

As the Confirmation candidates embark on their spiritual journey, they kindly ask you to remember them in your prayers and pray for them. Next Sunday, 8th February, after the 11:30am Mass they will handing out little slips with their request. Please endeavour to pick one.

Clergy Support Fund Second Collection 14th / 15th February: The clergy in our Archdiocese have given us so much. They have been there for us in our happiest moments and comforted us when we have lost loved ones. Supporting priests in their retirement is one way to show your appreciation for all they have done for parishes. You make supporting our clergy in retirement possible. Please take an envelope from the table at the back of church—gift aiders please complete the gift aid declaration.

Please continue to keep our Priests in your prayers.

International Exhibition of The Eucharistic Miracles of the World at St. John Vianney Church, Bexleyheath from 30th January to 15th February in the chapel, open during Mass times to view the exhibition designed by Saint Carlo Acutis. Everyone welcome.

Volunteering Opportunity at *Evergreen Care UK*: Fancy a cup of tea & chat with someone who would be grateful for some company? Befriending Volunteers Needed. See poster on notice board for more details or go to www.evergreencareuk.org or call 01322 431765 or email befriending@evergreencareuk.org

Bexley Winter Shelter Drop-In Centre at the Sea Cadet Hall in Trinity Place on a Monday and Tuesday from 10am-2pm. This is to help homeless or those at risk of homelessness. A hot shower, cooked breakfast, tea/coffee is provided and support from local services including DWP, Oxleas Mental Health & Thames Reach, as well as lending a friendly ear. The Drop-In is proving very busy and successful in providing accommodation for a lot of clients in a short period of time. This is a need currently of *new* sleeping bags. If anyone is able to donate a *new* sleeping bag(s) please contact the church office. Also, donations of men's *shower gel* and *shampoo* are needed (new & unused please). There will be a box in the church porch next weekend for donations – thank you. To find out more about BWS go to <https://www.bexleywintershelter.org.uk/>

If you know of or see anyone that is rough sleeping or sofa surfing, please ask them to call Geraldine: 07305 102730 who will be able to help.

Parish Liturgy Meeting on Thursday 5th February at 7.30pm in the small hall (attached to the church). Parishioners are invited to suggest additions or changes that could enhance any aspect of our parish liturgy by completing the leaflet available on the table at the back of the church and posting it through the presbytery letterbox or give to the priest after Mass. Ideas or suggestions from parishioners would be welcomed. The leaflets can also be used to volunteer for specific liturgical roles in our Sunday Masses. At the meeting we will be planning our Lent and Easter events.

Online Marriage Programme: *Retrouaille* helps marriages. It can bring hope and healing to relationships. Next date: 12th February 2026. www.retrouaille.org.uk Tel: 07887 296983

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.

Catechetical Institute: The Agency has agreed an extension to the diocesan-wide subscription to the Catechetical Institute workshops. Each person in our parishes and schools can create a personal account and access over 140 workshops for free. Visit <https://aec.rcaos.org.uk/franciscan> for more details. See poster on notice board to scan QR code.

Grief in Loss Retreat: 20 - 22 March 2026. For anyone who has experienced bereavement, either recently or some time ago. Grieve, remember, hope and give thanks for your loved ones in the light of the Resurrection of Jesus. Call 01622 717272 or email reception@thefriars.org.uk to book and find out more.

Examination Invigilators Required: *St Catherine's Catholic School:* For more information and to apply, please visit <https://www.stccg.co.uk/Support-Staff-Vacancies/>

St Columba's Catholic Boys' School: If you are interested and would like more information please contact Kelly White at KWE@st-columbas.co.uk

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.



ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH

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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

DONATIONS

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

The offertory collection after the Liturgy of the Word during Mass on Saturday evening & Sunday morning is for parishioners who wish to donate with their gift aid envelopes or with loose cash. If you choose to donate via the digital plate in church, online or by standing order, please continue to do so—there is no need to change your chosen method of giving. The collection bag will also be circulated for second collections.

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>.

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.

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 situated at the back of the church. 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 registered for Gift Aid at St Stephen's.

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

My Dear people

Last week I shared with you a basic structure of the Gospel of Matthew. As we hear today the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, I like to share with you another structure we find regarding the teachings of Jesus in Matthew.

Jesus has begun his Galilean ministry as we saw last week. Introducing ministry of Jesus, Matthew has prepared us—his readers—for the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew arranges the teachings of Jesus into five major discourses or teachings. First of these is the Sermon on the Mount, the beginning of it we hear today. In chapter 10 Jesus gives instructions to the twelve before sending them on mission.

In chapter 13 we have a series of parables which speaks about the nature of the Kingdom of God. The fourth discourse is known as the community discourse, found in chapter 18, speaks about the relationship within the community and how the new church will live in the spirit after Jesus' departure. The final discourse is known as the eschatological discourse where Jesus speaks about the future. It is also important to notice that at the end of these teachings, Matthew uses an expression, 'when he

had finished these words.'

We may wonder as to why Matthew arranged the teachings of Jesus. There are five scrolls of the Torah. As we hear the five discourses proclaimed during this year, they will echo the five books of the Torah. Matthew is telling the story of Jesus that echoes the great story of the Exodus and strengthens that connection by presenting Jesus as the new Moses—teacher, lawgiver and the one who leads God's people into the fullness of God's Kingdom. Jesus is not just another figure within the history of Israel but the one who completes it.

With this structure, Matthew shows us that the teachings of Jesus stand at the heart of the new Kingdom of God he brings about. Just as the Torah shaped and formed Israel, the five sermons shape our identity, our discipleship and our mission.

