



The month of February is dedicated to the Holy Family

2026

First Week in Lent

Sunday Mass Cycle: Year A; Weekday: Year 2; Psalter 1

The live-stream from HC is at www.mcn.live

HC - Holy Cross; PJ/SsP&J - Ss Philip and James; STM - St Thomas More

Sat	21 Feb	Vigil of the First Sunday in Lent
5:30pm	HC	Vigil Mass: Rory Connolly, RIP
Sun	22 Feb	First Sunday in Lent
		CAFOD Family Fast Day Appeal
9:00am	HC	Mass: Josephine Morrell, RIP
11:00am	PJ	Mass: Michael Toner, RIP
Mon	23 Feb	Feria
10:00am	PJ	Mass: David William and family, RIP
Tue	24 Feb	Feria
9:40am	HC	Lauds (Morning Prayer)
10:00am	HC	<i>Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion</i>
Wed	25 Feb	Feria
10:00am	HC	Mass: Bertie Hill, RIP <i>followed by Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation until 11:00am</i>
Thu	26 Feb	Feria
9:40am	PJ	Lauds (Morning Prayer)
10:00am	PJ	Mass: Daniele Frascoia, RIP
Fri	27 Feb	Feria
10:00am	HC	Mass: Michael Carter, RIP
10:30am	HC	Stations of the Cross
7:00pm	PJ	Mass: North Bedford SVP intentions
7:30pm	PJ	Stations of the Cross
Sat	28 Feb	Feria
10:00am	PJ	Mass: Josephine Hodgkiss - healing <i>followed by Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation until 11:15am</i>
5:30pm	HC	Vigil Mass: <i>Missa pro populo</i>
Sun	1 Mar	Second Sunday in Lent
		CAFOD Family Fast Day collection
9:00am	HC	Mass: Robert Meehan, RIP
11:00am	PJ	Mass: <i>Missa pro populo</i>

NB: We seek to open the Church **thirty minutes** before any Mass or liturgy

Responsorial Psalm:

Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Rite of Election 2026

All **Catechumens and Candidates** are to be presented during Masses this Sunday in our community.

The **Rite of Election** will be celebrated for the diocese in the Cathedral, also this Sunday, at 3:00pm.

All **Catechumens** celebrating the sacraments of **Initiation** at the Easter Vigil, and all **Candidates** to be received into full communion with the Catholic church also at the Easter Vigil will be elected by the Bishop for the Easter Sacraments during this liturgy. Please continue to pray for **Yamarie, Sharon, Hector, Cameron and Zac**, who will be elected as they prepare to join our parish, and **Adeola and Leonard** who will join them for Confirmation.

Lent House Masses and sharing God's Word

Every year in Lent, we gather in groups as friends and families to celebrate Masses in homes/halls. This year, beginning this week, there are opportunities for **House/group Masses** every Thursday through Lent where the host/group may invite a few parishioners and friends for a **House Mass** and sharing God's Word. The priest will arrange with the host for a lift to the venue. If you would like to host a **House Mass** please fill in the information in the folder in each narthex, or email:

parish.holycross@northamptondiocese.org

CAFOD Lent Appeal

There is an appeal this weekend for the **CAFOD Family Fast Day** on Friday. There will be a collection next weekend.

First Holy Communion candidates

Please continue to pray for the young children who are preparing for their **First Reconciliation** on Saturday, 28th February, which is a significant step on their journey towards **First Holy Communion** on 5th/6th June.

All **Altar Servers** are reminded and encouraged to participate in the Altar Servers' Training this Wednesday in Holy Cross church at 6:30pm.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of **Marguerite Violet Walsh, RIP**, whose funeral liturgy will be held at Holy Cross church on Thursday, 12th March, at 11:15am, followed by a cremation service at Norse Road.

Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacrament of Reconciliation is on Wednesdays in HC after **Mass** until 11:00am, and on Saturdays in SsP&J, also after **Mass**, until 11:15am.

Our Parish Priest is Fr Alexander Ibe, SMMM

Email: fralexander.ibe@northamptondiocese.org

Our Assistant Priest is Fr Richard Onuoha, SMMM

Email: frrichard.onuoha@northamptondiocese.org

The Presbytery, 2 Severn Way, Bedford MK41 7BX Tel: (01234) 352607

HC: Holy Cross Church, 355 Goldington Road, Bedford MK41 0DP

SsP&J/PJ: St Philip and St James Church, 2 Severn Way, Bedford MK41 7BX

Newsletters are available through CASPAR, and on our website. To receive our newsletter electronically,

please register with CASPAR, either by QR code or by [hyperlink](#) →, and tick the relevant box.

(Holy Cross: www.caspar.church/me/?ID=55969

Deacon: Rev. Tony Quinlan: Tel: (01234) 950453; deacontony.quinlan@northamptondiocese.org

(Ss Philip and James: www.caspar.church/me/?ID=55971

Deacon: Rev. Crispin Walking-Lea: Tel: 07941 884645; deaconcrispin.walkinglea@northamptondiocese.org

Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSR): HC; Shirley Whiterod 07955 670543 and SsP&J; Ann-Marie Blaney 07867 757598

Website: northbedfordcatholics.org.uk (Contact the Webmaster through the website) Facebook: **North Bedford Catholic Community**

Parish Secretary HC, Sheila Allen (Mondays and Thursdays: 9:00am - 12:00pm) Tel: (01234) 353116; parish.holycross@northamptondiocese.org

Parish Secretary Ss P&J, Mariateresa Quinlan (Tuesdays: 11.15am - 3:15pm) Tel: (01234) 353116; Parish.SsPhilipandJames@northamptondiocese.org

Items for the Newsletter to the editor, by the Sunday before publication. Tel/text: 07986 357 320; email: charlie.stallard@gmail.com



Parish General Meeting, SsP&J - Sunday, 8th March

Fr Alex has called together all the organisations and societies that help our joint parishes fulfill their baptismal promises. There will be presentations made by each group, describing what they offer and how they may be approached. The meeting starts at 3:00pm and everyone is welcome to attend and hear about what happens in-an-around our parishes. There will be refreshments too!

