

The Parish of St. Edward the Confessor

Registered Charity no. 234025

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Newsletter for the week of 15th February 2026 *Sunday Readings Cycle A* *Weekday Readings Cycle II*

Readings for the 6th Ordinary Sunday: Sirach 15:15-20; Psalm 119(118); 1 Corinthians 2:6-10; Matthew 5: 17-37

Psalm's Response: Blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord!

Saturday 14th Feb 5.30pm 1st MASS of the 6th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

Sunday 15th Feb 10.30am MASS of the 6th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

Monday 16th Feb 9.15am Mass

Tuesday 17th Feb (Optional: Seven Founders of the Order of Servites)

Wednesday 18th Feb **11.30am Mass (in church) & 7.00pm (in C. Room) with Blessing & Distribution of Ashes**

Thursday 19th Feb

Friday 20th Feb 1.00pm Mass (in Hospital Chapel)

Saturday 21st Feb 10.00am Mass

10.30-11am Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 21st Feb 5.30pm 1st Mass of the 1st Sunday of Lent

Sunday 22nd Feb 10.30am Mass of the 1st Sunday of Lent

Readings for the 1st Sunday of Lent: Genesis 2:7-9,3:1-7 Psalm 51(50); Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11

ASH WEDNESDAY: START OF LENT

-Next Wed 18th Feb Mass at 11.30am (in church) & 7.00pm (in Community Room -enter by C. Room door only)

- Ashes will be blessed and distributed at each Mass

- Ash Wednesday (Good Friday also) is a Day of Fasting & Abstinence for all well-bodied adults over 16 years

STATIONS of the CROSS & LENT SOUP LUNCH

Lent Fridays: 20th 27th in February, & 6th, 13th 20th & 27th in March at **12noon** in the Community Room: the PPC or organising Stations of the Cross in the Community Room followed by a simple Lent Soup Lunch- a simple way of joining together to keep the spirit of Lent alive through the whole of Lent. Volunteers are requested to help for setting up & clearing up afterwards

LENTEN ONLINE COURSE "WE DARE TO ASK"

For parishioners either individually or in groups to prepare their hearts & minds in Lent to renew our Baptismal Promises at Easter: 5 online sessions to deepen baptismal faith & for the Holy Spirit's guidance to renew relationships with Jesus. Each session has its page- click the links: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/we-dare-to-ask-session-one/>; <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/we-dare-to-ask-session-two/>; <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/we-dare-to-ask-session-three/>; https://www.cbcew.org.uk/we-dare-to-ask-session-four https://www.cbcew.org.uk/we-dare-to-ask-session-five

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Fri 6th March 2.00pm at Gawsworth Methodists', at Dark La./ Congleton Rd. crossroads-See Poster & Jean Bell for details.

GIVING with GIFT AID

Parishioners regularly giving to the offertory collection, who pay income tax, can take advantage of the government scheme to support charities including our parish & diocese by joining the Gift Aid scheme. By giving through a monthly Standing Order (S/O) or through placing your offertory cash (but not a cheque) contribution in a *numbered envelope*, our parish Gift Aid organiser, *Chris Doyle*, can make a claim on behalf of the parish for a tax reclaim of 25% of the amount given by you – a significant boost to parish income. To Contact *Chris Doyle* chris.doyle46@ntlworld.com; mobile: 07834 216148

THANK YOU for YOUR GENEROUS GIVING

Last Sunday's Collection £214.70

GET IN TOUCH QUICKLY –IF YOU ARE SICK If you or your relative enters Macclesfield Hospital or East Cheshire Hospice let Fr. Peter C. know as soon as possible tel: 01625 423576 or by e-mail st.edmacc@gmail.com

DIARY OF EVENT

Sun 1st March CAFOD Lent Fast Collection

Sun 22nd March Missionary Sisters' Appeal

Sun 5th April Easter Sunday

Sat 7th March Planned date for 1st Sac. of Reconciliation

Sun 30th March Start of British Summer Time (BST)

Sun 17th May Planned date for 1st Holy Communion

Marriage, Sanctuary of Life

When people talk about marriage in terms of their own happiness, they just might be forgetting someone.

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife,
and the two shall become one flesh.*

This is a great mystery, but I speak in reference to Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31-32).

St. Paul could not have been more correct. This Christian teaching—that marriage and the relationship between Christ and the Church, shed light on each other—remains “a great mystery.” What can it mean? At the very least, it must mean that marriage is a far weightier matter than bridal magazines and television shows indicate. It also means that God himself made marriage, and had it in mind when he made two “opposite” sexes who are able to become “one flesh.” Finally, from the reference to Christ and his Church, we get the distinct impression that marriage—like the relationship between God and the People of God—might involve great sacrifice for the other, total fidelity, and not a few ups and downs.

