

The Archdiocese of Southwark pilgrimage to Lourdes placed people with disabilities and the sick at its heart. The pilgrimage began with Archbishop John Wilson, along Bishop Paul Hendricks, Canon Edward and other clergy on the trip, anointing the hands of those caring for the sick and people with disabilities during the pilgrimage. This included nurses and healthcare professionals who gave their time supporting vulnerable people on the pilgrimage. As well as Mass in the Grotto, other highlights of the pilgrimage included seeing the Olympic torch going through Lourdes for the Paralympics, as well as a Mass at a Ukrainian Church.

To read more about the pilgrimage go to <https://rcaos.org.uk/news-events/news/2024-pilgrimage-to-lourdes/> To see photos of the pilgrimage go to <https://www.flickr.com/photos/rcsouthwark/albums/72177720319818142/>.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter: For the past 50 years Worldwide Marriage Encounter has been offering marriage enrichment retreats all around the world. Focused on couples who want to enrich their relationship and gain a deeper understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage, the retreat offers a unique experience. It's a chance to explore your relationship at a deeper, more intimate level, regardless of how long you have been together. Thousands of couples in the UK have benefited from a Marriage Encounter weekend retreat, the next non-residential retreat is from 21-22 September 2024 at Church of the Annunciation, Burnt Oak, London, HA8 0HQ. To find out more or book an experience: Email: enquiries@wwme.org.uk or go to wwme.org.uk or scan QR code on poster.

Bexley Foodbank: Donations can be left in the box in the porch. Your support and generosity is much appreciated. A list of wanted items can be found at <https://bexley.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/> Donations of strong 'bags for life' are urgently needed—please put any spare bags you have in the donation box. Thank you.

The National Augustine-Pugin Shrine in Ramsgate, which incorporates the Parish of St Augustine in which Pugin is buried, holds 'Pugin Week' on an annual basis. See a full list of scheduled events for 2024 beginning on 7th Sep at <https://www.augustine-pugin.org.uk/pugin-week-2024/> See poster.

All events are free (donations appreciated).
St Augustine's Road, Ramsgate CT11 9NY

Next Weekend there will be a second collection for the **Catholic Education Service** who acts on behalf of the Catholic Bishops' Conference to support Catholic education. They have a strong and positive working relationship with the British and Welsh Governments sharing the aims of high academic standards for all and increased parental choice. The CES is the chief negotiating and advisory body on matters affecting all aspects of Catholic education.

Young Adults' Mass at St George's Cathedral at 6pm on Sunday 1st September (and the first Sunday of every month), followed by a social gathering (for those aged 18+) in the Amigo Hall (finish at 9pm). Come and enjoy an uplifting evening of faith and community! Details of this and other young adult events at St George's Cathedral on Facebook and Instagram @stgeorgesya or go to <https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/mission/southwark-catholic-youth-service/> Lambeth Rd, London SE1 7HY

CYMFed Flame 2025: Last chance for early-bird price tickets - *CYMFED Flame* is the largest Catholic Youth event in the UK (for those aged from school year 9 to university) and takes place on Saturday 15 March 2025. Flame features guest speakers, praise and worship, Eucharistic Adoration and much more. The Archdiocese has an early-bird ticket price of £29, payable by 10 September. To book go to Flame 2025 Super Early Bird Passes - CYMFed More info is at www.cymfed.org.uk/flame/ or email youth@rcaos.org.uk

Service For Healing & Hope on Wednesday 25th September at 6.30pm at St George's Cathedral led by Archbishop John Wilson. The service is for *Healing & Hope* for all those that have been harmed by abuse, their families & friends. It is also to recognise the work of those that support survivors of abuse. There will be light refreshments afterwards and a place for anyone who wishes to, to talk to the safeguarding team. We warmly welcome anyone who has been harmed by abuse or hurt in any way to attend this event. This year we would also like to encourage many of our parishioners to attend the event, so as to demonstrate Southwark's solidarity for those that have been harmed by abuse. Also, to strengthen our commitment to ensure that every parish and Church event is a safe place for all and to support the Catholic Church to continue to grow and develop a compassionate and caring response to those that have been harmed.



ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

26 DEEPDENE ROAD, WELLING, KENT DA16 3QL ☒ Telephone: 020 8303 4422

Parish Priest: Canon Edward Perera

website: www.saintstephens.co.uk Email: welling@rcaos.org.uk
Secretary: Mrs. Lorraine Harris. email: wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk

School: St. Stephen's Primary School, Ruskin Avenue, Welling, Kent. DA16 3QG
Telephone: 020 8303 9738

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

Saturday 31st August

5pm Rev Fr Ernest Akorsou-Ayittey Cssp RIP
(M Tambyapin)

Sunday 1st September

9.30am People of the Parish

11.30am Vincent Bonanno (M Harmer)

Mon 2nd Feria

10am Wellbeing of Dolores Martin & Family
(J Kelly)

Tues 3rd St Gregory the Great, Pope

10am Jose Gomes RIP—anniv
7pm *Novena Mass*

Wed 4th Feria

10am Elizabeth Newitt—birthday blessings

Thurs 5th Feria

10am Declan Curry (J Kelly)

Fri 6th Feria

10am Alphonsa's 4th Birthday

Sat 7th Feria

10am Priest Ints

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Saturday 10.30am—11am & 4pm—4.30pm

Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

Saturday 7th September

5pm Nick Mythen RIP—anniv

Sunday 8th September

9.30am Rubertina Fernandes RIP (M Fernandes)

11.30am People of the Parish

Please remember in your prayers the sick and housebound; at home, in hospital or in residential care.

