrows of the Blessed V. Mary	—
TUE	16th	St. Cornelius Pope, Cyprian Bp., Martyrs	—
WED	17th	*The Stigmata of St. Francis (Ember Day)*	—
THU	18th	St. Joseph of Cupertino	—
FRI	19th	St. Januarius & C., Martyrs *(Ember Day)*	—
SAT	20th	*St. Eustace & Comp., Mart. (Ember Day)*	—
SUN	21st	**14TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**	10.30am, 4pm
MON	22nd	St. Thomas of Villanova, Bishop	12pm
TUE	23rd	Padre Pio *(Ember Day)*	9am
WED	24th	*Our Lady of Ransom*	10am
THU	25th	***Monthly Requiem***	6pm
FRI	26th	*St. Cyprian & Justina, Martyrs* ***(anointing)***	12pm
SAT	27th	St. Cosmas & Damian, Martyrs	9.30am
SUN	28th	**15TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY**	10.30am, 4pm
MON	29th	**DEDICATION OF ST. MICHAEL**	12pm
TUE	30th	St. Jerome	9am

Daily Intentions & *Anniversaries of death*

We pray for…

1st Pilgrims - *Maud & Millie Palmer, May Clothier*
2nd Beechcroft
3rd All schools, teachers, and students
4th Priests & vocations - *Dorothy Butler*
5th Dying - *Tom Buchanan, Mary Salsbury*
6th Walsingham - *Peter Mullis*

7th Our Parish - *Mary Vincent, Leslie Ball, David Foote, Peter Dawson, John Wray*
8th Those who flee persecution, leaving their home, family
9th Those living under war conditions
10th The Holy Souls in purgatory - *Margaret Ward*
11th Those with dementia - *Bessie Scriven, Tommy McCarthy, Andy Hutching*
—11th: Margaret Boxwell, Liz Taylor
12th Our Servers - *Joan Nickinson, Eileen Parsonage, Jean Wray*
13th Those who flee persecution, leaving their home, family

14th Our Parish - *Austin Woolrych, Jack Hardy, Holly Harding, Joyce Kemp*
15th Russia & Ukraine, Israel & Palestine
16th The Armed Forces (Battle of Britain)
17th Our PCC
18th Our Choir - *Kathleen Gunn*
19th Peace
20th The unemployed - *Betty Vincent, Marjorie Green,*

21st Our Parish - *Ann Wray*
22nd S.P.O.T.
23rd Westham - *Sydney Lambert pr., Elizabeth Keat*
24th Those with addictions
25th Departed
26th The sick - *Francis Johnstone, Madaleine Hicks*
27th The spread of the Gospel

28th Our Parish - *David Davies pr.*
29th And end to all evil, hatred, division and war - *Mary Kemp*
30th A greater love for the Holy Scripture - *Michael Kerrigan, David Sertin*

If there are names missing from the list or you want to add names, please, talk to the Vicar.

Open, O Lord, my mouth to bless thy holy Name; cleanse also my heart from all vain, evil, and wandering thoughts; enlighten my understanding and kindle my affections; that I may worthily, attentively, and devoutly recite this Morning Prayer, and so be meet to be heard before the presence of thy divine Majesty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

MORNING PRAYER

V. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.
R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

> V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
> R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
R. Be it unto me according to thy word.

> V. Hail Mary… R. Holy Mary…

V. And the Word was made flesh.
R. And dwelt amongst us.

> V. Hail Mary… R. Holy Mary…

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. O Lord, open my lips. R. And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.
V. O God, make speed to save me. R. O Lord, make haste to help me.
V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

V. Let us rejoice in the Lord; let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him!
R. Come and adore Christ the King who was exalted to the Cross for us!
V. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth; and the heights of the mountains are his.

R. O come, let us worship him.
V. The sea is his, for who but he made it; and his hands fashioned the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down, and weep before the Lord who made us! For he is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.
R. Come and adore Christ the King who was exalted to the Cross for us!
V. Today if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts: As in the provocation, on the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted me, and put me to the test, and they saw my works.
R. O come, let us worship him.
V. For forty years I loathed that generation, and I said: They always err in heart, they have not known my ways, so I swore in my wrath: they shall not enter my rest.
R. Come and adore Christ the King who was exalted to the Cross for us!
V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.
R. Come and adore Christ the King who was exalted to the Cross for us!

HYMN

Sing, my tongue, the glorious battle
Sing the last, the dread affray;
O'er the cross, the victor's trophy,
Sound the high triumphal lay:
Tell how Christ, the world's Redeemer,
As a victim won the day.

God, his Maker, sorely grieving
That the first-made Adam fell,
When he ate the fruit of sorrow,
Whose reward was death and hell,
Noted then this wood, the ruin
Of the ancient wood to quell.

Wherefore, when the sacred fullness
Of the appointed time was come,
This world's Maker left his Father,
Sent the heav'nly mansion from,
And proceeded, God Incarnate,
Of the Virgin's holy womb.

To the Trinity be glory
Everlasting, as is meet;
Equal to the Father, equal
To the Son, and Paraclete:
Trinal Unity, whose praises
All created things repeat. Amen.

The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow (please see next page).

