The Parish of St. Edward the Confessor

Registered Charity no. 234025

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Newsletter for the week of 18th January 2026 *Sunday Readings Cycle A* *Weekday Readings Cycle I I*

Readings for the 2nd Ordinary Sunday: Isaiah 49:3,5-6; Psalm 40(39); 1 Corinthians 1:1-3; 1:29-34

Psalm's Response: Behold, I have come, Lord, to do your will.

Saturday 17th Jan 5.30pm 1st MASS of the 2nd SUNDAY of ORDINARY TIME – *Day of Prayer for World Peace*
Sunday 18th Jan 10.30am MASS of the 2nd SUNDAY of ORDINARY TIME – *Day of Prayer for World Peace*
Monday 19th Jan 9.15am Mass *(Optional: St. Wulstan, bishop)*
Tuesday 20th Jan *(Optional: St. Fabian, pope, martyr) (St. Sebastian, martyr)*
Wednesday 21st Jan 11.30am Mass *St. Agnes, virgin, martyr*
Thursday 22nd Jan *(St. Vincent, deacon, martyr)*
Friday 23rd Jan 1.00pm Mass (in Hospital Chapel)
Saturday 24th Jan 10.00am Mass *St. Francis de Sales, bishop, doctor of the Church*
10.30-11am Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturday 25th Jan 5.30pm 1st Mass of the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sunday 26th Jan 10.30am Mass of the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings for the 3rd Ordinary Sunday: Isaiah 9:1b- 4; Psalm 28(27); 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17; Matthew 4:12-23

REMEMBER OUR RETIRED & SICK PRIESTS
This Sunday 18th Jan is the annual Collection for the *Retired Priests' Fund* is held. Please would you continue to build the Fund to help meet the needs of our sick & retired priests? Baskets will be at the church doors. To make a donation online please go to https://www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/retired-priests-fund

FOOD BANK
The *Silk Life* Food Bank is open to donate items. It is this time in the New Year when struggling people & families often need the most help. See the lists on posters e.g.: UHT milk, stewed steak, beef casserole, chilli con carne, instant mash..

PRAYER VIGIL FOR PEACE
Today Sat 17th Jan 8-9pm at St. Alban's Church; St. Alban's Justice & Peace Group invites you to join them for 1 hour with Taizé chants, silence & prayer for Peace & Christian Unity. Live stream at www.stalbanmacc.org.uk

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN CHESHIRE
This Sun 18th Jan 5pm: a service to mark the start of the *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* at Chester Cathedral, CH1 2DY on The Guest Speaker will be *Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski*, Bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of the Holy Family of London. This service brings together believers from many traditions to pray for peace, justice and deeper unity in our communities and our world. The service will also feature the Chester Taizé Choir. Refreshments will be served after the service.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSES
3 Marriage Preparation course are offered this year by Shrewsbury Diocese. Each course runs over 2 consecutive Saturdays 9.30am to 4.30 pm each day: 1) St Clare's Church Parish Hall on the 7th & 14th February at Downsfield Road, Lache, Chester, GB CH4 8HH ; 2) St. Vincent de Paul Church Westleigh Parish Hall on 28th of February & 7th March 2026 at Groby Road Altrincham WA14 2BQ 3)Shrewsbury Cathedral Parish Hall on the 21st & 28th March : Entrance: Town Walls Shrewsbury SY1 1UE.Registration is essential: please contact MONIKA at: monika.golembiewska@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL
Tues 10th Feb 7.00pm meeting of the PPC in the Community Room. Items for the Agenda to Chair John Mears 07483 801884 john_mears@outlook.com or Sec. Caroline Mottram 07453 276874 / caroline.mottram@talk.talk.net

THANK YOU for YOUR GENEROSITY Last Sunday's Collection £ 275.20

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 EVENTS
Wed 18th Feb Ash Wednesday
Sun 5th April Easter Sunday

Extracts From the Message of Pope Leo XIV for World Peace 1st Jan'26

Peace be with you all: Towards an "unarmed and disarming" peace

"Peace be with you!" This ancient greeting, still in use today in many cultures, was infused with new life on the evening of Easter on the lips of the risen Jesus. *"Peace be with you"* (Jn 20:19, 21) is his Word that does not merely desire peace, but truly brings about a lasting transformation in those who receive it, and consequently in all of reality. For this reason, the Apostles' successors give voice every day throughout the world to the most silent of revolutions: *"Peace be with you!"* From the very evening of my election as Bishop of Rome, I have wanted to join my own greeting to this universal proclamation. And I would like to reiterate that this is the peace of the risen Christ – a peace that is unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering. It comes from God who loves us all unconditionally……...

