

God of Mercy and Compassion

Mercy is the most striking manifestation of God's love as revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus. In Jesus, the mercy and forgiveness of God is unlimited – shown supremely in Jesus' death on the Cross, when he prays to his executioners. This was indeed an extraordinary act of mercy, but it was the climax of a life and ministry marked by consistent and compassionate outreach to sinners. In the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, God is revealed as one who not only forgives, but who delights in forgiving, who reaches out to the sinner, actively seeks out the lost, and dignify sinners on the path to conversion.

It was his compassionate outreach to sinners that led Jesus into conflict with the Scribes and the Pharisees. These were Jews who prided themselves on their strict observance of the law and despised all those who were not like themselves: the uneducated, the morally weak, the tax collectors, public sinners, and prostitutes, etc. This conflict is highlighted in the dramatic scene portrayed in today's gospel passage from John. The Scribes and Pharisees bring before Jesus an unfortunate woman, caught in the act of adultery, asking him to condemn her in accordance with the Law. John, however, pinpoints their real motivation. They did not require Jesus to condemn her. They had already done that themselves. What they wanted was to use her as a bait to trap Jesus. As John tells us, they wanted 'to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him' (Jn. 8:6).

Without condoning or trivializing the woman's sin, or appearing to contradict the Law, Jesus finds a way to turn the tables on his opponents and show mercy to the woman. He invites them to investigate their own hearts and judge themselves before stoning the woman: 'Let the one who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her' (Jn. 8:7). These words of Jesus dissolve an extremely volatile situation. The opponents of Jesus, realizing that that they are not without sin, walked away, one by one – displaying an admirable honesty. Left alone with the woman, Jesus says to her: 'Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more' (Jn. 8:11).

Jesus' act of mercy must surely have given this humiliated and terrified woman the freedom and the strength to turn her life around. We notice that Jesus'

forgiveness is given before the woman shows any signs of repentance. We usually think of repentance as a necessary precondition for forgiveness. However, as this story illustrates, God's forgiveness is not dependent on our repentance. It is rather God's forgiving love that makes repentance possible. In the words of the noted English theologian, Herbert McCabe O.P., 'It is not literally true that because we are sorry, God decides to forgive us... The literal truth is that we are sorry because God forgives us. Our sorrow for sin is the forgiveness of God working within us.'

While Jesus did not come to abolish the Law – he came to complete it – mercy was his number one priority. But what is mercy? It is that divine creative impulse, the fruit of God's unconditional love, which heals the wounds caused by human sin, sows seeds of hope where there is despair, restores broken relationships, and draws life from the jaws of death. And it was this divine impulse that determined the life and ministry of Jesus. It was divine mercy that enabled him to fulfil his mission of life-giving service: 'I have come that you may have life and have it to the full' (Jn. 10:10). At the very heart of Jesus' message and ministry was a concern for the integral well-being of the human person, created in the image of a God.

From Jesus' words and actions, it is clear that God wants us to be healed, to be fully alive and well, at all levels of our being: spiritual, psychological and physical as well as social and political. Jesus' entire ministry was the outward expression, the sacrament, of God's mercy and compassion. In the words of Pope Francis: 'Faced with a vision of justice as the mere observance of the law, that judges people simply by dividing them into two groups – the just and sinners – Jesus is bent on revealing the great gift of mercy that searches out sinners and offers them pardon and salvation.'

Fr. Elijah

5th Sunday of Lent (6th April 2025)

- 9.15am **Our Lady of the Assumption** (Hedge End)
Betty & Wallace Ward (RIP)
- 11.00am **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)
For John & Berenice Adams RIP
- 5.30pm **St. Brigid** (West End)
*For the repose of the soul of Guido Camilleri,
Francis, Antonia, Doris and Elsie*
- 6.00pm **Christ the King & St Colman** (Bitterne)
Polish Mass

Mass Times for 8th April – 13th April

OLA – Our Lady of the Assumption (Hedge End)

CKSC – Christ the King & St. Colman (Bitterne)

SB – St. Brigid (West End)

Tue 8 th	10.00am	OLA	<i>For the people</i>
Wed 9 th	10.00am	SB	
Thu 10 th	10.00am	CKSC	<i>For Gertie Milner on her birthday</i>
Fri 11 th	10.00am	OLA	
Sat 12 th	10.00am	CKSC	<i>For Marina, Augustin Cenac and David Reid</i>
Sun 13 th	9.15am	OLA	
	11.00am	CKSC	<i>Josephine & Michael Shepherd RIP</i>
	5.30pm	SB	
	6.00pm	CKSC	<i>Polish Mass</i>

Exposition & Rosary at 9.30am before Mass (Tue–Fri).