1	34	Proverbs 8,1-21 Mark 5,1-20	3	41	Proverbs 9 Mark 5,35-end
2	36	Proverbs 8,22-end Mark 5,21-34	4	42	Proverbs 10,1-12 Mark 6,1-13

5	43	Proverbs 11,1-12 Mark 6,14-29	18	68	Proverbs 27,1-22 Mark 9,1-13
6	44	Proverbs 12,10-end Mark 6,30-44	19	70	Proverbs 30,1-9 Mark 9,14-29
7	**122, 123**	**Jonah 4 Revelation 8,1-5**	20	71	Proverbs 31,10-end Mark 9,30-37
8	113	Genesis 3,8-20 Matthew 1,1-17	**21**	**130, 131**	**Isaiah 45,9-22 Revelation 14,1-5**
9	48	Proverbs 15,18-end Mark 7,1-13	22	73	Wisdom 1 Mark 9,38-end
10	50	Proverbs 18,10-end Mark 7,14-23	23	75	Wisdom 2 Mark 10,1-16
11	51	Proverbs 20,1-22 Mark 7,24-30	24	76	Wisdom 3,1-9 Mark 10,17-31
12	54	Proverbs 22,1-16 Mark 7,31-end	25	77	Wisdom 4,7-end Mark 10,32-34
13	55	Proverbs 24,23-end Mark 8,1-10	26	78 v. 1-39	Wisdom 5,1-16 Mark 10,35-45
14	**2, 8, 146**	**Genesis 3,1-15 John 12,27-36**	27	78 v. 40-end	Wisdom 6,1-11 Mark 10,46-end
15	56	Proverbs 25,1-14 Mark 8,11-21	**28**	**132**	**Isaiah 48,12-end Luke 11,37-end**
16	57	Proverbs 25,15-end Mark 8,22-26	29	150	Tobit 12,6-end Acts 12,1-11
17	63	Proverbs 26,12-end Mark 8,27-end	30	79	Wisdom 7,1-14 Mark 11,12-26

Each reading ends with these words:

V. This is the word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

BENEDICTUS

Ant: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because through your Cross you have redeemed the world.

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, *
who has come to his people and set them free.
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, *
born of the house of his servant David.
Through his holy prophets God promised of old *
to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,
To show mercy to our ancestors, *
and to remember his holy covenant.
This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: *
to set us free from the hands of our enemies,
Free to worship him without fear, *
holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, *
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,
To give his people knowledge of salvation *
by the forgiveness of all their sins.
In the tender compassion of our God *
the dawn from on high shall break upon us,
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, *
and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, *
world without end. Amen.

Ant: We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you, because through your Cross you have redeemed the world.

V. Let us pray. – ***Intercessions*** *are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (the world), for those in need, and for the dead. Then follows the Collect:*

O Lord, we pray that your grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

V. The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. R. Amen. V. Let us bless the Lord. R. Thanks be to God. V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. R. Amen.

Morning Prayer ends with the final Antiphon of Our Lady:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy; our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary!

V. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, who by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit, didst prepare the body and soul of Mary, glorious Virgin and Mother, to become a worthy dwelling for Thy Son; grant that we who rejoice in her commemoration may, by her gracious intercession, be delivered from present evils and from everlasting death. Through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen

EVENING PRAYER

V. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.
R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

> V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
> R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.
R. Be it unto me according to thy word.

> V. Hail Mary… R. Holy Mary…

V. And the Word was made flesh.
R. And dwelt amongst us.

> V. Hail Mary… R. Holy Mary…

V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. O God, make speed to save me. R. O Lord, make haste to help me.
V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

HYMN

Thirty years among us dwelling,
His appointed time fulfilled,
Born for this, he meets his passion,
For that this he freely willed:
On the cross the Lamb is lifted,
Where his life-blood shall be spilled.

He endured the nails, the spitting,
Vinegar, and spear, and reed;
From that holy body broken
Blood and water forth proceed:
Earth, and stars, and sky, and ocean,
By that flood from stain are free.

Faithful cross! above all other,
One and only noble tree!
None in foliage, none in blossom,
None in fruit thy peers may be;
Sweetest wood and sweetest iron!
Sweetest weight is hung on thee.

Bend thy boughs, O tree of glory!
Thy relaxing sinews bend;
For awhile the ancient rigour,
That thy birth bestowed, suspend;
And the King of heavenly beauty
On thy bosom gently tend!

Thou alone wast counted worthy
This world's ransom to uphold;
For a shipwrecked race preparing
Harbour, like the ark of old;
With the sacred blood anointed
From the smitten Lamb that rolled.

To the Trinity be glory
Everlasting, as is meet;
Equal to the Father, equal
To the Son, and Paraclete:
Trinal Unity, whose praises
All created things repeat. Amen.

The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow:

1	52	2 Samuel 3,12-end Acts 6	3	58	2 Samuel 6,1-19 Acts 7,17-43
2	53	2 Samuel 5,1-12 Acts 7,1-16	4	59	2 Samuel 7,1-17 Acts 7,44-53

5	60	2 Samuel 7,18-end Acts 7,54-end	18	81	2 Samuel 19,24-end Acts 12,1-17
6	61	2 Samuel 9 Acts 8,1-25	19	82	2 Samuel 23,1-7 Acts 12,18-end
7	**120** *or* **121**	**Isaiah 43,14-end** **John 5,30-end**	20	84	2 Samuel 24 Acts 13,1-12
8	45 v. 10-17	Songs of Solomon 1,1-16 Matthew 1,18-23	**21**	**128** *or* **129**	**Ezra 1** **John 7,14-36**
9	64	2 Samuel 12,1-25 Acts 9,1-19	22	86	1 Kings 1 Acts 13,13-end
10	65	2 Samuel 15,1-12 Acts 9,20-31	23	91	1 Kings 2 Acts 14,1-7
11	67	2 Samuel 15,13-end Acts 9,32-end	24	93	1 Kings 3 Acts 14,8-end
12	69	2 Samuel 16,1-14 Acts 10,1-16	25	94	1 Kings 5 Acts 15,1-21
13	66	Isaiah 53 Ephesians 2,11-end	26	102	1 Kings 6 Acts 15,22-35
14	**110**	**Isaiah 63,1-16** **1 Corinthians 1,18-25**	27	104	1 Kings 8 Acts 15,36-end
15	72	2 Samuel 18,1-18 Acts 10,34-end	**28**	**91**	**2 Kings 6,8-17** **Matthew 18,1-10**
16	74	2 Samuel 19,1-8 Acts 11,1-18	29	138, 148	Daniel 10,1-4 Revelation 5
17	80	2 Samuel 19,9-23 Acts 11,19-end	30	105	1 Kings 9 Acts 16,25-end

Each reading ends with these words:

V. This is the word of the Lord.
R. Thanks be to God.

MAGNIFICAT

Ant: O Holy Cross, upon you the Life of the world hung, upon you Christ openly triumphed, and his death trampled down death for ever.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,+
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;*
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed;+
the Almighty has done great things for me*
and holy is his name.
He has mercy on those who fear him,*
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm*
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,
Casting down the mighty from their thrones*
and lifting up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things*
and sent the rich away empty.
He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,*
to remember his promise of mercy,
The promise made to our ancestors,*
to Abraham and his children for ever.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, *
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, *
world without end. Amen.

