



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

25th January 2026 - THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
Matthew 4:12-23


Our Parish vision is to bring people closer to Christ by inviting, welcoming, nurturing & nourishing everyone

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Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth, (Reg Charity No: 1199568)
Bank details: CDP, Immaculate Conception Church
Sort Code: 30-93-04
Account No: 00887995

Parish Priest: Fr Anthony Chiatu
Parish Deacon: Dcn Gerard Dailly
Hospital Chaplaincy: (023 8120 8517)
University Chaplain: Sr Emelliana Silva (07426 000213)
Safeguarding:
safeguarding@immaculateconception.church
Parish Administrator: Cynthia Barretto(023 8055 5470)
Confessions: After 10 am Mass on Saturdays
Hall Bookings: Contact the Parish office

PARISH OFFICE TIMINGS : Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 9:00-3 pm, Friday 9-4pm, Monday Closed

ALL MASSES ADVERTISED BELOW ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE TO JOIN LIVE AT
www.churchservices.tv/portswoodchur

Date	Solemnities & Feast days	Times & Liturgies		Mass Intentions
Sun 25 January 	THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (SECOND COLLECTION: St John's Cathedral)	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Peace of mind for Maureen Mass for people of Ukraine
Mon 26 January	Saints Timothy and Titus	NO MASS		
Tue 27 January	St Angela Merici	9.00 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic Adoration Mass	Carol Broderick RIP
Wed 28 January	St Thomas Aquinas	10.00 am 6pm	Mass Eucharistic Adoration	Vicki and Eoin Broderick
Thu 29 January	Weekday in Ordinary Time	10.00 am	Mass	--
Fri 30 January	Weekday in Ordinary Time	9.00 am 9.30 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic adoration Rosary Mass	--
Sat 31 January	St John Bosco	10.00am	Mass	Albert & Rita Burkwood (Trish Bell's parents)
Sun 1 February	4 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	--

SUNDAY READINGS



1st Reading: Isaiah 9:1b-4

Psalm: Ps 27(26):1. 4. 13-14. R1a

2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:10-13, 17

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-23

OTHER REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVIES IN THE PARISH

All Welcome to join.....

- Mon** - **Cooking with Confidence** – 10 am – 1 pm – Church hall kitchen (**No session on 26th Jan**)
- Tues** - **Tea & Coffee after 10 am Mass** – Church hall
 - **RCIA** – 7:15 pm – 8.45 pm in the Church hall
- Weds** - **Parent & Toddler Group (term time only)**
10.30am – 12 noon, Church hall
- Thurs** - **Maintaining the parish gardens** – from 10:30 am
 - **Multicultural group** – 11 am in the Church hall
- Sun** - **Refreshments after 10.30 am Mass**- Church hall
 - **Choir Practice** 11:30am-12:30pm in the Church.

TODAY'S GOSPEL REFLECTION

God's Permissive Will



When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee...

From that time on, Jesus began to preach and say,

“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” [Matthew 4:12, 17](#)

When John the Baptist was arrested, his followers were likely overcome with fear and grief. The man they revered as a prophet, who fearlessly proclaimed the coming of the Messiah and called for repentance through baptism, had been imprisoned. John was arrested by Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, infamous for ordering the massacre of infants in Bethlehem. Like his father, Herod Antipas was ambitious and morally corrupt. As tetrarch of Galilee and Perea under Roman authority, Herod's political survival depended on maintaining Roman favor. He often used religion to secure legitimacy among the Jewish people, though his actions routinely violated Jewish law.

Though nominally Jewish, the Herodian dynasty was of Idumean descent, tracing its lineage to Esau rather than Jacob. The Idumeans were forcibly converted to Judaism between 135–104 BC. While this history granted the Herods a claim to Jewish identity, their foreign lineage and collaboration with Rome made them unpopular with many Jews. Herod Antipas, like his father, prioritized political cunning and personal ambition over genuine adherence to Jewish law.

When John the Baptist emerged on the scene, he proclaimed his message with fearless conviction. His central call was one of repentance and baptism for the forgiveness of sins, urging the people to prepare for the coming of the Messiah. Yet John did not shy away from addressing the moral and spiritual corruption of his time. He famously denounced the Pharisees and Sadducees as a “brood of vipers,” rebuking their hypocrisy and lack of genuine repentance. John also boldly condemned Herod Antipas for violating Jewish law by divorcing his wife and marrying Herodias, the wife of his half-brother, Philip. This marriage not only violated Mosaic Law but also reflected Herod's ambitions to consolidate power and status. John's fearless denunciation of sin, even among the powerful, ultimately led to his arrest and eventual martyrdom.

This historical context surrounding John's arrest is crucial because it helps us understand God's providence—how He permits certain evils to occur in order to bring about a greater good. Jesus Himself later affirmed John's greatness, saying, “Among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist” (Matthew 11:11). If the Son of God declared John's greatness shortly after John's arrest, why didn't God miraculously free him from persecution? The answer lies in John's mission. He had fulfilled his primary role: preparing the way for the Lord, the “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29). Once John's mission was complete, God permitted him to seal his testimony with his own blood, offering his life as a martyr for the Lord and for the Truth that sets all people free.

