



ST MATTHEW CATHOLIC CHURCH, WEST NORWOOD-

www.stmatthews-westnorwood.org.uk

02086701765

norwoodwest@rcaos.org.uk

37 Norwood High Street

West Norwood

London SE27 9JU

22 FEBRUARY 2026

Parish Newsletter

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT (A)

TODAY'S MASS READING: Parish Mass Book, from page 151

1st Reading (Gen. 2:7-9; 3:1-7) **2nd Reading** (Rom5: 12-19) **gospel** (Mtt.4: 1-11)

Readings Next Sunday: 1st

Reading (Gen. 12:1-4a). 2nd

Reading (2Tim. 1:8b-10). Gospel

(Matt. 17:1-9)

Homily – First Sunday of Lent (Year A)

My dear brothers and sisters, today we begin the sacred journey of Lent.

The Gospel presents Jesus in the desert, fasting for forty days and facing temptation. Before Jesus begins His public ministry, He first enters a place of silence, struggle and deep trust in God. This tells us something important: Lent is not simply about giving things up; it is about allowing God to strengthen us from within. The temptations of Jesus are also our temptations. The first temptation, turning stones into bread, speaks about the desire for comfort and immediate satisfaction. We live in a world that tells us to fill every hunger quickly, whether physical, emotional or spiritual. Yet Jesus reminds us, "Man does not live on bread alone." During Lent we are invited to ask: what truly nourishes my soul? Prayer reconnects us with the One who sustains us beyond material needs. The second temptation, to throw Himself from the temple, reflects the temptation to seek recognition, control or dramatic signs. Sometimes we want God to prove Himself according to our expectations. But faith is not about testing God; it is about trusting Him even when life feels uncertain. Lent teaches us humility, to walk with God quietly rather than demanding miracles on our own terms. The third temptation, to gain power and glory, touches the deepest struggle of the human heart. The world often measures success by status, influence or possessions. Jesus chooses another path: worship God alone. True greatness is not domination but obedience rooted in love. When we fast, give alms and pray, we learn to reorder our priorities so that God stands at the centre. Notice that Jesus answers every temptation with the Word of God. He does not argue with the devil emotionally; He stands firm in truth. This reminds us that during Lent we should deepen our relationship with Scripture. Even a few minutes each day with the Gospel can strengthen us when we face our own deserts, moments of anxiety, fatigue, loneliness or inner struggle. My dear friends, Lent is not meant to discourage us but to renew us. The desert is not a place of abandonment; it is a place of encounter. Just as the Spirit led Jesus into the desert, the Spirit leads us into these forty days so that we may rediscover who we are: beloved children of God. Let us therefore embrace three simple practices. First, **prayer**, create space for silence where God can speak to your heart. Second, **fasting**, not only from food but from habits or distractions that weaken our spirit. Third, **charity**, to love our neighbour concretely, remembering especially the poor and those who suffer. As we begin this Lenten journey together as a parish family, let us walk with honesty and hope. We may face temptations and weaknesses, but Christ walks before us. If we remain close to Him, the desert will not defeat us; it will transform us. And when Easter comes, we will rise with renewed faith, stronger love and deeper trust in God. Amen.

Parish Priest: Fr Celestine Ekwueme

Email: celestineekwueme@rcaos.org.uk

PARISH INFORMATION AND FAITH NEWS

Pope's February prayer intention: For children with incurable diseases. Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

PARISH NOTICES

The World Day of Prayer is being held at All Saints Church, West Dulwich London SE21 8JY AT 1.30 pm on Friday the 6th of March. The service this year is about Nigeria, informing us about life in Nigeria through the words of four women. The service will be followed by tea and refreshments. Please come.