Ant: O Holy Cross, upon you the Life of the world hung, upon you Christ openly triumphed, and his death trampled down death for ever.

V. Let us pray. – ***Intercessions*** *are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (world), for those in need, our Benefactors, and for the dead. Then the Collect is said:*

O Lord, we pray that your grace may always prevent and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works; through Jesus Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

V. Let us bless the Lord. R. Thanks be to God. V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. R. Amen.

Optional private prayer to be said after Evening Prayer: To the Most Holy and undivided Trinity, to our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, to the fruitful Virginity of the most blessed and most glorious Mary, always a Virgin, and to the holiness of all the Saints be ascribed everlasting praise, honour, and glory, by all creatures, and to us be granted the forgiveness of all our sins, world without end. Amen.

Prayers to Jesus Crucified *- Here I am, good and gentle Jesus, kneeling before you. Most earnestly I pray and ask you to engrave upon my heart a deep and lively faith, hope, and charity, with true sorrow for my sins and a firm resolve to amend them. O great passion! O deep Wounds! O Blood, shed in abundance! O God of meekness! Have mercy on me and grant my request if it be for my salvation. O blessed Jesus, most mighty Lion of Judah, King immortal and most victorious, remember the sorrow that you suffered when all your powers of heart and body failed you utterly, and when you bowed your head and said, "It is finished." Remembering your anguish and sorrow, blessed Jesus, have mercy on me in my last hour. Amen.*

Lord Jesus Christ, I thank You, who laid down your life for me so meekly. You bore the nails so patiently, You were raised upon the cross so mercilessly, You hung there so painfully, You wept so bitterly, You cried aloud piercingly, You shed your blood plentifully, and for me, a sinner, You suffered death unquestionably. Now, Lord Jesus Christ, I commend myself to your love, to the power of your passion, to the depths of your endless mercy. Jesus Christ, in your immeasurable pity, keep alive within me the memory of your bitter death, of your holy wounds, so that in sickness and in health, I may remember your mercy. Gentle Jesus, defend me from all danger, and keep me so that I may stand before You in joy. Defend my soul, Lord Jesus Christ, which You have bought with your precious blood. Amen.

Prayer to Our Lady of Sorrows - *Our Mother of Sorrows, with strength from above you stood by the Cross, sharing in the sufferings of Jesus, and with tender care you bore him in your arms, mourning and weeping. We praise you for your faith, which accepted the life God planned for you. We praise you for your hope, which trusted that God would do great things in you. We praise you for your love in bearing with Jesus the sorrows of his Passion. Holy Mary, may we follow your example, and stand by all your children who need comfort and love. Mother of God, stand by us in our trials and care for us in our many needs. Pray for us now and at the hour of our death. Amen.*

Fundraising update

Angela Matthews writes:

This year is proving to be another successful one for fundraising, and, as always, it is only possible with your kindness, support and generosity. The Summer Fete Was a huge success despite the fact that we were up against a large school-fete on the same day. We made a wonderful £1848.14. Over the Garden wall is going really well and we will update you on the final total when it's finished. The Cooks Raffle raised £132. We are hoping to have another jumble sale/coffee morning on October 18th which will be confirmed in one of the weekly sheets. Well as you know time really flies and it will soon be time for our Christmas bazaar!! We will confirm the date in the next week or two. Watch out in the weekly sheet for all the updates and requests for donations to the stalls.



















Pilgrimage: Journey of the Heart, Path of Grace

The Spiritual Importance of Pilgrimage — Pilgrimage, at its root, is a sacred journey—more than simply visiting holy sites or ticking a religious bucket list. As Pope Benedict XVI explained of pilgrimages, "*to go on pilgrimage really means to step out of ourselves in order to encounter God where he has revealed himself, where his grace has shone with particular splendour and produced rich fruits of conversion and holiness.*"

The Catechism of the Catholic Church beautifully encapsulates its depth: "*Pilgrimages evoke our earthly journey toward heaven and are traditionally very special occasions for renewal in prayer… shrines are special places for living the forms of Christian prayer 'in Church.*"'

Thus, a pilgrimage invites us to leave the familiar behind and rediscover our lives as spiritual quests, seeking God's presence through prayer, community, and physical movement—mirroring our deeper journey toward our heavenly homeland.

A Very Brief History of Christian Pilgrimage — Pilgrimage in Christian life began early. By the 4th century, following Emperor Constantine's legalization of Christianity, the faithful made pilgrimages to Rome—visiting basilicas over Peter's and Paul's tombs—and to the Holy Land.

Earlier archaeological insights challenge even this timeline, suggesting faithful Christians may have been pilgrimage-bound before churches were built—traveling between natural caves such as those at the Church of the Nativity or Holy Sepulchre, already revered due to their scriptural associations.

By the Middle Ages, pilgrimage was firmly embedded in Christian devotion: to Rome, Santiago de Compostela, Loreto, Monte Sant'Angelo, the Holy Land—and pilgrims wore distinctive tokens like scallops or Jerusalem crosses for identity and protection during their journey. While Reformation and Enlightenment eras saw a decline, the modern era has seen a profound revival of pilgrimage's spiritual potency.