An unarmed peace

Shortly before being arrested, in a moment of intimate confidence, Jesus said to those who were with him: "*Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives."* And he immediately added: "*Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid"* (Jn 14:27). Their distress and fear were certainly connected to the violence soon to befall him. But, more deeply, the Gospels do not hide the fact that what troubled the disciples was his non-violent response: a path that they all, Peter first among them, contested; yet the Master asked them to follow this path to the end. The way of Jesus continues to cause unease and fear. He firmly repeats to those who would defend him by force: "*Put your sword back into its sheath*" (Jn 18:11; cf. Mt 26:52). The peace of the risen Jesus is unarmed, because his was an unarmed struggle in the midst of concrete historical, political and social circumstances. Christians must together bear prophetic witness to this novelty, mindful of the tragedies in which they have too often been complicit. The great parable of the Last Judgment invites all Christians to act with mercy in this awareness (cf. Mt 25:31-46). In doing so, they will find brothers and sisters at their side who, in different ways, have listened to the pain of others and freed themselves inwardly from the deception of violence. Although many people today have hearts ready for peace, they are often overcome by a great sense of powerlessness before an increasingly uncertain world. Saint Augustine had already pointed out this particular paradox: "*It is not difficult to possess peace; it is, perhaps, more difficult to praise it. To praise peace, we may find that we lack the necessary talent; we search for the right ideas and weigh our words. But to have peace, it is there, within reach, and we can possess it without effort."*

When we treat peace as a distant ideal, we cease to be scandalized when it is denied, or even when war is waged in its name. We seem to lack those "right ideas," the well-considered words and the ability to say that peace is near. When peace is not a reality that is lived, cultivated and protected, then aggression spreads into domestic and public life. In the relations between citizens and rulers, it could even be considered a fault not to be sufficiently prepared for war, not to react to attacks, and not to return violence for violence. Far beyond the principle of legitimate defence, such confrontational logic now dominates global politics, deepening instability and unpredictability day by day. It is no coincidence that repeated calls to increase military spending, and the choices that follow, are presented by many government leaders as a justified response to external threats. The idea of the deterrent power of military might, especially nuclear deterrence, is based on the irrationality of relations between nations, built not on law, justice and trust, but on fear and domination by force. "Consequently," as Saint John XXIII had already written in his day, "*people are living in the grip of constant fear. They are afraid that at any moment the impending storm may break upon them with horrific violence. And they have good reasons for their fear, for there is certainly no lack of such weapons. While it is difficult to believe that anyone would dare to assume responsibility for initiating the appalling slaughter and destruction that war would bring in its wake, there is no denying that the conflagration could be started by some chance and unforeseen circumstance*."……..

……. An essential service that religions must render to a suffering humanity is to guard against the growing temptation to weaponize even thoughts and words. The great spiritual traditions, as well as right reason, teach us to look beyond blood ties or ethnicity, beyond associations that accept only those who are similar and reject those who are different. Today, we see that this cannot be taken for granted. Unfortunately, it has become increasingly common to drag the language of faith into political battles, to bless nationalism, and to justify violence and armed struggle in the name of religion. Believers must actively refute, above all by the witness of their lives, these forms of blasphemy that profane the holy name of God. Therefore, alongside action, it is more necessary than ever to cultivate prayer, spirituality, and ecumenical and interreligious dialogue as paths of peace and as languages of encounter within traditions and cultures. Throughout the world, it is to be hoped that "every community become a 'house of peace,' where one learns how to defuse hostility through dialogue, where justice is practised and forgiveness is cherished." Now more than ever, we must show that peace is not a utopia by fostering attentive and life-giving pastoral creativity. n today's world, justice and human dignity are at an alarming risk amid global power imbalances. How can we live in this time of destabilisation and conflict, and free ourselves from evil? We need to encourage and support every spiritual, cultural and political initiative that keeps hope alive, countering the spread of "fatalistic terms, as if the dynamics involved were the product of anonymous impersonal forces or structures independent of the human will."…….we must promote self-awareness in civil societies, forms of responsible association, experiences of non-violent participation, and practices of restorative justice on both a small and large scale. Leo XIII had already made this clear in his Encyclical Rerum Novarum: *"The consciousness of his own weakness urges the human person to call in aid from without. We read in Scripture: 'Two are better than one, for they have the advantage of their society. For if they fall, him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up' (Eccles 4:9-10). And further: 'A brother that is helped by his brother is like a strong city' (Prov 18:19)."*

Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 18th January 2026

The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time — John 1: 29-34

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 : THE LAMB OF GOD

Seeing Jesus coming towards him, John said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. This is the one I spoke of when I said, "A man is coming after me who ranks before me because he existed before me. I did not know him myself, and yet it was to reveal him to Israel that I came baptising with water."' John also declared, 'I saw the Spirit coming down on him from heaven like a dove and resting on him. I did not know him myself, but he who sent me to baptise with water had said to me, "The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is going to baptise with the Holy Spirit." Yes, I have seen and I am the witness that he is the Chosen One of God.'

