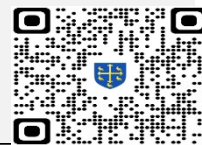


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Newsletter for the week of 22nd February 2026 *Sunday Readings Cycle A* *Weekday Readings Cycle II*

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

Psalm's Response: Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Gospel Acclamation during Lent: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ, Word of the Father, Son of God

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**

Monday 23rd Feb 9.15am Mass *St. Polycarp, bishop, martyr*

Tuesday 24th Feb

Wednesday 25th Feb 11.30am Mass

Thursday 26th Feb

Friday 27th Feb 1.00pm Mass (in Hospital Chapel) - *Day of Prayer for the Needy & Hungry of the World*

Saturday 28th Feb 10.00am Mass

10.30-11am Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 28th Feb 5.30pm 1st Mass of the 2nd Sunday of Lent

Sunday 1st March 10.30am Mass of the 2nd Sunday of Lent

Readings for the 2nd Sunday of Lent: Genesis 12:1-4; Psalm 32(31); 2 Timothy 8-10; Matthew 17: 1-9

STATIONS of the CROSS & LENT SOUP LUNCH

Lent Fridays: 27th Feb, & 6th, 13th 20th & 27th in March at **12noon** in the Community Room: the PPC are 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



CAFOD LENT FAST APPEAL

Next Sun 1st March This Lent, live out the Gospel call to love your neighbour. By fasting and giving what you save, you join in Christ's compassion and help another family put food on the table. Your donation can help families around the world grow food in difficult conditions – such as on flood-resistant floating gardens. *Rejoice* (pictured here) & her children fled conflict in South Sudan to find her new home under water. But each of our prayers & acts of love as neighbours together with working with Cafod's local *Caritas* partner, *Rejoice* is now growing vegetables on a floating garden -even when the land is submerged. Collect a CAFOD envelope to bless others with your support, donate online at cafod.org.uk/envelope or call **0303 303 3030** or text **CAFODLENT** to **70085** to donate £10.

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

Next 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 £244.00

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

DIARY OF EVENTS

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



LENTEN PASTORAL LETTER

A Church Ready for Converts

The First Sunday of Lent 22nd February 2026

My dear brothers and sisters,

As Lent begins, we see a growing number of men and women, many of them young adults, who are seeking faith and baptism. This stream of new converts is evident across our Diocese and country and indeed across the western world. It is all the more remarkable because this new generation of converts have been drawn to the Church by no special initiative on our part, rather by the constancy of faith, the reverence of worship and the authentic witness they have found. They may be statistically small in number compared with the overall decline of Christianity in our land, yet their search for Christ and His Church represents a moment of grace.

As Shrewsbury Diocese began its mission some 175 years ago, Saint John Henry Newman spoke of “*a Church ready for converts.*” Seeing so many today, often coming from no religious background to find the faith of the Church, I recalled these words of Cardinal Newman. We must now be ready to support new converts who are seeking Christ and His Church amid all the confusions of our time.

At the beginning of Lent, the Scriptures remind us of the deceptions which have marked humanity's struggle from the very dawn of history and of Christ's victory over Satan in the wildernessⁱ It is with Christ that we are to renounce the evil one who seeks to pervert all that is good and trueⁱⁱ It should not surprise us that, through the shadows of our time, many are coming in search of Christ, the truth of His teaching and all the means of grace He has entrusted to His Church in the Sacraments, and supremely in His Eucharist.

The journey of these new converts brings us back to the original purpose of Lent as the time when adults prepared for Baptism. The Church quickly recognised this time was needed by all the baptised as part of their continuing conversion. It is for this reason, that we now keep these 40 Lenten days devoted to greater prayer, self-denial and generosity as we each prepare to renew at Easter the promises of our Baptism, confess our sins and receive the Holy Eucharist with ever renewed faith and love. It is by striving to live our own conversion that we can best support a new generation of converts. For Lent calls us to recognise that every member of the Church must always be a convert.

On my visits to parishes, I often remind you of the many thousands of souls in every place who depend so much on your prayer and faithfulness. Today, with a prayer card distributed at Mass, I invite you to pray for all those in your lives and for the many adults who are seeking the faith and the new life of Baptism. May we truly be a Church of converts, that is always “*ready for converts.*”

United in this prayer, and as a convert with you,

+ **Mark**

Bishop of Shrewsbury

ⁱ Cf. Gen 2: 7-9, 3:1-7 and Mt. 4:1-11

ⁱⁱ Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 538



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 22nd February 2026

The First Sunday in Lent – Matthew 4: 1-11

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 TESTING OF JESUS



Jesus was led by the Spirit out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. He fasted for forty days and forty nights, after which he was very hungry, and the tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to turn into loaves.' But he replied, 'Scripture says: Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.' The devil then took him to the holy city and made him stand on the parapet of the Temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down; for scripture says: He will put you in his angels' charge, and they will support you on their hands in case you hurt your foot against a stone.' Jesus said to him, 'Scripture also says: You must not put the Lord your God to the test.' Next, taking him to a very high mountain, the devil showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour. 'I will give you all these,' he said, 'if you fall at my feet and worship me.' Then Jesus replied, 'Be off, Satan! For scripture says: You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone.' Then the devil left him, and angels appeared and looked after him.

