



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

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

"For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? - Matthew 16:21-27"

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Website: www.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 LISTED BELOW ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE TO JOIN LIVE on our website or www.churchservices.tv/portswoodchur

Solemnities, Feast days & Memorials	Times & Liturgies		Mass Intentions
Sun 30 August TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	8.30 am	Mass	Wendy Whitcher RIP
	10.30 am	Mass	Remembrance service for Tina Leng
Mon 31 August St Aidan, Bishop, & All Saints of Lindisfarne	-NO MASS-		
Tue 1 September Feria	9.00 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic Adoration Mass	Rosemary Spencer RIP
Wed 2 September Feria	10 am 6 pm	Mass Eucharistic Adoration	Lawrence & Luigiana Clegg RIP
Thu 3 September ST GREGORY THE GREAT	10 am	Mass	--
Fri 4 September St Cuthbert	9.30 am 10.00 am 10:30 am – 6pm	Rosary Mass First Friday Eucharistic Adoration	Wilfred Lorange Perera RIP
Sat 5 September St Teresa of Calcutta	10 am	Mass	18 th Birthday Lifalle De Almeida
Sun 6 September TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Wilfred Perera 87 th Birthday RIP Bryan Rosario RIP & Nicholas 49 th Birthday RIP



Thought for the Week:

"Our love of neighbour is the measure of our love of God. For Christians - and not only for them - no one is a 'stranger'. The love of Christ knows no borders." (St Edith Stein.)

SUNDAY READINGS

1st Reading: Jeremiah 20:7-9
The word of the Lord has meant insult for me

Psalm: Psalm 62(63):2-6,8-9

2nd Reading: Romans 12:1-2
Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice

Gospel: Matthew 16:21-27
'Get behind me, Satan!'

OTHER REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

All are welcome to join!

- Mon- Cooking with Confidence 11 am – 1 pm, Church Hall kitchen
- Tues- Tea & Coffee after 10 am Mass – 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

TODAY'S GOSPEL REFLECTION: A Stark Contrast

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

"Get behind me, Satan! You are an obstacle to me. You are thinking not as God does, but as human beings do." [Matthew 16:23](#)

This scene likely unfolds in or near Caesarea Philippi, a Gentile region steeped in pagan worship. There, at the mouth of a cave long associated with the entrance to the netherworld—believed by some pagans to be the very gate of Hades—Jesus had just questioned His disciples: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" and then more directly, "But who do you say that I am?" (cf. [Matthew 16:13–15](#)). Peter, speaking with conviction on behalf of the Twelve, boldly proclaimed, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" ([Matthew 16:16](#)). Jesus responded by declaring him "Peter," the rock upon which He would build His Church, promising that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Just moments later, Jesus issues one of the strongest rebukes recorded in the Gospels: "Get behind me, Satan!" The same Peter who had just spoken divine truth now speaks human fear and shortsightedness. In trying to dissuade Jesus from His suffering and death, Peter unknowingly opposes the very mission of the Messiah. Jesus calls this mindset not merely a mistake, but a diabolical temptation—echoing the same temptation He faced in the desert, when Satan sought to lure Him away from the Cross with promises of worldly glory.

What a stark contrast. Peter goes from being the rock of faith to an obstacle in the Lord's path. But why was Jesus so severe in His response?

Because the stakes were eternal. The Cross is not optional. It is the means of salvation—not just for Jesus, but for all who would follow Him. To think otherwise, even with good intention, is to prefer human comfort over divine wisdom. Peter's protest reflects a natural aversion to suffering, but Jesus exposes it for what it truly is: a stumbling block to the will of the Father.

This dramatic Gospel scene is recorded for a reason. By calling Peter "Satan," Jesus wanted to warn him—and us—of the real and ever-present danger of rejecting the way of the Cross. Like Peter, we can easily fall into the trap of wishful thinking and misguided compassion by saying about ourselves or those close to us, "God forbid, Lord! No such thing shall ever happen..." We are saying, in essence: "Lord, please make sure that neither I nor anyone I love ever has to suffer!" But such a prayer, though well-meaning, is clearly mistaken, and Jesus wants that point to be clearly understood.

Peter was troubled because "Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer greatly from the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed and on the third day be raised." But all that Jesus revealed about His suffering was good—very good. Though His suffering was inflicted by the sins of others, His free and loving embrace of that suffering was the greatest act of love the world has ever known. Peter was blinded to this truth. He could not yet see beyond the horror of suffering to the divine good that would come through Jesus' sacrificial embrace of it. Reflect today on Peter's and Jesus' words: "God forbid, Lord!" and "Get behind me, Satan!" In this exchange, Jesus is also speaking to each of us, saying, "Never run from the Cross!" We must never flee from a selfless and sacrificial embrace of suffering, even when that suffering is unjust. God can and will transform all freely embraced suffering into a means of His eternal glory and our sanctification. With our Lord, reject the evil one's false empathy. Reject the lie that suffering is meaningless. Choose instead to lay down your life in love with Christ, and in doing so, you will rise with Him,

victorious over every sin and diabolical lie, overcoming even the sufferings of this life through your free and faithful embrace.

