

Word on Fire UK Bible Conference: If you want to gain a deeper appreciation of the Bible and the Catholic faith, come and join Bishop Robert Barron and thousands of other Catholics from across the UK for the national conference *Evangelisation & Culture: The Bible*. Tickets are available for the Friday and Saturday or just a day pass for the Saturday.

Date: Friday 21st - Saturday 22nd February 2025

Location: Excel Centre, East London

Speakers Include: Bishop Robert Barron, N.T. Wright, Professor Tracey Rowland, Archbishop John Wilson and more.

For more information and to register, please visit: wordonfire.org/the-bible-event. See poster for information and to scan QR code.

Archbishop John Wilson has written a new book entitled **The Romero Rosary**. With introductory chapters about St Oscar Romero and the rosary, this beautiful and creative new book contains reflections on the traditional mysteries of the rosary (*Joy, Light, Sorrow & Glory*) and the *NEW* Romero Mysteries (*Charity, Compassion and Mercy, & Justice and Peace*) - all illumined for reflection and prayer by the words of St Oscar Romero. The book is available from Pauline Bookshops and online at www.paulineuk.org. The Archbishops warmly invites everyone to the book launch on Wednesday 12 February 2025 at 6pm for 6.30pm at Amigo Hall, adjacent St George's Cathedral, Southwark SE1 7HY.

Flame 2025. The Southwark Catholic Youth Service has tickets available to purchase for the largest Catholic Youth event in the UK (for those aged from school year 9 to university). It's taking place on 15 March 2025 at Wembley Arena, London and has a range of exciting speakers and prayer activities. Buy tickets and for further information about the event go to www.cymfed.org.uk/flame/ or email youth@rcaos.org.uk

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.

Bexley Foodbank: Donations can be left in the box in the porch. Your support and generosity is much appreciated. Thank you.

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 (no large cartridges). Many thanks.

Help Shape the Future of Our Archdiocese:

The Archbishop invites you to play a vital role in shaping the future of our Archdiocese. In his pastoral letter, he encouraged everyone to reflect on the themes in the *Called to Bear Fruit* booklet and participate in small group discussions over the coming weeks. Here's how you can get involved:

- Form a group: Each small group should be composed of not less than four and not more than seven people. Each group will need a facilitator to lead the discussion and to feedback to the Called to Bear Fruit team.

- Choose your schedule: Discuss all six themes across six sessions or combine them into fewer meetings—whatever works best for you.

- Share your insights: Submit your group's reflections via our online form or as a typed hard copy by 6th April.

The more people who take part, the richer our understanding of the needs of our Archdiocese will be. Let's work together to shape our future! This is not led by the parish priest—we need your voices to help shape our Archdiocese. Please take a booklet from the table at the back of the church. Thank you for your involvement.

Monthly Young Adult Mass at 6pm – 9pm at St. George's Cathedral on the first Sunday of each month. Each Mass has a guest celebrant or preacher, music, and a social hour afterwards. This is an excellent opportunity to connect with other young Catholics across the Capital. <https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/mission/southwark-catholic-youth-service/news/>

Archdiocese of Southwark 2025 directory:

The fully functional, searchable Online Digital Directory for public use is available here www.rcaos.org.uk/directory

Support our parish and make your donations to our church go further by signing a valid Gift Aid Declaration form. Go to <https://forms.rcaos.org.uk/giftaid>.

Wellspring Church: Rev Christina has written a book about her missionary work entitled "*God of the Mountain, God of the Valley*". Book launch on Saturday 8th February between 12noon and 3pm. All welcome to attend. New Road, Welling Da16 1QJ. Enquiries please tel 07540425427.



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

**The Presentation of The Lord
(Year C)**

Saturday 1st February
5pm Sebastiao Dias RIP (S Fernandes)

Sunday 2nd February
9.30am Antonio Zacarias Fernandes RIP
11.30am People of the Parish

Mon 3rd **St Laurence of Canterbury, Bishop**
10am Malcolm Ireland RIP—birthday

Tues 4th **Feria**
11am **Funeral: Bernard O'Halloran**
7pm **Novena Mass**

Wed 5th **St Agatha, Virgin & Martyr**
10am Patricia Dowling RIP—anniv

Thurs 6th **Sts. Paul Miki & Companions, Martyrs**
10am Michael O'Connell—wellbeing (P Norville)

Fri 7th **Feria**
10am **Funeral: Terence Tyler**

Sat 8th **St Josephine Bakhita, Virgin**
No Morning Mass

Sacrament of Reconciliation
4pm—4.30pm

**Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time
(Year C)**

Saturday 8th February
5pm Kelly Patel—birthday

Sunday 9th February
9.30am Maritxu Zaratiegui RIP (M Rush)
11.30am People of the Parish