The Cost of True Pilgrimage: Spiritual Depth Over Comfort — A pilgrimage isn't meant to be a spiritual vacation. Fr. Robert McTeigue, SJ, reminds us that real pilgrimage should cost you—requiring more than money or travel—it must involve letting go of familiarity, expectations, and illusions that this life is our true home.

St. Ignatius Loyola's practice is instructive: after reaching the Holy Land, he relinquished his former life, even refraining from returning home,

and continued to call himself "the Pilgrim," underscoring our human nature as wayfarers bound for eternity.

Thus, the true cost lies in embracing spiritual vulnerability, openness, and the willingness to be transformed.

Making the Most of Your Pilgrimage to Walsingham — Here are some recommendations—both spiritual and practical—to help you and our parish group enter into the pilgrimage journey with purpose and openness.

1. Prepare with Prayer and Intentionality — Begin with communal and personal prayer. Ask: What do I hope to receive from this journey? Am I seeking healing, clarity, repentance, deeper communion with God? Frame your pilgrimage not as a visitor, but as a soul seeking encounter.

2. Embrace Simplicity — Echoing the spirit of true pilgrimage, simplify your routine: detach from digital distractions, carry minimal comforts, and walk (even short distances) deliberately—this cultivation of humility and dependence deepens awareness of grace.

3. Engage Spiritually with the Site — Walsingham is rich in history and devotion—known as England's Nazareth, where the Blessed Virgin's apparition inspired generations. Encourage reflection: *What is God inviting me to encounter here?* Use quiet time in the shrine, Mass, or the Holy House replica to meditate inwardly.

4. Cultivate Communal Bonds — Pilgrimage is both solitary and communal. Share moments: group prayers, shared meals, reflections on the walk, or a brief evening sharing of what touched you. These foster mutual support, love, and solidarity on the journey.

5. Expect the Unexpected — Physical discomfort, weather, delays—embrace these as spiritual teachers. Sore feet or fatigue can remind us of Christ's own journey. Perseverance amid difficulty becomes prayer, forging deeper union with the Lord.

6. Journal & Reflect — Keep a spiritual journal—note what you see, hear, feel, pray. Over time, you'll see God's movement in daily simplicity and special moments alike.

7. Mark Transition Moments — Before and after pilgrim milestones (arrival at the shrine, Mass, group prayer), pause and pray. Recognize arrival as both external and internal transitions—an opportunity for conversion, thanksgiving, or resolution.

8. Return with Purpose — A pilgrimage's end is not homecoming—it's mission. As you return to daily life, nurture the grace received: commit to continued prayer, acts of service, conversion habits, or sharing your testimony with the parish.

From Angel of Light to Father of Lies: how Christian art has depicted satan

(based on Sandra Miesel's essay in CWR 31 Oct 2023)

When we think of Satan in Christian art, we usually picture the horned red figure with a goatee, pitchfork, and tail. But that cartoon image is really quite new. The journey of how artists across the centuries have shown the "Adversary" is a long and surprising story—one that reveals how Christians imagined the reality of evil and the hope of Christ's victory.

A late arrival — For the first centuries of the Church, Christians were far more eager to celebrate salvation than to dwell on damnation. In the catacombs and basilicas we find images of the Good Shepherd, the Madonna and Child, the heavenly banquet, and the saints—but not the Devil. Only in the sixth century does Satan finally appear in Christian art.

And even then, he looks nothing like the monster we expect. In a mosaic in Sant Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna, Italy, Satan is shown as a pale blue angel with wings and a halo, sitting to the left of Christ at the Last Judgment. His washed-out colour was thought to show his connection with the "air," his element. It was an odd and confusing interpretation—an angelic devil who looked almost holy.

From angels to monsters — Soon a new way of depicting the Devil emerged. In the illuminated manuscripts of the Christian East—such as the sixth-century Rabbula Gospels or the famous Irish Book of Kells—Satan looks more like a scruffy, spike-haired, black imp with thin wings. This was not meant to insult dark-skinned peoples, but to show evil spirits as distorted, cartoonish figures—clearly not human, and certainly not holy.

As centuries passed, Satan's appearance grew more grotesque. The Middle Ages added features borrowed from pagan gods and monsters: goat horns and hooves like Pan, serpentine coils like dragons, or hairy bulk like the wild men of northern folklore. Demons sprouted bat wings instead of angel feathers. They fused together traits of animals—snouts, claws, tails, stingers—like today's science fiction monsters.

Artists loved to test their imaginations on the theme of temptation, especially the trials of St. Anthony in the desert. Paintings and engravings by Martin Schongauer, Hieronymus Bosch, and Matthias Grünewald swarm with bizarre demons: half-animals, half-humans, swooping down on the patient old saint as he prays. Bosch even filled an entire triptych with Anthony's ordeals. These wild images, though often frightening, made one point clear: evil is real, but faith endures.

The devil in the Last Judgment — The Last Judgment was one of the most popular subjects for medieval churches, especially on the great stone portals of Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals. Christ the Judge sat enthroned above, while below, devils hustled the damned toward Hell. Sculptors carved row upon row of naked sinners, but sometimes focused on one terrifying detail—like the Cathedral of Autun in France, where two giant claws reach out of nowhere to seize a man's head.

Sometimes artists gave evil a more deceptive face. On the façade of Strasbourg Cathedral, a fashionable young dandy offers an apple to one of the Foolish Virgins. But turn him around, and his back is crawling with snakes and toads. Evil often wears a smile.

In Venice, Byzantine mosaics showed Satan enthroned like a parody of God himself, with the Antichrist seated on his lap. And in the fifteenth century, Hans Memling painted a rainbow-coloured devil with an extra face on his stomach—grotesque, but unforgettable.

