



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

8th February 2026 - FIFTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

"You are the light of the world" -Matthew 5:13-16

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

Address: 346 Portswood Road, Southampton, SO17 3SB

Tel: (023) 8055 5470

Website: www.immaculateconception.church

Email: office@immaculateconception.church

Facebook: Immaculate Conception Church, Portswood

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 8 February	5 th Sunday in Ordinary Time	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Dan & Maureen McCarthy RIP --
Mon 9 February	5th Week in Ordinary Time	-NO MASS-		
Tue 10 February	Saint Scholastica	9.00 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic Adoration Mass	Sr Mary de Sales RIP
Wed 11 February	Our Lady of Lourdes	10.00 am 6pm	Mass Eucharistic Adoration	--
Thu 12 February	5th Week in Ordinary Time	10.00 am	Mass	--
Fri 13 February	5th Week in Ordinary Time	9.00 am 9.30 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic adoration Rosary Mass	Levana Fernandes 3 rd birthday
Sat 14 February	Saints Cyril and Methodius, Bishop	10.00am	Mass	--
Sun 15 February	6 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Family Mass at 10:30am)	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Rem Treacy RIP Krystyna Madej & Adam Madej RIP

SUNDAY READINGS



1st Reading: Isaiah 58:6-10

Psalm: Ps 112:4-5, 6-7, 8-9

2nd Reading: Corinthians 2:1-5

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

OTHER REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVIES IN THE PARISH

All Welcome to join.....

Mon - Cooking with Confidence – 10 am – 1 pm – Church hall kitchen

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** – 10:30 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

Flavor, Preservation, and Purity

Jesus said to his disciples:

“You are the salt of the earth.

But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned?

It is no longer good for anything but

to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.”

[Matthew 5:13](#)



Sodium chloride, also known as salt, is one of the most commonly used substances in the world, used for seasoning, preserving, and purifying. Sodium chloride is a very stable compound and cannot lose its flavor unless there is a chemical reaction or dissolution. Why, then, did Jesus suggest that salt could lose its taste? One likely explanation is that the salt used in ancient Palestine could indeed lose its flavor due to impurities and the conditions in which it was stored.

The Dead Sea, located in modern-day southeast Israel, contains a massive deposit of salt and other minerals. According to biblical history, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt in this region. Because of the vast salt and mineral deposits, the area surrounding the Dead Sea is desolate.

Salt extracted from the Dead Sea was never pure sodium chloride. Gypsum and other minerals were also present, making the salt impure. If this salt were stored improperly or came into contact with water, the sodium chloride could dissolve and wash away, leaving behind the solid residue of minerals. These residual substances, like gypsum, had the appearance of salt but were tasteless and useless for flavoring, preserving, and purifying purposes. When this happened, the “salt” lost its taste. In light of this explanation, Jesus' teaching becomes especially clear.

The first notable feature of salt is its ability to add flavor to food. By calling His disciples the “salt of the earth,” Jesus was instructing them to enhance the “flavor” of the world by bringing the truth of the Gospel and the joy of His message to others. A Christian life lived in fidelity to Christ would make the world a better and more virtuous place, just as salt enhances the flavor of food.

Salt is also commonly used for preservation. Before the age of refrigerators and freezers, salt was mixed with food to prevent corruption, by drawing out moisture and hindering bacteria and other microorganisms. Though this practice is still used today, it was especially vital in ancient times. By being the “salt of the earth,” Jesus was calling His disciples to preserve the world from moral decay. Through their witness and proclamation of the Gospel, they were to act as a preservative against sin and spiritual ruin. If they were to “lose their taste,” they would become indistinguishable from the rest of the world and ineffective in their mission. Hence, Jesus was exhorting them—and us—to avoid becoming watered down and bland in our witness to the Gospel.

Lastly, salt held a significant role in Jewish religious practices, symbolizing purity and consecration. In sacrificial rituals, salt was used to consecrate offerings, as commanded in Leviticus: “You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not let the salt of the covenant with your God be lacking from your grain offering. On every offering you shall offer salt” ([Leviticus 2:13](#)). By seasoning their offerings with salt, the Israelites preserved the sacrifices from decay, making them pure. This practice reflects the disciples' role in purifying the world through their example of holiness, their lives of self-sacrifice, and their participation in Christ's redemptive work. They were to live lives of integrity, leading others to God through the purity of their hearts and their unwavering commitment to His will.