Mass Times & Intentions

Mon 10th **St Scholastica, Virgin**
10am Holy Souls (G Robinson)

Tues 11th **Our Lady of Lourdes**
11am Helen & Denis Sugrue—60th Birthday & Retirement Thanksgiving (J Mythen)

7pm **Novena Mass**

Wed 12th **Feria**
10am Mary Smith RIP (Doherty Family)
11.30am **Funeral: Milton Olwa Okello**

Thurs 13th **Feria**
10am Bridget O'Reilly RIP (M Rush)

Fri 14th **Sts. Cyril, Monk & Methodius, Bishop, Patrons of Europe**
10am Joan O'Halloran RIP (E Newitt)

Sat 15th **The Blessed Virgin Mary**
10am Priest's Ints

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

**Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time
(Year C)**

Saturday 15th February
5pm Margaret Murray (E Ryan)

Sunday 16th February
9.30am People of the Parish
11.30am Phil Daykin (M Harmer)

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

My dear People

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the temple.

Until 1969 this feast was also known in the west as the feast of the Purification of Mary, and was the end of the Christmas season. However, today the focus is on Jesus rather than his mother and therefore the feast is known as the Presentation of the Lord.

Luke tells us of three ancient ceremonies that Joseph and Mary observed following the birth of Jesus—the circumcision and naming of the child, purification following the childbirth and the presentation of the child.

Today's gospel text for the feast speaks of the presentation of Jesus in the temple, the purification of Mary and the Song of Simeon. The verse immediately before the beginning of today's gospel we are told of the circumcision and naming of Jesus.

According to the Jewish custom a mother had to offer a sacrifice—either a year-old lamb or, if she was poor two turtle doves or two young pigeons. Luke does not mention a lamb but two turtle doves or pigeons, which indicate that the parents of Jesus were poor.

Soon afterwards Luke introduces Simeon, a righteous and devout man, who looked forward to the restoration of the people and the fulfilment of God's redemptive work. His blessing relates the birth of Jesus to the fulfilment of the promise of salvation. He also speaks of the coming rejection of Jesus. Not everyone will want to see the light, or recognise God coming in Jesus. Jesus will be rejected and treated as someone to be opposed. Even his mother will have to share in his sufferings.

Jesus came to challenge our way of looking at the world. This challenge is not easy to accept. It's a challenge to ask ourselves how comfortable are we to accept this new way of life Jesus proclaims.

God Bless and love you all Edward

Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Year C)

Today's Feast

Obedient to the Law of Moses, Mary and Joseph take Jesus to the temple forty days after his birth. While at the temple, the Holy Family meet Simeon and Anna, two faithful Jews awaiting the revelation of the Messiah. In words heard in the Gospel of the day and prayed each night as part of the Liturgy of the Hours, the prophet Simeon declares that Jesus is a "light [of revelation] to the nations and the glory of [God's] people, Israel" (Lk 2:32). minding us that Christ is the light of the world.

Scriptures Insights

There was very little in the prophets or in John's preaching to prepare Israel for the tiny child who made his first public appearance when his mother took him to the temple for the purification rite prescribed by the law. Jewish custom considered a woman who bore a son to be unclean for seven days. After the boy's circumcision, she spent an additional thirty-three days becoming purified of her blood, following which she presented an offering in the temple.

What is remarkable in this story is the reaction of two old wise people. When they look at the child, they see the salvation of Israel, the Messiah who has come to redeem the world. Simeon confidently describes the child's destiny and the joy and sorrow that Mary will feel. Anna's worship bursts forth into proclamation about the child to anyone who will listen. The good news seemed unbelievable, for most of the Jews believed that the Messiah would be a great warrior, bringing God's justice and righteousness to a sinful nation. Even the

preaching of John the Baptist pointed to someone greater than he. Could this infant really be the promised one?

Reflections

• Today's feast is a stepping stone taking us down the path from Christmas to Easter, hinting in a big way at the suffering that is to come. At Christmas we let ourselves bask in gratitude and awe that God would choose to walk with us so closely on this human journey, yet this is not a walk that comes without difficulties. We too can choose to walk closely with others, especially those who are isolated, oppressed, or marginalised. This choice comes with suffering as our hearts break for each other, but it a path Jesus walks with us.

• Pope Francis points to the presentation of Jesus as a story of people being drawn together in Jesus, and reminds us that Jesus calls us to an encounter that "takes place within the people of God, in its concrete history, in its living traditions: in the temple, according to the law, in the context of prophecy, in young and old together" Homily of Pope Francis, February 2, 2019). Do we see Jesus drawing people together to encounter him through our own Church community? How can we make this encounter more alive?