God Bless and love you all.

Canon Edward

Sunday 1st February - Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Scripture Insights

When Jesus proclaims whom he considers "blessed," the strong and the proud are not listed. The rich and powerful are absent. Jesus says the blessed ones are the humble and lowly, the faithful who pursue justice and who take refuge in the Lord (see Zep 3:12). They boast only in the Lord Jesus and his salvation (see 1 Cor 1:31). To them, God promises the kingdom of God, an upside-down kingdom in which the last are first.

The blessed ones imitate God with their merciful acts—feeding the hungry, protecting the resident alien, and raising up those who are bowed down (see Ps 146:7-9). To them, God promises his mercy on the day of judgement.

The blessed ones mourn, because they are the oppressed and the captives, the fatherless and widows, the ones in exile longing for home. These blessed are those whom Paul describes as "lowly and despised of the world," as "those who count for nothing" (1 Cor 1:28). To them, God promises his comfort and consolation, which in the Bible means redemption, it means the eternal day of sabbath rest and joy at the end of earthly strivings, it means the wiping away of all tears (see Rev 21:4).

The blessed ones long for God's justice. They have pure hearts that single-mindedly seek the things of God and speak only the truth (Zep 3:13). They love God's law (see Zep 2:3); they secure justice for the oppressed (see Ps 146:7). To them, God promises what their heart most

desires: they will be satisfied with God himself; they will be "filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph 3:19).

The blessed ones sow shalom, peace, wherever they go. Because they are meek, they do not return evil for evil or trample the weak. Like Jesus, they are gentle. They reconcile enemies to God and to one another. They are called the children of God because they are like their Father.

Reflections

- Though we would expect that happiness belongs to those who are successful in life, the Beatitudes declare that it is the poor, the marginalised, and the oppressed who are happy.

- This reversal of expectation is characteristic of the kingdom of God, and in announcing the nearness of the kingdom, Jesus identifies the recipients of God's blessing as those whom the world despises and rejects. It is not because of their poverty that these poor merit God's kingdom; rather they receive God's blessing because they are wholly dependent upon God and so open to God's intervention in this world. That they are now declared "blessed" indicates that the time of salvation has begun. With the coming of Jesus, the future hope of the coming of the kingdom of God upon them; the present is already being transformed.

LTP Sourcebook 2026

Many Thanks for your donations to *St George's Cathedral* last weekend which came £279.36.

Your support can enable the Cathedral to remain open daily to those seeking a place of peace, prayer and worship. Thank you! Donations can still be made by

- Donate Online: www.rcaos.org.uk/Cathedral
- Or Scan QR Code using telephone camera (below)
- Telephone weekdays 9 am – 5 pm: 020 7960 2504



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.

This Weekend there will be a second collection for the *Catholic Association for Racial Justice* to support the work of the Catholic Church to promote racial justice in our schools, parishes and in wider society.

Archbishop John Wilson will celebrate Mass for *Racial Justice Sunday* at St George's Cathedral on Sunday 1 February 2026, at the 10am Mass. Racial Justice Sunday is a time for the Church to pray, reflect and take action against racism, while celebrating the diversity of our Archdiocese. Everyone is invited to take part, and those who wish may wear national or cultural dress as a sign of unity and pride. After Mass, all are welcome to gather in Amigo Hall for refreshments – a chance to meet one another, share experiences and continue the conversation about faith and inclusion.

You are warmly encouraged to attend in person, but if you cannot make it you can watch the livestream through the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/live/fdmGwmESSgI>

CAFOD's Big Lent Walk 2026: Take on this challenge! Walk 200km throughout the 40 days of Lent anytime and anywhere to raise funds for life-saving water. Go to CAFOD's Big Lent Walk for 2026 for more details & to sign up.

Bexley Foodbank: Items needed are cereal, sugar, tea, coffee, UHT milk, toilet rolls, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit & soup. Donations can be left in the box in the porch. Your support and generosity is much appreciated.

Parish Coffee Morning on Sunday in the meeting room attached to the church (while the Confirmation classes are taking place in the main parish hall). Please join us for a cuppa & chat. Donations welcomed

Aspiring to Governance - Wednesday 25 March, 5.30pm-6.30pm. Join the Education Service for an informative session designed for individuals interested in becoming a Foundation Governor within the Archdiocese. This session is ideal for prospective Foundation Governors, as well as anyone interested in the governance of Archdiocesan schools. To book and view further details please [follow this link](#).

Archdiocesan Pilgrimage for Young Adults

(aged 18 to 35) are invited to join Archbishop John on pilgrimage to Lourdes, from 7 to 13 June 2026. The cost is £789, which includes flights and full-board accommodation on a shared basis. To book, please visit: www.tinyurl.com/lourdes26

Young adults (aged 18 to 35) are also invited to register interest for the *World Youth Day* pilgrimage to Korea in August 2027 at www.tinyurl.com/wyd2027

For information about youth activities for all ages across the Archdiocese please visit our website

[Southwark Catholic Youth Service: Archdiocese of Southwark](#)

First Saturday (of the month) Devotions including praying the Rosary together at 9.20am in church. Please join us on 7th February.

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

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 and post it through the presbytery letterbox. Please ensure you include your contact number. The recommended stipend (donation) advised by the Archdiocese for a Mass Intention is £10. Please give plenty of notice to avoid disappointment if you would like specific date for your intention as we may not always be able to accommodate your request at short notice (at least 6 months notice is recommended). If you are a UK tax payer please complete the Gift Aid declaration on the reverse of the envelope. Cheques made payable to 'RCAS Welling'. Thank you.