A reflection from www.mycatholic.life

PARISH NOTICES

Final Call: First Holy Communion & Confirmation Programme

This is the final call for children wishing to enrol in the First Holy Communion and Confirmation programmes.

Parents and guardians are asked to register their initial interest using the form or QR code:

[SOUIC Sacramental Initial Interest Form](#)

Alternatively, feel free to contact the Parish Office or speak directly with Fr Anthony or Deacon Gerard.

Please register as soon as possible to avoid missing the enrolment deadline.



World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation - September 1

The Season of Creation runs from the World Day of Prayer for Care for Creation on 01 September until the Feast of St Francis of Assisi on 04 October. It is an annual event and a time to renew our relationship with our Creator and all creation through celebration, conversion, and commitment together. It is also a time where we join our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family in prayer and action for our common home.

The theme of this year is 'Living Water' drawn from Ezekiel 47:9, 12 who gives a description of the Living Water we receive from God. The image of which seems more meaningful as we experience this very dry summer.

Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. [...] Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing. Ezekiel 47:9, 12

For the World Day of prayer for Care for Creation, Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (Is 2:4), to highlight the need for sustainability and development over destruction and conflict.

ALPHA - Autumn 2026

What if there's more to life?

Have you ever found yourself asking the bigger questions about life, faith, purpose or God?

Or perhaps you simply want to explore what Christianity is all about, in a relaxed and welcoming environment where you can ask questions, share your thoughts and meet other people on the same journey.

Our next Alpha course begins in early October and runs through to mid-December 2026 — and you are warmly invited to join us. Alpha is a place to come as you are. You don't need to have all the answers, know much about Christianity or consider yourself "religious". Each week gives us an opportunity to explore a different aspect of the Christian faith, listen to one another and discover what faith might mean in our own lives.

Most importantly, Alpha is a journey we make together. As friendships develop and conversations deepen, being able to join us each week makes a real difference — both to your own experience and to the experience of everyone else. So, if you decide to come, we would really encourage you to make a positive commitment to joining us each week wherever possible.

We understand that life happens, and there will inevitably be occasions when you cannot make it. There is no expectation of perfection — simply a genuine desire to make Alpha a priority. You are welcome to join us during the first three weeks of the course. After Week 3, we will invite anyone who has not yet joined to wait until our next Alpha course, which we hope to begin in early 2027. This helps everyone to experience the journey together from the beginning.



Interested in joining us?

If Alpha sounds like something you would like to explore, please sign up using the QR Code or fill the form here - [SOUIC - ALPHA - Autumn 2026](#).

Alternatively, contact the Parish Office, leaving your name and contact details, and we will be in touch.

If you would like to know more about Alpha or are simply wondering whether it might be right for you, please speak to Fr Anthony or Deacon Gerard. We would be very happy to have a conversation with you.

Why not come and see?

You may come with questions.

You may come with doubts.

You may come simply because you are curious.

Wherever you are on your journey, you are welcome.

Come, meet us, share a meal, enjoy good conversation and give yourself the space to explore some of life's bigger questions. Perhaps Alpha could be the beginning of something new for you.



RCIA - Autumn 2026

Curious about the Catholic Faith? Come and explore with us.

Have you ever wondered what Catholics believe, why we celebrate the Mass, or what it means to have a relationship with Jesus and His Church?

Perhaps you have been thinking about becoming Catholic, or simply feel drawn to find out more. **You are very welcome to come and explore.**

We are hoping to begin our **RCIA programme in early October 2026**, meeting each **Tuesday evening from 7:00pm–8:30pm in the Parish Hall.**

There is **no expectation and no pressure to make any commitment**. At this stage, it is simply an opportunity to ask questions, discover more about the Catholic Faith and begin a journey together. We will walk alongside you, listen, learn and explore, with the opportunity to discuss what the next steps might look like as the months go by.

The programme is also open to **Catholics who may wish to prepare for a Sacrament they have not yet received.**

Interested in joining us?

If you would like to explore the Catholic Faith with us, or are interested in preparing for a Sacrament, please **complete the short sign-up form** - [SOUIC - RCIA - 2026/27](#) or **scan the QR Code.**

Alternatively, you can contact the **Parish Office**, leaving your name and contact details, and we will be in touch.

If you are curious, have questions, or simply wonder whether RCIA might be right for you, **we would love to hear from you.**

Please speak to **Fr Anthony or Deacon Gerard** if you would like an informal conversation or have any questions.

You don't need to know all the answers. You don't even need to know exactly what you are looking for. **Just come and explore.**