DONATIONS

All donations are greatly appreciated to help support our church & parish. Thank you.

The offertory collection during Mass on Saturday evening & Sunday morning is for parishioners who wish to donate with their gift aid envelopes or with loose cash. Other methods to donate are via the digital plate in church, online or by standing order. The collection bag will be circulated for second collections.

Donate online at <https://portal.mydona.com/assets/webPay/index.php?cid=236> or <https://justgiving.com/campaign/parishsupport>—please include parish name and location. To set up a standing order to make regular monthly donations see bank details below.

Support our parish and make your donations go further by signing a valid Gift Aid Declaration form. Go to www.rcaos.org.uk/media/xfqfyxyj/welling-planned-giving-and-gift-aid-form.pdf Paper copies of the form are available on the table at the back of the church. You can also join the gift aid scheme by completing an online form at <https://forms.rcaos.org.uk/giftaid>.

NatWest Bank

Sort Code: 51-70-14

Account No. 39013332

Account Name: RCAS Welling

Please use your name as a reference. Thank you.

Digital Collection Plates are at the back of the church. Making a donation is simple and quick. Press one of the donation values or Other Amount. Tap your card or phone on the card reader. Your donation can be gift aided by completing a digital Gift Aid Declaration on the Digital Collection Plate screen (name, address and email address required) and all future donations you make using this card will automatically be recorded as a gift aid donation. A Gift Aid Declaration is required when using the Digital Collection Plate for the first time even if you are already registered for Gift Aid at St Stephen's.

My dear People

After five weeks we return once again to read from the Gospel of Mark. The Pharisees and the scribes are gathered around Jesus, and as Mark describes, the mood is such that we can feel a conflict is about to begin! We recognise that Mark's audience today is Gentile as he has to explain Jewish rituals.

Harsh words are directed by Jesus towards pharisees and some of the scribes. This takes us to the issue of Jesus' attitude to the Jewish law. Pharisees were a group of Jews who observed all the commandments of the Law and the scribes were Jewish scripture scholars who offered teachings based on the interpretation of the scriptures.

It is also good to understand what we mean by the Jewish law. The Hebrew word is Torah which is translated as 'law', in its restrictive meaning, it means the first five books of the Bible. It is the heart and soul of the God's revelation of Israel. The first five books of the bible are also known as the Pentateuch. However, the

word Torah comes from the root 'yarah', meaning 'to shoot', an image coming from archery. In other words, the Torah helps to find the right direction on life's journey. Torah also contain specific commandments and many more than just ten.

Jesus' response is to question the ancient traditions by quoting from Isaiah 29:13. Using this quotation Jesus highlights what is important in a relationship with God. It is a person's 'heart' that is important, more important than 'mere human traditions.' Jesus also declares that pharisees have turned God's commandments into mere human rules and regulations.

Looking at the gospel a question to ask ourselves is, did the Gentile readers of Mark need this explanation, or is he quietly urging the Jewish Christians in Rome to see something of the absurdity of these oral traditions to the original Law? It is far easier to follow external ritual practices than to change our hearts and attitudes.

God bless and love you all. Canon Edward

Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year B)

Scripture Insights

All of today's readings illuminate God's call to wholehearted obedience. Deuteronomy 4 names two purposes of God's holy law: one purpose faces inward, intended for the flourishing of Israel; one purpose faces outward, intended for witness to the world. For Israel, God gave the law "that you may live." As the psalmist writes, whoever follows the law will live well: in peace, without disturbance. The law is not to restrict followers but to set them free for a life of true abundance. As for the world, the law was given to Israel so that they could bear witness that their God's wisdom and kindness surpass all other nations' gods. The law illuminated the Israelites so that they might shine brightly, drawing other nations to Israel's God.

James picks up on the theme of fruitful obedience and applies it to Christians. He uses three metaphors to show how intertwined our lives are with God's "word of truth" (that is, the Scripture, or God's law): we are the infant children of the Word; we are like the first figs blossoming on the Word's tree; and we are the soil in which the Word is planted. Our lives are bound up with God's Word in such a way that to hear the Word without living it out would be to turn away from our parent, to wither on the tree, or to dry up and crack as desert soil.

Finally, Mark's Gospel warns that obedience to the law must be deeper than mere observance. Our obedience should be inward, coming from hearts turned toward God. Mark warns, rather literally, against paying "lip

service" to the law without loving God with the heart. The purpose of God's holy law is inner transformation leading to abundant life.