Perhaps the most famous Last Judgment is Michelangelo's fresco in the Sistine Chapel. Painted between 1536 and 1541, it shocked viewers with its muscular nudes and vivid drama. The damned are hurled into Hell, angels wrestle with demons, and even mythology slips in: Charon the boatman and Minos the judge take their places in the Christian scene. Michelangelo's devils are varied, brutal, sometimes even grimly humorous. One critic was immortalized with donkey ears—and a snake biting his private parts! Even here, evil was mocked.

Swallowed by hell — A favourite medieval motif was the "Hellmouth"—a monstrous beast whose jaws swallowed up sinners. In manuscripts and paintings, Satan himself often appeared as a giant devouring figure, chewing the damned and excreting them again. Giotto's fresco in Padua shows him as a blue-grey giant, serpents sprouting from his ears, seated on a throne of dragons. The Très Riches Heures, a jewel of medieval illumination, shows Satan reclining like a king while his demons stoke the furnace of Hell and feed him grilled mortals.

For medieval Christians, Hell was less about abstract philosophy and more about the horror of being consumed and lost forever—far from the light of God.

The Apocalypse — Another rich source of imagery was the Book of Revelation. From the eighth century onwards, manuscripts of Beatus of Liébana's Commentary on the Apocalypse spread across Europe, full of fiery visions of dragons and beasts. By the Gothic period, illuminators were filling whole volumes with delicate pictures of the End Times.

The greatest leap came with Albrecht Dürer's woodcuts of the Apocalypse (1498). With just black lines, Dürer made the terrifying visions of Revelation leap to life: multi-headed beasts, bat-winged devils, and the final chaining of Satan. These prints were copied everywhere—in stained glass, tapestries, and even Orthodox icons. They remain among the most powerful Christian images of evil ever made.

Dürer also gave us one of the most famous symbolic depictions of spiritual struggle: *The Knight, Death, and the Devil* (1513). A Christian knight rides steadfastly through a dark forest. Death rides beside him with an hourglass, reminding him that life is short. The Devil, pig-snouted and goat-legged, lurks behind with mismatched horns and claws. Yet the knight rides on, unafraid. It is a portrait of Christian courage in the face of temptation.

Reformation and Counter-Reformation — The sixteenth century wars of religion added a new use for demonic imagery: propaganda. Protestant artists like Lucas Cranach showed the Pope as the Whore of Babylon or Antichrist, riding beasts with papal tiaras. Catholic artists responded weakly at first, but eventually shifted toward more positive art—focusing on the glory of Heaven and the triumph of the saints.

One of the most enduring images came from Guido Reni's painting of St. Michael (1636): the archangel in shining blue armour, standing victorious over a manlike Satan. Reproduced countless times in paintings and statues, it gave Catholics a confident vision of evil defeated.

Meanwhile, the witch hunts of the 1500-1600s flooded Europe with crude but chilling images of witches and their goat-headed master. These pictures were less about theology than about stoking fear. Yet they remind us how seriously people once took the presence of evil spirits in everyday life.

From the Enlightenment to Romanticism — By the seventeenth century, rational thinkers began to dismiss Satan as a superstition. Yet at the very same time, poets gave him new power. John Milton's *Paradise Lost* portrayed him as a fallen archangel of ruined beauty. Goethe's *Faust* made him into the sly, witty Mephistopheles.

Romantic artists like Gustave Doré and Eugène Delacroix gave visual form to these literary Satans: Doré's engravings of Milton's epic show a majestic, tragic Lucifer; Delacroix painted Faust meeting Mephisto as a charming red-haired gentleman. The Devil was no longer just ugly—he was alluring, glamorous, even sympathetic.

Not all artists were so indulgent. William Blake gave us both dazzling and disturbing visions: Satan as a radiant silver-skinned nude, but also as a seven-headed beast of Revelation. Sculptor Guillaume Geefs made *The Spirit*

of Evil (1848)—a heartbreakingly beautiful fallen angel chained beneath the pulpit of a Belgian cathedral, a reminder that even beauty can be corrupted.

Into modern times — The nineteenth century also saw Satan used in satire, politics, and even advertising. Caricatures mocked him; novels like C.S. Lewis's *Screwtape Letters* gave him a witty but ridiculous voice. Yet darker visions persisted. Francisco Goya painted witches and goat-demons as symbols of human cruelty and madness. Occultists even revived the ancient goat-god as the figure of "Baphomet," a symbol still used by modern Satanists.

By the twentieth century, the Devil had become a staple of film and fiction. From Disney's eerie demon Chernabog in *Fantasia* to the terrifying realism of *The Exorcist* (1972), Satan became a figure of horror entertainment. Sometimes he was played for laughs, sometimes for satire, sometimes for shock. But the image also grew tired. The red devil with horns, tail, and pitchfork became a cliché, decorating hot sauce bottles and Halloween costumes. The Adversary was reduced to a joke.

Evil with an ordinary face — And yet, the truth Christians know is far more sobering. Satan does not need horns or tails to do his work. Evil often comes with a smile, or in ordinary, even bland disguise. In 1988, in the forests near Minsk, Belarus, mass graves were found: thousands of victims of Stalin's purges. On a nearby tombstone, the photograph of one of the officials responsible had been sealed under glass. Over the years, black mold crept across the glass, slowly darkening the man's face. The image became a haunting parable: evil may not always look monstrous, but it consumes just the same.

Christ's Victory — From angel to dragon, from grotesque monster to sly gentleman, Satan's image has changed endlessly in Christian art. But the message has always been the same: however frightening or deceptive evil may appear, it cannot overcome Christ.

Every Last Judgment scene ends with the saved rising into glory. Every St. Michael image shows the archangel triumphant. Every picture of temptation also shows the saint enduring.