Reflect today on John's arrest and consider how you might have reacted if you had been one of his disciples. From an earthly perspective, martyrdom is difficult to comprehend or accept, especially in our own lives or in the lives of those we love. Though John's arrest and subsequent martyrdom likely brought fear and grief to his disciples, shaking their sense of security, from an eternal perspective, John's martyrdom was his greatest act of witness. It fulfilled his mission by pointing his disciples—and all of us—toward the true Prophet and Messiah, Jesus Christ. John is forever glorified in Heaven, and in the end, that is all that truly matters. As we honor John's unwavering faith, seek to embrace God's permissive will in your own life. Even in the face of suffering or evil, trust that God, in His providence, can bring about a greater good if we surrender ourselves fully to Him.

A reflection for the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

www.mycatholic.life

PARISH NOTICES

Have Your Say – A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity

An important moment is approaching for the Catholic community across the City of Southampton. A proposal is being considered to bring together the existing parishes into one new Canonical Parish, to be known as **Our Lady Star of the Sea**.

This consultation is not a formality — it is a genuine invitation to be part of the conversation. Every parishioner is encouraged to take part, whether you feel hopeful, unsure, or even sceptical about the proposal. All views matter, and this is the moment when they can be heard. A questionnaire is available to help gather the thoughts, hopes, and concerns of parishioners. Before completing it, please take time to read the letter available in church today, which offers background information and guidance to support your reflection. **Your response will help shape the future of parish life in our city.** If you care about how our parishes grow, change, and serve future generations, this is your opportunity to contribute. All responses will be treated confidentially.

The questionnaire is available online at <https://www.immaculateconception.church/survey>, and paper copies can be found in the Church Porch.

We warmly encourage everyone to take part — not simply to respond to change, but to help shape it together.

An Invitation to Alpha – For the Curious, the Cautious, and the Committed

On **Wednesday 25th February (not the 25th January - diary clash means this has been pushed out)** at 7:30pm in the **Hall**, our parish will be launching **Alpha** — and everyone is warmly invited.

Alpha is a series of relaxed, welcoming sessions designed to explore the Christian faith. Over eleven weeks, each gathering focuses on a different question of life and faith — questions many of us already carry, whether we voice them or not. There is no pressure, no homework, and no expectation to have all the answers. Alpha is simply a space to listen, to share, and to belong. What makes Alpha special is that it is **not a lecture or a debate**, but a **conversation**. It creates room for open and honest discussion, where every viewpoint is respected. You are free to come as you are — whether you are deeply rooted in faith, quietly questioning, returning after time away, or simply curious.

Alpha is also more than a course; it is a **tool for evangelisation and parish renewal**. It helps us grow as a Church that listens well, welcomes generously, and encourages each person to discover their unique calling and gifts. Through Alpha, parishioners are empowered to become **missionary disciples**, grounded in faith and confident in sharing it through everyday life.

If you are interested please save the date as we will be publicising and sharing more information in the coming weeks.



Youth Activities – Coming Soon

We are pleased to share that plans are underway to introduce regular social activities for young people in the parish. These will be parish-based, carefully organised, and led by young adults alongside experienced parishioners with many years of involvement in youth ministry, all of whom know the parish community well.

Parents and young people will receive further information in due course, including how to register interest.



Support Group for Young Parents – Coming Soon

The parish is also exploring the formation of a small support group for young parents who wish to encourage one another in raising their children in the ways of the Lord. This would provide an opportunity for mutual support, shared reflection, and faith-based conversation within the parish community.

Further details will be communicated in due course once arrangements are in place

Second Collection for St John's Cathedral takes place on Sunday 25th of January.

A message from Canon James McAuley:

Our cathedral is situated in the most deprived part of the Diocese of Portsmouth. The parish collection covers just over half of the ordinary running costs of £5,000 per week. I fully appreciate the financial pressures we are all experiencing, but I would appeal to you to support the Second Collection for the Cathedral on 25 January. Never has this annual collection by parishes for the Mother Church of the Diocese been more critical or needed. Your support is vitally important to us.

Thank you.

For more information about how you can also support the **Cathedral150 Appeal**, please follow this link: [Cathedral150 Appeal - Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth](#)

Online donations for the Second Collection can be made at the following link:
<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/st-johns-cathedral-second-collection-2026> or
by scanning the QR code below with a Smart Phone



Please Let Us Know – We Are Here for You

Our parish family cares deeply for one another, especially during times of illness, hospital stays, or when someone is unable to leave their home. If you, or a loved one, are in hospital, unwell at home, or housebound, we kindly ask that you let the parish know.

Many people are surprised to learn that hospitals do not automatically contact a priest when a Catholic patient is admitted. In the same way, the parish may not know if someone is sick or unable to come to Mass unless we are told.

Letting us know allows us to:

If you are unwell, it is perfectly okay to ask a family member, friend, neighbour, or hospital staff member to contact the parish on your behalf. A simple phone call can make a big difference.

For those who are sick or housebound, receiving a visit and Holy Communion can be a powerful reminder that you remain a valued and loved part of our parish community. You are not forgotten, and you are always welcome.

Please remember: asking for a priest or a visit is not “making a fuss.” It is an act of faith and a source of grace.

If you or someone you care for would like a visit, Holy Communion, or prayer—whether at home or in hospital—please contact us:

Parish Office: 02380 555470 Email: office@immaculateconception.church

“I was sick and you visited me.” (Matthew 25:36)

For urgent pastoral care outside office hours, please contact the parish number and leave a message if not answered.

- ❖ Arrange a visit from a Catholic priest
- ❖ Offer Holy Communion at home or in hospital
- ❖ Provide the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick
- ❖ Offer prayer, comfort, and pastoral support