The New Testament’s direct teachings on marriage—St. Paul’s above, and Jesus’ in Matthew 19:6 (“what God has joined together, no human being must separate”)—were prefigured in the Old Testament’s many allusions to the marital qualities of the relationship between God and Israel, right down to calling Israel an adulteress when she strayed from fidelity to God.

How far is this picture from our modern conversations about marriage which, when they are not about the gown or the “destination wedding,” still verge on the economic and the utilitarian? Not a week goes by that we don’t read about a new study or survey talking about young men and women making strategic decisions about marriage based on their educational plans, their incomes, and/or their desires to consume certain experiences and adventures before settling down to the adult life of marriage and children. Increasingly frequent, too, are stories or studies purporting to show the “death of marriage” on the grounds that a sexually-active single life or cohabitation are essentially superior, or that women would do better to enjoy their newly elevated incomes alone, or that fidelity is well-nigh impossible (and maybe not even desirable).

Starting with the last point, St. Pope John Paul II could not have been clearer in his Encyclical letter *The Gospel of Life* (Evangelium Vitae, no. 81): “The meaning of life is found in giving and receiving love.” For most people, that meaning is discovered in marriage. It is no surprise that John Paul II calls marriage “the primordial” (i.e., the first, most fundamental) “sacrament,” and the “central point of the ‘sacrament of creation’” (Pope John Paul II, Wednesday Audience, Oct. 6, 1982). In other words, and simplified greatly, the authentic gift of self between a man and a woman in marriage is bound up with the mystery of Christ and the Church. In this sacrament, husband and wife make visible the invisible grace of the perpetual, fruitful love of Christ, who as Son of God belongs to an eternal communion of love known as the Trinity. God desired to enter into the most intimate communion with his creation by coming among us, as one of us—Jesus Christ, true God and true man—and by giving himself for the life of the world. Married couples manifest this “invisible reality” of communion through a lifetime of mutual, perpetual self-donation, which is also the source of procreation.

It seems odd to modern ears, no doubt, that we talk about this very human, very common, highly imperfect experience of romantic and practical love we call marriage, as a glimpse of God. It takes some getting used to. But that is what we are called to do because that is what marriage is. Marriage is both a gift and a task (to borrow more language from John Paul II). Both John Paul II and Benedict XVI have reminded us further, and in gorgeous terms, that our dignity as human beings demands nothing less than what marriage is. In other words, when spouses say to each other “I love you, and I wish to have children with you,” nothing less than all their lives, nothing less than all their lives, nothing less than all their persons, will do.

It has also become quite apparent today that the Catholic “model” of marriage—faithful, exclusive, permanent and procreative—“works.” In fact, it is the model that people, in general, long for, whether Catholic or not. In fact, people who take pains to avoid some of the most common impediments to successful marriage—among them, cohabitation and non-marital childbearing—are more likely to achieve a marriage that is lasting and includes children. Both they and their children then reap many of the advantages of marriage: marital and financial stability, emotional security and educational attainment, among many others.

Catholics hold that marriage is a vocation, a “call.” It is a way of life that offers continual opportunities to be in loving service to the other. Marriage has a way of calling us to make this happen, and of making us want it to happen. It is both a splendid reality and serious business. It is not to be entered into in an unthinking way. The person you marry—and his or her salvation—is a permanent part of your own path to salvation. Clearly God is in the midst of it. Consider that the majority of those who marry still do hold onto one another until separated by death. And so, if you thought marriage was a grand calling, a dramatic part of existence, you would be right.



Relax

Make the Sign of the Cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Then read the Gospel — preferably aloud and slowly — paying attention to any words that stand out to you.



Read

This Sunday's Gospel : **JESUS TEACHES THE TRUE MEANING OF THE LAW**



Jesus said to his disciples, 'I tell you, if your virtue goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven. You have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not kill; and if anyone does kill he must answer for it before the court. But I say this to you: anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court. You have learnt how it was said: You must not commit adultery. But I say this to you: if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Again, you have learnt how it was said to our ancestors: You must not break your oath, but must fulfil your oaths to the Lord. But I say this to you: do not swear at all. All you need say is "Yes" if you mean yes, "No" if you mean no; anything more than this comes from the evil one.'

Did any words or phrases stand out to you in the Gospel? If so, take a few moments to meditate on them.