Sacrament of Confession is available on request.

Please consider offering Mass Intentions for families and friends (contact Fr. Elijah or Parish Office).

OPEN CHURCH

Our Lady of the Assumption Church in Hedge End is open for private prayer on Thursdays from 10am until midday. To join the rota, please contact Pauline or Jane.

OPEN CHURCH at St. Brigid's

For a trial period, St Brigid's will be open for quiet prayer on Fridays at 5.30-6.30pm on 4th April and 25th April, with a mixture of silence and quiet reflective music. Why not pop in, and pray away the stresses of the week?

Penitential Service

The penitential service will take place at **Christ the King & St. Colman Church** in Bitterne on **11th April at 5pm.**

Easter Triduum

17th April HOLY THURSDAY

8.00pm CKSC, Bitterne
followed by Watching until 11.00pm

18th April GOOD FRIDAY

3.00pm The Passion CKSC, Bitterne

19th April HOLY SATURDAY:

8.30pm Vigil Mass OLA, Hedge End

20th April EASTER SUNDAY

9.00am Mass St Brigid, West End
11.00am Mass CKSC, Bitterne

Baptism preparation course

The next baptism preparation course will be run on Sunday 11th & 18th May at 2pm in Christ the King & St Colman's church hall.

If you are interested in having your child baptised and attending the course, please contact the parish office to let them know.

Lenten Observances at CKSC

Before mass on Thursdays and Saturdays we will be praying the Stations of the Cross and not the Rosary.

Jubilee of Hope Companion Booklets

Jubilee of Hope Companion Booklets are available in all three churches. These are free, with a suggested donation of £1 to cover the cost to the Parishes.

Stations of the Cross Hedge End & West End

Stations of the Cross will alternate between Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Brigid's on Monday evening at 7.30pm during Lent on the following schedule:

- 7th April: OLA
- 14th April: SB

CKSCOLASB Calendar of Events

OLA – Our Lady of the Assumption (Hedge End)

CKSC – Christ the King & St. Colman (Bitterne)

SB – St. Brigid (West End)

Sun 6 th	Tea, Coffee, Biscuits after Holy Mass (CKSC)
Tue 8 th	9.30am-12pm Table Tennis (OLA Hall) 7.30-9pm Growing in Faith (OLA)
Thu 10 th	10.30am-12pm Prayer Group (CKSC) 10am-12pm Open Church (OLA)
Fri 11 th	7.30pm Choir Practise in church hall (CKSC)
Sun 13 th	Tea, Coffee, Biscuits after Holy Mass (SB)
Tue 15 th	9.30am-12pm Table Tennis (OLA Hall) 7.30-9pm Growing in Faith (OLA)
Wed 16 th	7.00-8.30pm Carers Group (OLA Hall)
Thu 17 th	10.30am-12pm Prayer Group (CKSC) 10am-12pm Open Church (OLA)
Tue 22 nd	9.30am-12pm Table Tennis (OLA Hall) 7.30-9pm Growing in Faith (OLA)
Thu 24 th	10.30am-12pm Prayer Group (CKSC) 10am-12pm Open Church (OLA)
Fri 25 th	7.30pm Choir Practise in church hall (CKSC) 5.30pm-6.30pm Open Church (SB)

Recurring Events

Our Lady of The Assumption (Hedge End)

- **Tea Coffee, Biscuits, Friendly Chat** (and often cake) in the hall every Sunday after Holy Mass
- **Children's Liturgy** during Mass every 3rd Sunday of the Month
- **Carers Group** on third Wednesday of every Month from 7.00pm to 8.30pm
- **Growing in Faith** every Tuesday evening 7:30-9pm
- **Table Tennis** every Tuesday from 9.30am to 12pm
- **Open Church** every Thursday from 10am-12pm

Christ the King & St. Colman (Bitterne)

- **Prayer Group** every Thursday 10.30am-12 noon
- **Children's Liturgy** for 4 to 7-year-olds every Sunday
- **Tea, Coffee, Biscuits & friendly chat** in the hall every 1st Sunday of the month
- **Choir practice in hall** - 7:30pm on 2nd & 4th Friday each month. All welcome.