Reflect today on this powerful metaphor of being the salt of the earth. The world desperately needs the enriching “flavor” of God's grace. Without Him, the world is left to corruption and decay. With God, we, and those we serve, are preserved as pure and holy offerings, adding to His glory and growing in holiness. Be the salt of the earth. Do not become watered down in your faith. Remain steadfast in your fidelity to Christ and His Gospel, and you will transform the world around you. In doing so, you will not only glorify God but will also share in His eternal joy.

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

www.mycatholic.life

PARISH NOTICES

Invitation to join Alpha at Immaculate Conception

You are warmly invited to join us for **Alpha**, a series of relaxed and welcoming sessions exploring life, faith, and meaning. Alpha is a chance to explore life and the Christian faith in a friendly, open and informal setting.

Alpha will begin on **Tuesday 25 February** in the **Parish Hall**.

We will gather at **7:15pm** for a **7:30pm ending at 9:15pm**.

Each session includes good company, a short talk, and plenty of opportunity for open conversation in a friendly, informal setting. Alpha is for everyone—whether you're curious about faith, returning to church, or simply interested in meaningful discussion.

We would love you to come along and bring a friend if you wish.

If you have any questions or would like to let us know you're coming, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

If you are interested please see the Sign-Up Sheets or alternatively contact the Parish Office to register your interest.

If you have any questions, please speak to Fr. Anthony or Deacon Gerard in the first instance.

Poitier Project

This winter brings many demands, but please remember the Poitier Project. The food bin in the porch helps this Catholic charity feed families in need each week. Donations have slowed, and the project has sadly been neglected but your support can bring it back to life.

Please email parish office for more information.



Will you support the Sunday Lunch Project?

The Sunday Lunch Project provides a warm, welcoming space and a hot meal for those in need each week. We are looking for volunteers who can offer a little time, kindness, or practical help.

If you are interested, please email the parish office with your Name, Email & Phone Number.

The project serves at two locations every Sunday from 10:00am - 1:00pm:

- St Mark's Institute, Woolston
- St Denys Church & Centre



Repair Cafe

Repair Cafe at Immaculate Conception church hall on **Saturday 21st February from 10.30am till 1pm.**

Bring your items for repair: clothing, jewellery, electric and electronic items, bikes etc and we'll try to mend them for a donation.

Refreshments including homemade cakes available.

Come and see what we do... friends also very welcome.



Cake Sale

The first cake sale of the year will take place after 10.30am mass on **Sunday 8th February**, in the hall.

As some of our bakers have had to step back due to work commitments, **we are in need of volunteers** to either bake or provide shop bought cakes. If you can bake or provide cakes, we would be very grateful. Donations can left in the hall prior to 10.30 mass.

This is a regular fund raiser with the proceeds going towards parish charities. If we don't have enough donations we may have to suspend the sales. Please help if possible.



World Day of the Sick 2026 (from Bishops' Conference)

The Holy See has issued the Holy Father's message for this year's **World Day of the Sick** on 11th February which can be found at:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/sick/documents/20260113-messaggio-giornata-malato.html>.

HALF-TERM YOUTH DAY

Friday 20th February

Time: 10am - 2pm

Venue: Parish Hall

All children aged 5–16 are warmly invited to a fun-filled half-term day in the Parish Hall!



-  Games & Activities
-  Make-Your-Own Pizzas for Lunch
-  Time with Parish Friends
-  Bring your own snacks and drinks if you wish

Come along for a great day of fun, food, and friendship! Everyone welcome!

Knock Pilgrimages

Escorted Tour to Westport, Knock & Co Mayo, 08th March 2026. £899.00 pps.

Price includes flight from Heathrow or Luton, 10kg hold luggage, 5 nights' in 4* Castlecourt Hotel, Westport with Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Full use of leisure facilities. All entertainment, excursions and transport included.

Visit Knock Shrine, Ballintubber Abbey, Fr. Peyton Centre & Kylemore Abbey. Irish music nightly. Single supplement on Enquiry.

Contact 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.

Have Your Say – A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity- (*Final week for submission*)

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.

Please note - This is the final week to submit your response.