

Cardinal to Catholics – urge your MP to vote against the deeply flawed and under-scrutinised Bill on assisted suicide

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, has written a pastoral letter urging Catholics to contact their MPs – even if they have done so already – to oppose the Bill that seeks to legalise assisted suicide.



As well as restating the Bishops' objections to the Bill in principle, Cardinal Nichols expresses his dissatisfaction regarding the "deeply flawed" parliamentary process.

"It is a fundamental duty of every MP," he writes, "to ensure that legislation is not imposed on our society which has not been properly scrutinised and which will bring about damaging consequences."

Questioning why there has not been a Royal Commission or independent inquiry before considering changing the law on matters of, literally, life and death, the Cardinal wrote:

"The Bill itself is long and complex and was published just days before MPs voted on it, giving them inadequate time to consult or reflect upon it. The time for debate was minimal. The Committee examining the Bill took only three days of evidence: not all voices were heard, and it comprises an undue number of supporters of the Bill. In short, this is no way to legislate on such an important and morally complex issue."

Ahead of the Bill's Third Reading and vote, likely on or around Friday, 25 April, Cardinal Nichols points out that many vital questions remain unanswered:

"Can MPs guarantee that the scope of the Bill will not be extended? In almost every country where assisted suicide has been introduced the current scope is wider than was originally intended. What role, if any, will the judiciary have in the process? We were told that judicial oversight was a necessary and vital part of the process; now we are told it isn't needed at all. What will protect the vulnerable from coercion, or from feeling a burden on family? Can the National Health Service cope with assisted suicide or will it, as the Health Secretary has warned, cause cuts elsewhere in the NHS? Can MPs guarantee that no medical practitioner or care worker would be compelled to take part in assisted suicide? Would this mean the establishment of a 'national death service'?" ... To read more, visit <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/cardinal-assisted-suicide-pastoral-letter/>

Found Alive Again

The Liturgy this Lent has shown us the God of the Exodus. He is a mighty and gracious God, Who out of faithfulness to His covenant has done "great things" for His people, as today's Psalm puts it.



But the "things of long ago," Isaiah tells us in today's First Reading, are nothing compared to the "something new" that He will do in the future.

Today's First Reading and Psalm look back to the marvelous deeds of the Exodus. Both see in the Exodus a pattern and prophecy of the future, when God will restore the fortunes of His people fallen in sin. The readings today look forward to a still greater Exodus, when God will gather in the exiled tribes of Israel that had been scattered to the four winds, the ends of the earth.

The new Exodus that Israel waited and hoped for has come in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Like the adulterous woman in today's Gospel, all have been spared by the Lord's compassion. All have heard His words of forgiveness, His urging to repentance, to be sinners no more. Like Paul in today's Epistle, Christ has taken possession of every one, claimed each as a child of our heavenly Father.

In the Church, God has formed a people for Himself to announce His praise, just as Isaiah said He would. And as Isaiah promised, He has given His "chosen people" living waters to drink in the desert wastelands of the world (see John 7:37-39).

But our God is ever a God of the future, not of the past. We are to live with hopeful hearts, "forgetting what lies behind but straining forward to what lies ahead," as Paul tells us. His salvation, Paul says, is power in the present, "the power of His resurrection."

We are to live awaiting a still greater and final Exodus, pursuing "the goal, the prize of God's upward calling," striving in faith to attain the last new thing God promises—"the resurrection of the dead."

Scott Hann



English Martyrs
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5TH SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR C

Entrance Antiphon: Ps 42:1-2

Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

First Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 126

What great deeds the LORD worked for us!
Indeed, we were glad.

Second Reading: Philippians 3:8-14

Gospel Acclamation:

Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.

Even now, says the LORD, return to me with all your heart, for I am gracious and merciful.

Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.

Gospel: John 8:1-11

Communion Antiphon: Jn 8:10-11

Has no one condemned you, woman? No one, Lord. Neither shall I condemn you. From now on, sin no more.