Reflect

Now read the Gospel again and consider what the Lord might be saying to you, or asking of you, through it. Then continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection...



Jesus is the completion of the Law of God, given to Israel through Moses. He has come not to sweep it away but to perfect it. In this part of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew has gathered together six instances (four this week, two in next Sunday's Gospel) of the ways in which Jesus brings the Law to perfection. The first factor to notice, however, is that Jesus does not hesitate to adjust the divine Law on his own authority, for he too has divine authority. Each amendment begins with a statement of the Old Law and boldly goes on, 'But I say this to you...!'. Each of the alterations has its own character. The first is about enmity, the sixth about love. About enmity, it is not enough merely to forego violent injury; we must even expel enmity from our hearts, positively seeking reconciliation, whether the offence is our fault or not. About lust, it is similarly not enough to forego acts of lust; we must not even harbour such thoughts in our hearts. About truth, it is not enough to keep a legal oath; we must be people whose every word can be relied upon. These are Jesus' demanding standards.

Have I allowed any enmity to fester? Can I solve it now? Am I a person whose every word can be trusted as true?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

Rest

Now call to mind the Lord's love for you, remembering that through this scripture the Lord is truly present. Then silently and prayerfully listen for God's voice and rest in God's love.



Respond & Request

Thank God for any insight you may have received, and respond by asking the Holy Spirit to bless you with a spiritual gift or help you to grow in a particular fruit of the Spirit.

You might pray for wisdom, courage, faithfulness, self-control, patience, generosity, joy, kindness, love, peace, faith, chastity - or another grace - to help you live out your faith this week.



Remember

This Wednesday's word for our families is **TEACHER**
(To see the Family Version, please visit: wednesdayword.org)



As you pray for your loved ones, please remember to pray for the Church and for the families connected to our schools.

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. 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.



First Reading: *Contrasts*



Ecclesiasticus 15: 15-20

If you wish, you can keep the commandments; to behave faithfully is within your power. He has set fire and water before you; put out your hand to whichever you prefer. Man has life and death before him; whichever a man likes better will be given him. For vast is the wisdom of the Lord; he is almighty and all-seeing. His eyes are on those who fear him; he notes every action of man. He never commanded anyone to be godless; he has given no one permission to sin.

Readings from Ecclesiasticus are rare occurrences in the Sunday cycle: it is good to remind ourselves of the origin of the book. It is one of the Wisdom Books of the Bible, written towards the end of the Old Testament period, when prophecy had come to an end. The fierce corrections of the prophets and their inspiring promises of coming salvation were no more, and the word of

the Lord came in collections of wise sayings to guide conduct, inspired by acute awareness that the Lord was the source of all wisdom. This collection of wisdom was brought together by a sage and experienced scribe of the Law at Jerusalem named Ben Sira. It was taken by the author's grandson to Alexandria in Egypt and translated into Greek for the Greek-speaking Jews there. Only recently have manuscripts been discovered containing most of the Hebrew original. In today's passage Ben Sira sets out the contrasting choices which face us, to which we can freely reach out our hands. It is one of the chief passages in the Bible which stresses our own free will. Of our own volition we may turn to good or to ill. God calls for our love and response, but does not force us, for love must be a free act.

How can I freely express my love for God and for his loving plan?



Second Reading: *The Hidden Wisdom of God*



1 Corinthians 2: 6-10

We have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him. These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

Among the recipients of this letter of Paul's were philosophers who prided themselves on their wisdom, the Greek understanding of the nature of things and the structure of the universe. The wisdom which Paul teaches is beyond human understanding. What, then, is the point of it? Firstly, it concerns the mystery hidden throughout

the earlier history of the world and of humankind. The plan of God has been working itself out throughout the history, throughout the affectionate, the tender, the forgiving dealings of God with human beings. But it has been made clear only by the coming of Christ into human history as the keystone which makes sense of the whole structure. Secondly, we can still not fully understand it. We still have not fathomed the meaning of life and all its strange and unpredictable twistings and turnings. And yet we are assured by the Spirit of God that there is a meaning, and that this meaning is for our glory. Whatever goes wrong, as well as whatever goes right is, by God's grace, so arranged for our glory. Thirdly, this same Spirit which penetrates the meaning of everything, even the depths of God, is the divine Spirit which lives in us and informs us as Christians.

What seeming disasters in your life have in fact turned out to be part of the saving plan of God for you?

“We are assured by the Spirit of God that there is a meaning [to life], and that this meaning is for our glory.”

The Wednesday Word: Connecting Home, School and Parish through the Word of God