For us today, perhaps the best image to keep in mind is Dürer's Christian knight: steady, undistracted, riding onward through the shadows. Evil snarls, Death warns, but the knight presses on, eyes fixed ahead. That is the Christian life. "*Resist the devil, and he will flee from you*" (James 4,7). Christ has conquered, and in Him, we are more than conquerors.

Vade retro, Satanas! — Begone, Satan!

(If you can, do an image research on Google of the artworks mentioned in this article!)

Feast of the month: St. Lawrence Justinian, Bishop & Confessor

5 September

Venice's grandeur often brings to mind shimmering canals, gilded basilicas, and mercantile might—but once upon a time, amidst opulence and spiritual decay, there arose a humble servant of God: Saint Lawrence Justinian (Lorenzo Giustiniani). Born in 1381 into the distinguished Giustiniani family of Venice, Lawrence's mother, widowed early, imbued him with deep piety that shaped his spiritual destiny.

A vision leads to reform — At nineteen, after a deep spiritual crisis, he entered the community of Canons Regular of St. Augustine on San Giorgio in Alga, striking even his contemporaries by his extreme austerity, mortification, and prayerful devotion. A mystical vision of Eternal Wisdom further confirmed his calling to the religious life.

Once ordained, he was elected Prior of the community, and soon after, Prior General—his zealous promotion of the congregation's Constitutions earned him the reputation as its de facto founder.

Bishop, reformer, humble shepherd — In 1433, Pope Eugene IV appointed him Bishop of Castello, a diocesan seat in disrepair. With characteristic humility and zeal, Lawrence restored churches, founded new parishes and convents, and encouraged a deeply reverent and orderly divine worship. His tireless charity made him beloved and effective—a man of action and prayer.

A Patriarch for the new era — In **1451**, Pope Nicholas V united the Diocese of Castello with the ancient Patriarchate of Grado and moved its seat to Venice, making Lawrence the first Patriarch of Venice. In this new role, his reforms continued: he founded fifteen monasteries, expanded parishes, and introduced rigorous liturgical standards. Observers likened his reform to a precursor of what St. Charles Borromeo would later achieve in Milan after the Council of Trent.

A life of prayer, reform, and humility — Though elevated to high office, Lawrence's hallmark remained profound humility. Sources say he remained "humble, eternally seeking Heaven" until his death. He passed away on 8 January 1456 (some sources note 1455), in Venice. He was beatified by Pope Clement VII in 1524 and canonized by Pope Alexander VIII in 1690, with his feast widely celebrated on 5 September—the date of his episcopal consecration.

Why his story inspires! — Faced with laxity and corruption, Lawrence didn't close his eyes; he risked reputation and comfort to reform the Order from within, becoming its spiritual rebirth.

He also shows us that greatness need not renounce humility. Lawrence wielded authority with prayer, genuine love for people, and unwavering simplicity.

Finally, known more for his spiritual writings and sermons than for worldly accomplishments, he reminds us that deep prayer can reshape communities.



A few curious facts — Though he didn't establish the Canons, his reforms were so revitalizing that he is often hailed as its second founder. Lawrence's work in northern Italy preceded the Protestant Reformation by about a century—proof that the impulse for renewal pulses within the Church's heart, long before crises strike.

Unlike many churchmen of his noble origin, Lawrence did not pursue political power. His writings emphasize devotion to the Passion of Our Lord, spiritual depth, and humility as true reform forces.

What does his life teach us? — Saint Lawrence Justinian is more than a historic figure. He appears as a pastor and reformer whose greatest tool was prayer. In our parish life, whatever role we might have in it, he invites us to foster holiness by:

- Basing decisions on prayer;
- Addressing challenges with charity and spiritual clarity;
- Letting humility guide us in our words, acts and decisions;
- And remembering that true reform begins with prayerful integrity.

Saint Lawrence Justinian reminds us that sanctity blooms where the effort of making "things better" is founded on prayer and starts with the reform of ourselves. May his example and prayers inspire clergy and faithful alike to serve with humility, vigilance, and love, blending spiritual depth with practical zeal—just as he did in his beloved Venice.

Know the Bible! - The Books of Ezra & Nehemiah (1)

In most modern Bibles, Ezra-Nehemiah is two separate books, but that division happened long after it was written. It was originally a unified work written by a single author who lived long after the Babylonians' invasion of Jerusalem and the exile. Ezra-Nehemiah picks up some fifty years later and tells of the return of some Israelites to Jerusalem and what happened when they rebuilt their lives and the city.

More specifically, the book focuses in on three key leaders who led the rebuilding efforts: Zerubbabel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Zerubbabel first led a large group back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple (Ezra 1-6). About 60 years later, Ezra arrived in Jerusalem to teach the Torah and to rebuild the community (Ezra 7-10). He was soon followed by Nehemiah, who led the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls (Neh 1-7).

All three stories are designed to be parallel to one other. Each begins with a king of Persia being prompted by God to send a leader to Jerusalem while offering resources and support. Then, each leader encounters opposition in their efforts, which they overcome, but in a way that leads to a strange anticlimax.

The Big Idea — Returning to their land does not guarantee a change in the peoples' spiritual state. God will fulfil his covenant promises, but the people need a holistic transformation of their hearts if they are going to love and obey their God.

Ezra 1-6: Zerubbabel leads first exiles back & rebuilds Temple — The story begins with a decree from Cyrus (Ezra 1:1-4), the king of Persia who is moved by God to allow the exiles to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. The author says that this fulfils a promise made by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 25) that the exiles would one day return. Now, this fulfilment should trigger our hopes in many other prophetic promises that Israel's exile was not the end of their story. The reader should recall the prophetic hopes for a messianic king from the line of David (Is 11, Hos 3), for a rebuilt temple where God's holy presence will dwell (Ez 40-48; Zech 2), and for God's Kingdom to come over all the nations and bring his blessing upon everyone (Is 2; Zech 8) just as he promised Abraham (Gen 12,1-3).