Pray and Play

The weekly Pray and Play is moving to **Holy Cross church** from the new half-term. Meetings at 6:30pm, Mondays.

Yarl's Wood Immigration Removal Centre

We are looking for volunteers to go to Yarl's Wood IRC to visit and share their faith, lead prayers and bible studies, etc. If you are interested, please speak with Fr Alex. You will need to be DBS checked and granted permission to enter.

Fr Alex's car

You may be aware that **Fr Alex's** car was stolen last week. Matters are in the hands of the police and his insurers. If anyone has a good, well-maintained, reliable and affordable car that they are thinking of selling in the immediate future, Fr Alex might be interested in buying it. Please contact him at the Presbytery or email:

fralexander.ibe@northamptondiocese.org

Mothering Sunday, 15th March

This Mothering Sunday will see the inauguration of the **Catholic Women's Organisation (CWO)** in the **NBCC**. The **CWO** is a social religious group of Catholic women. Their aim is to encourage and promote Catholic values through their members, support local charities, and contribute to the spiritual and social growth of the church. If you wish to enquire about this group, contact **Uju** on 07908 444 800.

The online **Rosary Group** meets from 8:00am to 8:20am weekdays on Zoom. ID: 833 1504 6319 Password: Rosary

The **Rosary and Divine Mercy Group** meets in SsP&J each Monday at 1:45pm. Divine Chaplet, Rosary, cup of tea.

Holy Cross and Ss Philip and James Repositories

The Repositories are open before and after Sunday Mass.

Service to others takes many forms in our churches. It can be high-profile as in Priests, Deacons, Extraordinary Ministers and Readers. There are also those who work in the background. We need one or two people to take on the **Ministry of Refreshments** at Holy Cross after the 9:00am Sunday Mass. To find out more, please speak to Kathy Goodwin, telephone 07956 560 380 or email kathye.goodwin@gmail.com. Thank you.

Thank you to everyone who donated surplus gifts and came to the gift sale last week. We raised £300 for the **SVP Camino fund**. Your generosity is always greatly appreciated.

In April, **Krystyna Sykes** will be walking the **Camino de Santiago**. Krystyna will walk the 100km over six days and will raise funds for the **SVP** through sponsorship. You may donate using our **DONA** machines or the QR codes below under "**SVP Camino**" until the beginning of March.

You may make donations in the same way as if using the **DONA** machines in the narthexes of our churches.

Holy Cross



Ss Philip and James



Pope Leo XIV – Message for Lent 2026

Pope Leo presents Lent as a renewed time of conversion centred on listening and fasting. He calls the Church to deeper attentiveness to the Word of God and to the cry of the poor, reminding us that true listening forms compassionate and discerning hearts.

Fasting, he teaches, orders our desires and must be lived with humility and rooted in the Word, not as mere external discipline. Of particular pastoral relevance is his invitation to fast from words that wound, urging us to “disarm our language” and foster speech that builds communion.

Lent, the Holy Father concludes, is a shared ecclesial journey in which renewed listening and fasting can transform our relationships and communities as we move towards Easter. You may read the message here: press.vatican.va/content/salastampa/en/bollettino/pubblico/2026/02/13/260213d.html

Journey with Jesus through Lent

The online programme continues with bible studies based on the Sunday Mass readings on every Tuesday throughout Lent. Visit: comeandsee.org/lent26

Walk with Me

The Lent 2026, 25th Anniversary issue of **Walk with Me** is still available in the narthexes of our churches.

Walking in the Holy Spirit (Fanning into Flames)

The online sessions continue from 7:00 - 8:30pm on Tuesday with “Growth” by Fr Emmanuel Okami northamptondiocese.org/courses/walking-in-the-holy-spirit/

We Dare to Ask

The **Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales** Lenten resource seeks to encourage an appreciation of what is given in Christian Baptism. This is the third year in the series, “We dare to...” Download the five sessions from: cbcew.org.uk/we-dare-to-ask/

Diocesan Lent Resources

Bringing together a wide range of Lenten resources to support both groups and individuals on their journey through this sacred season, there is a **Lent Resources** page on the diocesan website. Whether you are looking for prayer materials, reflections, or practical ideas for fasting and almsgiving, these resources are there to help deepen faith and encourage spiritual renewal in Lent. All materials are offered to support parishes, families and individuals as we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Easter.

northamptondiocese.org/lent-resources/

The diocese is recruiting three **Property Area Coordinators**.

The closing date for applications is Friday, 7th March.

Full information for these positions and an application form may be found by visiting: northamptondiocese.org/jobs

Catholic Young Artist and Young Writer Awards

The **Catholic Union Charitable Trust** has announced the **Catholic Young Artist Award**, open to primary school-aged children. The theme is **Forgiveness** and the judge is Margaret Mizen, Founder of the **Mizen Foundation**

The deadline for submissions is 22nd May.

The Award runs alongside the **Catholic Young Writer Award**, which invites young Catholic people to reflect on the question: “Why do we go to Confession?” Deadline for writers is 30th June. For more information:

catholicunion.org.uk/2026/01/young-catholic-artist-award-2026/