SATURDAY 5th April ... St Vincent Ferrer

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... **Confessions after Mass** ... Raymond Traynor RIP (A. Kershaw)
4:30 pm Adoration and confession before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford
5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford ... Thanksgiving for Kim & Douglas
5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot
6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... David Woodley RIP (Anne Johns)

SUNDAY 6th April ... Fifth Sunday of Lent

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Joanne Bentair & All deceased relatives of Capp Family RIP
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford

MONDAY 7th April ... NO MASS ... St John Baptist de la Salle

TUESDAY 8th April

6:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot
11:30 am Stations of the Cross St John Wallingford
12:00 noon Mass St John Wallingford

WEDNESDAY 9th April

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Kamdi's birthday thanksgiving (Chioma)

THURSDAY 10th April

6:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot
9:30 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Simone Stone RIP

FRIDAY 11th April ... St Stanislaus

9:30 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Rosario Ellose's soul (Connie)
6:00 pm Stations of the Cross English Martyrs Didcot

SATURDAY 12th April

9:30 am NO MASS
4:30 pm Adoration and confession before Vigil Mass St John Wallingford
5:00 pm Vigil Mass St John Wallingford
5:50 pm Adoration before Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot
6:30 pm Vigil Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... David, Alan & Joyce Woodley RIP (Kim & Douglas)

SUNDAY 13th April ... Palm Sunday

9:00 am Mass English Martyrs Didcot ... Jacqueline Thomas recovery from operation (Achilleus)
11:00 am Mass St John Wallingford ... Kylie-Anne Gillen RIP (Noel Clifford)

In your prayers, please remember: Margaret O'Conner, Anne O'Brien, Jenny Evans, Mary Guinan, Ann Tomline, Joan Walker, Joan Russell, Joan Turner, Nina Oakes, Jacob Oakes, Pat McLoughlin, Barry Molloy, Annie Furlong and all the sick and housebound of our churches.



CAFOD Myanmar Earthquake Appeal

Following the devastating earthquake in Myanmar, CAFOD is responding through the Catholic Church there to support families affected by the disaster. Your donations will provide essentials like water, food, solar lights, and mosquito nets. Please give to CAFOD's Myanmar Earthquake Appeal in church or you can donate online at cafod.org.uk/myanmar or by calling 0303 303 3030. You can also text EARTHQUAKE to 70450 to donate £10.



Young Vincentians Youth Group is coming to Didcot and Wallingford!

Come along to hear about our exciting launch. We will meet on Sunday 27 April after the 0900 mass at English Martyrs for our young members of the Church (ages approximately secondary school). Find out more about us from: <https://svp.org.uk/youth-svp/about-us>. We will use the formula "See, Think, Do" to put our faith into action to support those in our community. We hope to see you soon!

Holy Places Second Collection 2025

Portsmouth Roman Catholic Diocese is raising money for Christians in the Holy Land. The Pontifical Good Friday Collection supports the Christian community in the Middle East. This last year has been particularly challenging for this small community which seeks 'to be the salt, light and leaven of the Gospel' in the region, often living in difficult circumstances. "May this year's collection pro Terra Sancta be an opportunity for everyone not to ignore the difficult situation of our brothers and sisters of the Holy Places but rather to lighten their burdens." – Leonardo Card. Sandri. Thank you for your support.

Seniors' Lunch is 10th April

Join our Seniors' Lunch this week at 12 noon on Thursday 10th April. You have a choice of mains including Vegetable Quiche and Egg Fried Rice, served with mixed vegetables salad and complimented with jelly, ice cream and fresh fruit for desserts. Tea and coffee served at the end. Please put your name on the list on our notice board outside the tea-room. There will be NO MASS before the lunch. Please save the date. Thank you.



Food Donation in Lent

In the period of Lent, we remember those who are suffering and need our help. We share what we have and can give with those who are in need. Please bring food items for donation to the Didcot and Wallingford Food Banks. Food items need to have 3 months best before dates. Thank you.



Święconka—The Blessing of Easter Baskets

The blessing of the Easter baskets is one of the most enduring and beloved Polish traditions on Holy Saturday. It is called Święconka. This special event takes place in many of our parishes across the diocese because of our Polish families who enrich our parish and liturgy. Are you Polish? Do you want to organize or be part of those to organise it on Holy Saturday 19th April? Please let the Parish Office know if you want to help. Thank you.