It's with all these hopes in mind that we read the story of Zerubbabel. His name means "planted in Babylon." He represents the generation born in Babylonian captivity, and he leads a wave of people back to Jerusalem (1-2).

After they settle in Jerusalem, they rebuild the altar for offering sacrifices and later the temple itself. The foundation laying ceremony (Ezra 3) and the temple's final dedication (Ezra 6) are key moments. The past stories

of the tabernacle and temple's dedication when the fiery cloud of God's presence descended should come to mind (Lev 9; 1 Kings 8). That's not what happens in this case, and while some people were happy about the new temple, the elders who had seen the previous temple of Solomon cry out in grief. This building is nothing like their glorious past or the hopes they had for the future.

It's here that we get the first story of opposition, and it's an odd one. The descendants of the Israelites who were not taken into exile and had been living around Jerusalem for some time come and offer help with the temple rebuilding (Ezra 4). Zerubbabel refuses and says, "You have no part in our temple!" This understandably generates conflict, which Zerubbabel eventually overcomes, but we should feel disappointed. The prophets had envisioned the tribes of Israel coming together with all nations to participate in the worship of the God of Israel when his Kingdom finally came (Is 2; Zech 8). This turn of events is an anticlimactic opening to say the least.

Ezra 7-10: Ezra leads more Israelites back & decrees divorce — In the next section (Ezra 7-10), we move decades into the future and are introduced to Ezra, a leader among the exiled Israelites in Babylon. He's a Torah scholar and teacher and is appointed by Artaxerxes, king of Persia, to lead another wave of people back to Jerusalem. He wants to bring about social and spiritual renewal among the people.

Our hopes are set high, but once again we come to another strange, anticlimactic moment in the story with chapters 9-10. Ezra learns that many of the exiled Israelites had returned and married non-exiles who had been living around Jerusalem, some who were not Israelites and some who probably were. Ezra then appeals to the commands of the Torah that Israel should be holy and separate from the ancient Canaanites (Deut 23,1-4), and continues by saying that the people living around Jerusalem are like the Canaanites and will corrupt the exiles. He offers a prayer of repentance, which is very heartfelt, but then he rallies all the leaders during a rainstorm. He enacts a divorce decree that will annul these marriages and send all these women and their children away. This decree is only partially carried out, but we're given a list of some of the men who went through with it.

This story is strange for a number of reasons. God never commanded Ezra to do any of this. It was the leaders of Jerusalem who compelled Ezra to make the decree. While the contemporary prophet Malachi did say that the exiles should care about purity, he went on to say that God was opposed to divorce (Mal 2,13-16). The mixed results of the decree fit well into this pattern of strange, disappointing endings. But the story continues with Nehemiah…

Psalms 52: The end of the man who loves violence

Psalm 52 is a striking song of rebuke, warning, and thanksgiving. It gives voice to the righteous as they reflect on the arrogance of the wicked and the steadfast love of God. It teaches that life founded on lies and pride will end in ruin, but the one who roots himself in God's love will flourish like a strong and fruitful tree.

Rebuke of the wicked (vv. 1–4) — The psalm begins with powerful words against a figure who is arrogant and destructive. This man loves evil more than good, lies more than truth, and uses words like weapons. His confidence is not in God but in himself, his wealth, and his cleverness. He represents all who trust in their own strength, who build their lives on deceit, and who misuse their influence.

The psalmist's rebuke reminds us that sin is not only personal but has consequences for the wider community. When prideful people exploit others, or when dishonesty becomes a way of life, the fabric of trust is torn apart.

The threat of judgment (v. 5) — The psalm does not only name the problem; it announces God's response. The proud man who sets himself against God cannot last. He will be uprooted like a tree torn from the ground, removed from the land of the living. His boasting ends in destruction.

This picture of judgment is not meant to delight us in another's downfall but to remind us of the seriousness of turning away from God. To live by lies and self-reliance is to build life on sand…

The witness of the righteous (vv. 6–7) — The psalm also shows that the judgment of the wicked has a purpose: it strengthens the faith of the righteous. When the faithful see arrogance brought low, they are reminded that God does not abandon truth or overlook evil. They learn to rejoice in God's justice and to fear him with renewed reverence.

The psalmist observes that the wicked man's boasting is revealed as empty. He trusted in wealth and lies, and even his cruelty seemed like strength to him. Yet all of it fails before the power of God. Here the sinner becomes a warning to others, while the faithful witnesses to God's righteousness.

Thanksgiving and trust (vv. 8–9) — The psalm ends with a beautiful contrast. The wicked man, uprooted and destroyed, stands in stark opposition to the psalmist, who describes himself as a flourishing olive tree in the house of God. The tree is a picture of strength, fruitfulness, and enduring life. Rooted in God's love, the psalmist is unshaken and secure.

This confidence leads to thanksgiving. The psalmist declares he will give thanks to God forever, not in private but in the presence of the faithful

community. His life becomes a testimony to the grace of God, a reminder that true strength and joy are found only in him.

Spiritual meaning for today — Psalm 52 is more than an ancient rebuke of a tyrant; it is a mirror for us. Each of us is faced with the choice of whom or what we trust. Do we place our hope in possessions, influence, or self-reliance? Or do we root ourselves in God's steadfast love? The psalm shows that arrogance leads to isolation and ruin, while humility before God brings stability, peace, and joy.

The psalm also reminds us that faith is not lived alone. The psalmist speaks within the community of the godly, giving thanks before others and drawing strength from shared witness. For us, too, the Church is the place where our faith is nourished, our thanksgiving offered, and our trust in God deepened.

Finally, the psalm offers us hope. In a world where dishonesty and pride often seem to triumph, Psalm 52 assures us that God's justice will prevail. The proud may boast for a time, but their boasting is empty. The faithful, planted in God's love, will endure.