LTP Sourcebook 2025

Racial Justice Sunday: 16 February: As we reflect on the theme: "*Pilgrims of Hope: Our Journey Together Towards Racial Justice*". This special celebration will be led by Archbishop John Wilson, who will preside over the 10am Mass at St George's Cathedral. To mark this occasion in a spirit of unity and cultural diversity, we encourage attendees to wear traditional attire and, where possible, bring a flag representing their country of origin. This will be a beautiful expression of the universal nature of our Church and our shared commitment to justice and inclusion. Westminster Bridge Road SE1 7HY. (Please be seated by 9:45am). View online: [Racial Justice Sunday Mass 2025](https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/mission/commission-for-promoting-racial-and-cultural-inclusion/a-prayer-for-justice/) or scan the QR code on poster. Following the Mass, refreshments will be served in Amigo Hall, offering an opportunity for fellowship and conversation.

There will be a second collection in church on 16th February to support the work of the Catholic church to promote racial justice in our schools, parishes and in wider society.

A Prayer for Justice <https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/mission/commission-for-promoting-racial-and-cultural-inclusion/a-prayer-for-justice/>

Southwark Archdiocese Rosary Prayer

Project: Everyone is warmly invited to join this prayer initiative, praying a decade of the Rosary each day for priests and parishes. For details see the poster & pick up an invitation leaflet at the back of church or email southwarkrenewal@gmail.com.

The Southwark Catholic Youth Service are delighted to offer a series of Saturday retreats designed for young people aged 13-17. The retreats are an opportunity to develop a knowledge and love of Christ, and to build friendships through formation, prayer and fellowship. For dates & venues and to book go to [Event Booking: Archdiocese of Southwark](https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/young-adults/saturday-retreats/). Please email Youth Service youth@rcaos.org.uk or call 020 7928 5256 with any queries.

Youth Days: These events will offer a blend of faith formation, prayer, sports, crafts, and, of course, pizza! They present a wonderful opportunity for young people aged 10 to 14 to deepen their faith, make new friends, and have a lot of fun. For dates & venues and to book go to [Event Booking: Archdiocese of Southwark](https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/young-adults/youth-days/). Please email Youth Service youth@rcaos.org.uk or call 020 7928 5256 with any queries.

Save the date: Archdiocesan Jubilee Celebration on Saturday 7 June at Aylesford Priory. This event will also mark the 60th anniversary of the Archdiocese of Southwark. More details to follow.

First Saturday (of the month) Devotions including praying the Rosary together at 9.20am in church. [Please join us on 1st February.](https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/first-saturday-devotions/)

Eucharistic Adoration in church will be on Mondays to Fridays 9am to 9.30am and on Saturdays 10.30am—11am & 4pm—4.30pm, Confessions also available at these times on Saturdays. Please note there will not be Eucharistic Adoration on Saturday 8th February.

Parish Coffee Morning this Sunday, 2nd February, after the 9.30am & 11.30am Masses in the parish hall. Please pop in for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed

Volunteers are needed! Please add your name to list at the back of the church if you are able to help—setting up tables & chairs before 9.30am Mass or serving or washing-up or tidy up or putting tables & chairs away after 11.30am Mass coffee morning. You can also speak to Sarah & Simon Heywood (9.30am Mass) or Pat Hobbs (11.30am Mass) to offer your help.

Mass Intentions: If you would like to offer a Mass for an intention, please use the Mass Intention Envelopes available at the back of the church. Please ensure you include your contact number. The recommended stipend (donation) advised by the Archdiocese for a Mass Intention is £10. Your Mass stipend can be gift aided—please complete the gift aid declaration on the reverse of envelope if you are not already signed up to the parish gift aid scheme.

Young Adults Spring Talk Series 2025 at St. George's Cathedral on Thursday evenings for a programme of talks, prayer and social events. Details of the *Spring Series* is via Facebook and Instagram @stgeorgesy

The Southwark Catholic Youth Service has activities in 2025 for those aged 10-35. For details, please sign up to our network to receive updates at <https://form.jotform.com/230894642403052>

Join our Mailing List: To receive our weekly newsletter by email please email wellingsecretary@rcaos.org.uk to subscribe.

Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate : You are warmly invited to join us at The Vine Christian Community Church, Axminster Crescent, Welling DA16 1HF. The course is on Saturday 8th February 10am – 12noon. Please let me know if you are interested at your earliest convenience via email melvynfrench7@gmail.com Cost £15.