St Brigids (West End)

- **Tea, coffee & cake** every 2nd Sunday of the month after Mass

If you would like a future event to be included in the Calendar of Events, kindly advise the Parish office.

Continuing Support of the Church

Please consider setting up a **standing order**.

For Christ the King & St Colman:

Account Name: CDP Christ the King & St Colman

Sort code: 30-93-04

Account Number: 00887553

For Our Lady of the Assumption and St Brigid:

Account Name: CDP Hedge End Our Lady

Sort code: 30-93-04

Account Number: 00879747

Please use your surname as a reference.

Make out cheques for Fr Elijah to Rev Fru N Elijah

Thank you for your support.

50th Anniversary

Our Lady of the Assumption Church

Events to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the church of Our Lady of the Assumption in Hedge End, which was opened on 25th April 1975, will include:

25th April **Anniversary Mass** at 7pm
followed by refreshments in hall

17th May **Barn Dance**
at West End Parish Centre at 7pm

14th June **Summer Tea Party**

25th July 50th Anniversary **Summer Quiz**

16th August **Parish Summer Picnic**
at Manor Farm

CAFOD Myanmar Earthquake Appeal

Following the devastating earthquake in Myanmar, CAFOD is responding through the Catholic Church there to support families affected by the disaster.

Your donations will provide essentials like water, food, solar lights, and mosquito nets.

Please give to CAFOD's Myanmar Earthquake Appeal in church or you can donate online at <https://cafod.org.uk/myanmar> or by calling 0303 303 3030. You can also text EARTHQUAKE to 70450 to donate £10.



Our Lady of the Assumption Easter celebration refreshments after the Easter Vigil Holy Mass

Following our Lenten Observances, after the joyful celebration of the Easter Vigil Mass, there will be refreshments in the hall: cake, nibbles, etc. tea, coffee, orange juice, Bucks Fizz or, perhaps, a glass of "Celebration Fizz".

Please do come along if you can, to celebrate as a Community of Faith, the wonderful Feast of Easter.

Please bring along a plate of food to share.

We wish you a Blessed Easter and look forward to welcoming you.

Significant Marriage Anniversaries

Are you celebrating a 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th, 60th wedding anniversary or anniversary over 60 years? If so, Bishop Philip would like to invite you to a Mass of celebration. This will take place at St Bede's Church in Basingstoke on Saturday 21st June at 11am, followed by a buffet lunch.

It is a wonderful occasion to celebrate and witness to Marriage.

Please contact your parish secretary or email anniversaries@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk to request a form to complete and return.

To help celebrate the occasion please could you provide a COPY of your Wedding photograph, you can upload it when you return the form.

Again, if you have no access to the internet you can post a COPY along with completed form by post to the following address:

St Bede's Parish Office
Popley Way
Basingstoke
RG24 9DX

Keep in touch with Portsmouth Diocese

@PortsmouthRC
Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
@PortsmouthRC
<https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/>

If you have news to share with the Diocese, contact:

communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Income figures for Hedge End for March

The collection figures for Hedge End for March are:

• Looseplate	697.59
• Standing orders / direct payments	1,591.50
• Candles	100.68
• Closer to Christ	296.67
• Hall income	222.00
• Church rent	190.00
• Donations	9.48

Second collections

• CAFOD	394.40
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Dare to Hope

During Lent we will be following the Programme written by the Dominican sisters at Sway during our Thursday morning Prayer sessions 10.30-12 noon.

To see more just click [Dare To Hope](#) and come and join us

Sunday's Readings:

Daily Readings

<https://universalis.com/europe.England/20250406/mass.htm>

Reflections

<http://www.mycatholic.com/>

Diocesan eNews

<https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/communications/news/enews/>

UK Catholic Newspapers

<https://www.churchpaper.co.uk>