Reflections

- Easy to say, much more difficult to do. James is quite aware of this, as he writes to his brothers and sisters in today's second reading. If we're only attending Mass on Sundays, listening to the Word, exchanging niceties with our regular contacts, but then go out into the world unchanged and unwilling to help those most in need—are we really followers of Christ? We are asked to help the widow and orphan, the least among us.

- God bless the rule-followers among us—the ones just wanting to do the right thing, to keep the peace, to play their part. The Gospel passage today does not intend to dismiss those who are following the rubrics of tradition. It does, however, cause us to evaluate our priorities: do we follow the rules, even as current contexts demand we re-examine? Do we place the law itself about the good of the people? Do our liturgical practices lead us to better follow the core principle to love God and one another?

- We spend so many resources to protect ourselves and our communities from danger. But what are we doing to protect us..... From ourselves? From the anger, isolation, and grief that bubbles up inside of us with no healthy outlets?

LTP Sourcebook 2024

World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation: The Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development has published the Holy Father's message for the *Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation 2024*. This is celebrated on the 1 September every year, and the Season of Creation itself extends from this date until 4 October, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi. The Holy Father's message is entitled "Hope and Act with Creation" and can be read in full here [Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation \[1st September 2024\] \(27 June 2024\) | Francis \(vatican.va\)](#)

Date for the Diary: Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion & Readers Formation Day— 9.30am -3pm
Saturday 19th October ~ at St Stephen's Church Hall 26 Deepdene Road, Welling, DA16 3QL. **OR** **Saturday 26th October** at Thomas Grant School, Belltrees Grove, Streatham SW16 2HY. See poster for full programme of the day.

Mass Intentions: If you would like to offer a Mass for an intention, please use the Mass Intention Envelopes available on the table at the back of the church and post it through the presbytery letterbox. Please ensure you include your contact number. The recommended stipend (donation) by the Archdiocese for a Mass Intention is £10.

St Mary's Church Welling, Wickham Street DA16 3QU **90th Anniversary**. Saturday 7th Sep— Church will open from 10am until 5pm. Organ recital at 2pm. Cream tea at 3.30pm (£5) Displays of photographs from the past. Sunday 8th Sep - Celebration service at 10am. Bring and Share Lunch in the hall 12noon – 2pm. All welcome. See poster.

March for Life UK is in London on Saturday 7th September. Join us at this family-friendly event. Find out more at <https://www.marchforlife.co.uk/> See poster & leaflets in porch.

Medjugorje Irish Centre Pilgrimages April - Oct 2025: 7 Nights Apartment B&B from €273 per person sharing. Airport transfer available on request. Contact us for details and book the dates that suit you. Tel. 020 3239 8662 Email: reservations@med-irishcentre.com More info on website www.med-irishcentre.com

SVP & Ink Cartridges: Recycle your old ink cartridges and raise funds for the St Vincent de Paul Society by placing them in the box on the table in the porch. Many thanks.

Fr. Godfrey Ogwang will be returning to Uganda on Wednesday 4th September. We thank him for his time spent in our parish during August and wish him safe travels as he returns home. Hopefully we will be able to welcome him once again to St Stephen's next summer. Please keep Fr Godfrey in your prayers.

Parish Garden Day: Please join us on **Saturday 7th September** (and every first Saturday of the month). *Everyone welcome*. Please bring your own equipment—gloves, kneelers, brushes, hand tools, spades, cutters etc. Families welcomed—jobs for all. Any amount of time you are able to give will be greatly appreciated to help tidy our outdoor space. Thank you

Living Water blog on St Stephen's website includes an article from Paul Harris about his experience volunteering at SPARK in the Park this summer. Please click on the link to read. <http://www.saintstephens.co.uk/blog/> Perhaps you have visited an interesting place this summer or would like to share an experience / event you have attended with the parish. Please send contributions to Gwen via email at gwen@chiosso.com and they can be posted on our website for all to enjoy.

Support our parish and make your donations go further by signing a valid Gift Aid Declaration form. Go to www.rcaos.org.uk/media/xfqfyxyj/welling-planned-giving-and-gift-aid-form.pdf Paper copies of the form are available on the table at the back of the church. You can also join the gift aid scheme by completing an online form at <https://forms.rcaos.org.uk/giftaid>.

If you have any questions regarding Gift Aid please speak to Maureen Harrison, our parish Gift Aid officer or contact the church office. Please return any completed Gift Aid Declaration forms to the church office via email or posted through the presbytery letterbox. Thank you.

Join our Mailing List: To receive our weekly newsletter by email please email wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk to subscribe, include your name and confirm your consent to receive our newsletter. You can unsubscribe at any time by notifying the parish office. Your email address will not be shared and used only to receive our newsletter.

Prayer Intentions Book: Parishioners are invited to write any prayer intentions in our Parish Prayer Intentions book which is placed on the table at the back of the church. Please take time to read the intentions and include them in your prayers.