Divine Mercy Sunday is 27th April

Divine Mercy Sunday is Sunday 27th April. Come join us at English Martyrs Didcot at 2pm. We hope to think of the Message of Divine Mercy, Hour of Mercy, Divine Mercy chaplet, Adoration and Benediction, Talk on Divine Mercy, Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



Formation for Extraordinary Ministers

Fr Anthony Fyk, Director of Liturgical Formation, will be running further formation days, one for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion which will include a session on taking Holy Communion to the sick and housebound on Saturday 3rd May and another for Readers which will include a session on Lectio Divina on Saturday 18th October. There will also be a day for Ministers of Children's Liturgy on Saturday 7th June, further details to follow. The sessions will take place at St Bede's Church/Hall in Basingstoke. Anyone interested is encouraged to register by sending an email to liturgy@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.



Palm Sunday Outdoor Procession

Next Sunday 13th April is Palm Sunday! We are going to bear witness to the Lord by publicly carrying our palms in procession and singing to the Lord! The procession will begin from Didcot Girls' School driveway into English Martyrs Church. Please arrive at 8:45am and gather at the driveway of Didcot Girls' School. The procession will start at 8:50am so as to get into the Church for Mass at 9:00am.

In St. John's Wallingford, the procession will begin from the Tea Room out into Wood Street through City Centre and back into the Church via the main entrance. Please come let us celebrate the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. Bring palms or symbols of Christ entry into Jerusalem that are particular to your country. Thank you.



Joint Christians and Catholics Good Friday Walk of Witness in Didcot

The Didcot Good Friday Walk of Witness and outdoor services will be on 18th April this year. The meeting will be led by Nick White from King's Church, worship led by Sara Green from Didcot Baptist Church, with a band drawn from many churches, prayers led by Rachel Ciampoli from Ladygrove Church, kids' activities by Louise Brown from Didcot Baptist Church, readings by young people from across the churches, and talk by Yinka Oyekan from The Gate Church. There will be palm crosses and evangelistic materials to give out to interested passers-by and an opportunity to offer your prayers. Refreshments will be kindly provided by Didcot Methodist Church from 11:15am. At 11:50am we will gather outside Didcot Methodist Church and walk together to Cornerstone, for an outdoor service at 12:00pm.



Can You Help As A Cleaner?

Do you have half an hour to help clean the Church? We need a few more hands to help in cleaning and dusting in St. John the Evangelist Church. You don't have to commit to every week nor every month. You could just "dip in and out". You could as well commit to certain days or months. Please consider putting your name down in the schedule at the back of the church.



Sacristans Needed in Didcot

We urgently need volunteers as Sacristans in Didcot. This role is open to those who can offer their free time as they wish. A rota enables you to come in and go as fits your routine on weekdays and weekends. The role of the sacristan in the Catholic Church includes the following duties: Preparing for Mass: Setting up the altar, arranging liturgical items, and laying out vestments for the clergy. Caring for sacred vessels: Cleaning and maintaining items like the chalice and paten. Assisting with ceremonies: Helping with the ringing of bells and other tasks during Mass when no altar server is available. Key to the Church and Sacristy will be made available. Training and support are available. If you are interested, please contact the Parish Office, Fr Dominic, or Anna Richardson. Thank you.

Calling all Readers: Save the Date!

On Saturday 17th May, we are having a day for Readers at English Martyrs Church Didcot from 10:00am to 2:30pm. This day is for ALL our Readers: please do your best to come.



GiftAid Envelops Now Available

The new Gift Aid envelope boxes for the coming tax year are now available and ready for collection at the entrance of Church. If you are a taxpayer and you give to the Church, we applaud you. You can claim back 25p every time on every £1 you give when you sign the giftaid form. You have nothing to lose. Please collect a form for yourself and a friend. You can reach the parish Finance Administrator via email if you need clarifications by email at accounts.didwal@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk. Thank you.



Prayer Board for First Holy Communion

Our First Holy Communion Team would like to invite you to participate in a prayer chain to pray for the lovely children who are preparing for their First Holy Communion and their families. There is a 'prayer board' set up in Didcot, with the self portraits and name of the children. If you want to participate in this prayer chain, please use the pins provided to post a praying hands icon next to the children's name and say a prayer for them. The First Holy Communion will take place during the Corpus Christi Sunday mass on 22nd June.