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...

In contrast to the other gospels, where the reader observes the disciples discovering gradually who Jesus is, John gives us a week between the baptism and the marriage-feast of Cana, during which Jesus is given increasingly significant titles by those who meet him: Rabbi, the Messiah, Son of God, King of Israel. Perhaps the most significant titles of all are those given by the Baptist himself, Lamb of God and Chosen One of God. Jesus as the Lamb of God is a theme which overarches the gospel; it is introduced again at the Crucifixion. According to John Jesus dies at the moment the paschal lambs were being slaughtered in the Temple, and John alone refers the scriptural saying to Jesus that 'Not one bone of his will be broken' (John 19:36) which was originally part of the instructions for the sacrificing of the lamb at the Festival of Passover (Exodus 12:46). In the Book of Revelation Jesus is represented standing 'as a Lamb that seemed to have been sacrificed'. The Lamb is therefore an image both of his suffering and of his triumph. It links up with the picture of Jesus as the Suffering Servant of the Lord who moves through suffering and humiliation to vindication and to the triumph of God.

Reflect on Jesus as the Lamb standing as though sacrificed.

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 **WITNESS**

(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.

Wednesday Word Plus +

If you'd like to spend more prayerful time with God through the First and Second Readings, follow the same process for praying with the Gospel (overleaf). Gently place the First or Second Reading and Fr Henry's reflection into that same prayerful rhythm for more fruitful meditation with God's Word.

First Reading: *Israel, Servant of the Lord*

Isaiah 49: 3, 5-6

The Lord said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, in whom I shall be glorified'; I was honoured in the eyes of the Lord; my God was my strength. And now the Lord has spoken, he who formed me in the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him, to gather Israel to him: 'It is not enough for you to be my servant, to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back the survivors of Israel; I will make you the light of the nations so that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth.'

We are about to set out, in the Ordinary Sundays of Year A, on a journey through Matthew's account of Jesus' ministry. In the gospels themselves of Mark, Matthew and Luke, the reader accompanies the disciples in learning only gradually who and what Jesus is. In the arrangement of the Lectionary, however, which is put before us by the Church, the gospel-reading of this first Sunday this year is from John, showing clearly who Jesus is: 'the Chosen One of God'. The first reading from Isaiah, written in the dark days of the Babylonian Exile, introduces a Servant of the Lord, formed in the womb to be the Lord's Servant and to bring light both to Israel and to the nations. Is this an individual whose mission is to bring Israel back to the Lord, or is it the nation of Israel, destined to bring the gentile nations to the Lord? Despite their failure to recognise the Messiah, the faithful of Israel still bear witness 'to the ends of the earth' to God's promises. It is remarkable that, already at this stage of revelation, the task given by God to the one who truly serves him is to bring the whole world within the orbit of the salvation promised to Israel.

What does it mean to you to describe Jesus as "servant"? How do I follow Christ, the Servant of the Lord?

Second Reading: *The Beginning of First Corinthians*

1 Corinthians 1: 1-3

I, Paul, appointed by God to be an apostle, together with brother Sosthenes, send greetings to the church of God in Corinth, to the holy people of Jesus Christ, who are called to take their place among all the saints everywhere who pray to our Lord Jesus Christ; for he is their Lord no less than ours. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace.

One third of this great letter to the Corinthians is read at the beginning of each of the three years of our Sunday cycle of readings. Paul greets the Corinthians as the 'holy people of God', but – like the pilgrim Church today – they were far from uniformly holy. However, they were chosen to be holy and so, by that same divine choice, given the designation 'holy'. Corinth was a turbulent city. It had been sacked by the Romans for rebellion. But it lay on the narrow neck of land between the Aegean and Adriatic Seas, and so was a vital resource for shipping between the eastern and western Mediterranean. After a hundred years it was rebuilt, and a hundred years after that, when Paul was writing, it was again a boom town, with two harbours, an international games more famous than the Olympics and a large segment of the population was Jewish. Paul spent eighteen months evangelizing the city before being driven out by the Jews. However, he kept in close contact with the Church there and wrote them several letters. It was not an easy relationship: the Corinthians were arrogant and quarrelsome. Paul does not hesitate to correct them. He calls them babies whom he can feed only on milk - which must have upset the city elders among them!

At the opening of the letter, St Paul reminds us that we are called to be saints (not babies). How may we grow in holiness and become a community of saints?

"The holy people of God."