Questions for reflection and prayer — To take the message of Psalm 52 into daily life, here are some questions for personal reflection and prayer:

1) The psalmist rebukes the man who loves lies more than truth. Where do I see the temptation in my own life to shade the truth, exaggerate, or hide behind falsehood? How might I live even more honestly?
2) The wicked man is uprooted because he trusted in his wealth and strength rather than in God. What are the things I am tempted to trust in instead of God? How can I renew my trust in his steadfast love today?
3) The righteous witness the downfall of the wicked and rejoice in God's justice. How do I respond when I see wrongdoing exposed or arrogance humbled? Do I gloat, or do I let it deepen my holy fear for God?
4) The psalmist compares himself to a flourishing olive tree in God's house. In what ways do I experience growth, stability, and fruitfulness when I remain close to God? What practices—prayer, Scripture, worship, service —help my roots go deeper into him?
5) The psalmist promises to give thanks before the community of the faithful. How do I share my gratitude to God with others? Could I be more intentional in speaking about God's goodness, so that my thanksgiving encourages the faith of my community?

Psalm 52 leads us to examine our hearts, to turn away from pride and deceit, and to anchor our lives in the unfailing love of God. It calls us to witness, thanksgiving, and trust. Above all, it points us to the joy of life lived in God's presence, where we are planted like trees that will never be uprooted.

Symbols of Early Christian Art: The Ship

Based on prof. László Vanyó's book



From the earliest centuries, Christians have seen in the image of the ship a profound symbol of the Church. Life on the sea — with its storms, shifting winds, and perils — offered a vivid picture of the Christian journey through the world. To belong to the Church was to step aboard a vessel that Christ Himself steers, carrying His people safely through the deep waters of history toward the harbour of eternal life.

An early writing known as the *Pseudo-Clementines* exhorts believers: *"Love Christ as your Saviour and Helmsman, and believe what He says. Let the rest pray to God for favourable winds, for those who sail must expect all manner of persecution, as they cross the vast and troubled deep."* The Church is here imagined as a great ship carrying people from many places, tossed by storms but moving towards the one Kingdom of God. Its Lord is God Himself, its Helmsman Christ, its crew the ministers of the Church.

This image tells us something vital: in a turbulent world we are not adrift. Christ holds the rudder. His guidance may lead us through storms, but He never abandons His vessel.

The Fathers loved to expand this imagery. The bishop was compared to the captain, the presbyters to sailors, the deacons to those who row, and the catechists to those who set the sails. The faithful are the passengers — but not idle ones. Each has a place and responsibility. A ship can only move forward when all cooperate, each fulfilling their duty for the sake of the whole.

In this picture we glimpse the early Christian sense of the Church as a living body in which every role matters. It was not enough merely to be carried along: the voyage required unity, mutual support, and faithfulness to Christ who guides.

The seas are rarely calm. Early writers reminded their congregations that the Church, like a ship, must often endure storms: persecution, heresy, division, temptation. The winds represent false teaching, the waves worldly hostility, the reefs the snares of the enemy. And yet the ship does not sink, because it is steered by Christ. The mast is the Cross, the sail is the love of Christ, the anchor is Christian hope.

The Church Fathers saw in these storms a trial of faith. To remain on board, to hold fast to the ship, was to trust that Christ would bring His people

through. Hippolytus described the sea as the world, the mast as the Cross, and the sail as the love that binds the faithful to Christ. Even as the waves rise, the ship presses on towards the heavenly shore.

The connection with Noah's Ark was never far from mind. Just as Noah and his family were saved through the waters by entering the Ark, so too Christians are saved through the waters of baptism by entering the Church. The Ark's single door was Christ, its timbers a sign of the Cross. In a chaotic and perishing world, the Ark offered a place of refuge and salvation.

This is why the saying grew in the early Church: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* — "outside the Church there is no salvation." It was not meant in pride, but in recognition that God Himself had provided the Ark of salvation, and to abandon it was to return to the flood.

Other writers enriched the picture further. Some spoke of the ship's mast as a ladder rising to heaven, recalling Jacob's vision. The crow's nest became a sign of rest after toil, while the anchor was likened to Christ's firm promise. The harbour represented the Kingdom of God — the safe shore awaiting the faithful after their long voyage.

These symbols remind us that our journey has a goal. The Church is not wandering endlessly; she is guided to a destination. However storm-tossed the voyage, the harbour of eternal peace awaits.

By the third century, the ship became a fully developed symbol of the universal Church. Writers like Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Origen connected it to baptism, to the unity of the Church, and to the hope of salvation. "Whoever is not in the Ark is not in the Church," Tertullian declared — a statement later echoed by Cyprian and taken up in the tradition. To be in the ship was to belong to Christ and His people; to jump overboard was to embrace peril.

At the same time, the ship pointed beyond the present world. It carried an eschatological hope: the end of the voyage, the safe arrival into the Kingdom of God. For this reason the image was not only pastoral but also missionary. The Church was to be the great vessel drawing people from every nation aboard, so that together they might sail to the heavenly city.

The ancient symbol of the ship still speaks powerfully today. We live amid winds and waves — confusion, hostility, temptation. Yet the Church is not adrift. She is Christ's vessel, with the Cross as her mast, hope as her anchor, and the Spirit as her wind. Each of us has a role to play, whether great or small, in keeping the ship moving forward.

And the promise remains: however storm-tossed the voyage, the harbour lies ahead. The Lord of the Church is also its Helmsman, and He will bring His people safely to shore.

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The Vicar's day-off is Tuesday. With enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings, Banns, or Funerals, please, contact the Vicar. ***If you are in hospital, live in a care home, or are house-bound and you wish to receive Holy Communion and/or Anointing, or to make your Confession, please let the Vicar know and he will be very happy to visit you.***

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