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...



By putting this scene at the beginning of Lent, the Church shows that it sees Lent as a period of testing. Matthew sees this period in the wilderness as the testing of God's Son, just as the People of God (Israel – God's son, whom he brought out of Egypt) was tested for forty years in the desert. We may also see it as the time when Jesus reflected on the mode of his mission. His mission was to bring the Kingship of God to a new realisation: how should he do this? The Tempter suggests false ways, which Jesus rejects one after another, each time using a word from scripture, the Word of God. He rejects the idea of the Messiah merely producing the luxury of the plenteous messianic banquet (stones into food). He rejects the idea of a startling personal miracle which none could gainsay (the leap from the Temple). He rejects the suggestion of entering into league with the Tempter's own values of pride and dominion (rule over the world). At the same time Jesus shows himself to be the Second Moses, the founder of a new People of God: like Moses, he spends forty days and forty nights fasting; like Moses he is taken up onto a high mountain, from where he can see not merely all the territory of the Holy Land, but all the kingdoms of the earth.

What temptation do you find hardest to resist? What helps you to resist temptation?

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 **LENT**

(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: *The Garden of Eden*



Genesis 2: 7-9. 3: 1-7

The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden in Eden which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. The Lord God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden. The serpent was the most subtle of all the wild beasts that the Lord God had made. It asked the woman, 'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?' The woman answered the serpent, 'We may eat the fruit of the trees in the garden. But of the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden God said, "You must not eat it, nor touch it, under pain of death".' Then the serpent said to the woman, 'No! You will not die! God knows in fact that on the day you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.' The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye, and that it was desirable for the knowledge that it could give. So she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they realised that they were naked. So they sewed fig-leaves together to make themselves loin-cloths.

In Lent the readings are especially carefully chosen. The first readings work through the history of salvation, starting with the story of un-salvation which makes it all necessary - the Fall of Adam and Eve. Presented in the form of a historical story, this is not simply history of what happened long ago to the first Man (Adam means generically 'Man') and Woman. It is also an analysis of what happens to us every day, an image of how sin happens: we are subtly tempted to go against what we know are the divine commandments for life. Look at the way the serpent flatters Eve to make her pleased with herself and so fall all the easier! We fall, come to our senses and find ourselves naked and defenceless. Even so, God does not desert the creatures whom he loves. He comes to their aid, to help them over the worst: he himself sews garments for them to ease their shame, and finally - a few verses later - promises that evil will not eventually prevail. Other cultures have other stories of how evil comes into being, but only the Hebraeo-Christian story ends with the assurance that evil will be conquered, that the seed of the Woman will crush the head of the serpent.

Does the story ring true? Fit it to your own experience!



Second Reading: *The Second Adam*



Romans 5: 12. 17-19

Sin entered the world through one man, and through sin death, and thus death has spread through the whole human race because everyone has sinned. If it is certain that death reigned over everyone as the consequence of one man's fall, it is even more certain that one man, Jesus Christ, will cause everyone to reign in life who receives the free gift that he does not deserve, of being made righteous. Again, as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life and makes them justified. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

Paul's letter to the Romans sets out in glowing confidence and clarity the process by which evil was overcome. Just as the representative of all humanity, Adam, turned away from God, and by his disobedience set humanity on a course leading to disaster, so Christ, by his supreme act of loving obedience, turned back

the course of human destiny. Only Christ, who was not only the supreme Man but more than man, could so reverse the course of history and bring to God the homage of the human race which would wipe away and extirpate the rebellion from God wrought by human disobedience. We know full well that we were born into a world where evil begets evil, fraud begets fraud, violence begets violence, jealousy begets jealousy. Salvation consists in the conscious act of putting our faith in Christ, in the reversal he achieved. This understanding of salvation is expressed in Baptism, by which we enter into Christ and clothe ourselves in his redemption. So the one Man, Adam, prefigures the one Man, Christ. Only the direction is reversed. Adam is the paradigm of rebellion from God; Christ the paradigm of loving obedience to God.

Can those who have never heard of Christ enter into his salvation?

“Christ, by his supreme act of loving obedience, turned back the course of human destiny.”

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