CAFOD Family Fast Day – Friday 27 February: "Love your neighbour as yourself." Our parish will be joining Catholics across England and Wales in supporting CAFOD's Family Fast Day. By praying, eating simply and giving generously, we stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world. Your support helps local experts provide practical and life-changing solutions to communities facing poverty, hunger and the effects of climate crisis. A **second collection** will be taken at all Masses next weekend in aid of CAFOD. Please take time to pray, fast if you are able, and remember the poor through your generosity. Thank you for your continued compassion and support

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 2 retreats are 27th Feb-1st Mar 2026 in Swindon and 15th-17th May 2026 in Maidstone, why not find out more at wwme.org.uk

Pray the Romero Rosary at St George's Cathedral. Join Archbishop John Wilson and the Cathedral clergy in praying the rosary every Friday at 5pm throughout Lent. This is a beautiful opportunity to draw closer to the Lord Jesus in prayer Lenten season. Find out more at: rcaos.org.uk/romerorosary

We Need Your Help: Each year, the Catholic Association Pilgrimage (CA) is responsible for coordinating the welcome and care of our 'assisted pilgrims' - those on our annual pilgrimage to Lourdes who have particular care and support needs. The CA is appealing for parishioners who might want to come to Lourdes as an assisted pilgrim, or as a volunteer helper in order to help provide the support that our assisted pilgrims need. All are welcome and all have an important contribution to make to the community that we form during our pilgrimage week. For more information visit: catholicassociation.co.uk or see posters at the rear of Church.

We Dare to Ask a five-week Lenten: Course inviting parishioners to prepare their hearts and minds to renew their Baptismal promises during the Easter celebrations. Through Baptism, we are united with Christ and given our mission to image him in our homes and communities. This proposed resource aims to contextualise our vocation within God's plan of Salvation, Christ's self-gift and the Sacramental life of the Church. While the world tempts us in all manner of ways yet by God's grace, we can turn back to him with contrite hearts to ask his mercy and forgiveness. We stand to renew our Baptismal promises: to ask for his life, his grace and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to renew and restore our covenant relationship with Jesus, that we may live in an ever-deepening union with him as his baptised son or daughter. Visit: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/we-dare-to-ask/>

Parish Secretary Role: The parish will be recruiting a Part-Time Parish Secretary to assist with general administration, correspondence, record-keeping, and support for parish activities. Further details will be shared in due course. Parishioners who may be interested are encouraged to contact the parish office. Please keep this in your prayers

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**PARISH MINISTRY**

Saturday 21	Vigil, 1st Sunday of Lent
6:30pm	Felicia Okoh; RIP
Sunday 22	1st Sunday of Lent
9am	Agnes Fonseca RIP
11am	Maria FitzGerald & Frances Wynne RIP
Monday 23	Feria
9:30am	No Mass
Tuesday 24	Feria
9am	No Adoration
9:30am	No Mass
Wednesday 25	Feria
9:30am	Christine Teves Sim RIP
Thursday 26	Feria
11am	Holy Souls
Friday 27	Feria
9:30am	Anne D'Souza RIP
Saturday 28	Vigil, 2nd Sunday of Lent
6:30pm	Joaquim & Cacilda RIP
Sunday 1	1st Sunday of Lent
9am	John Doherty RIP
11am	Holy Souls

READERS:

	21st/22nd	28th/1st
6:30pm	Ann Doe	Liane
9am	Savio	Kene
11am	Munachi/Chiebuka	Nathaniel/Ariel
Eucharistic Ministers		
6:30pm	Jenny	Russell
9am	Lawrence	Zena
11am	Kereine	Patience

Church Cleaning:**CYCLE OF PRAYER - Intentions for Lent:**

Candidates for the Sacraments (especially on the Sundays)

The Needy and Hungry of the World (especially on Lent Fast Day, first Friday of lent)

Penitents and Wanderers

Women (especially on Women's World Day of Prayer - First Friday in March)

WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS THOSE WHO HAVE RECENTLY DIED IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY , AND THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH OCCUR AROUND THIS TIME, MAY THEY REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

Anthony Walsh RIP

Sean Mulholland RIP

HOSPITAL CONTACTS: If you or a member of your family are admitted to our local hospitals, do please let the hospital's Catholic chaplain know.

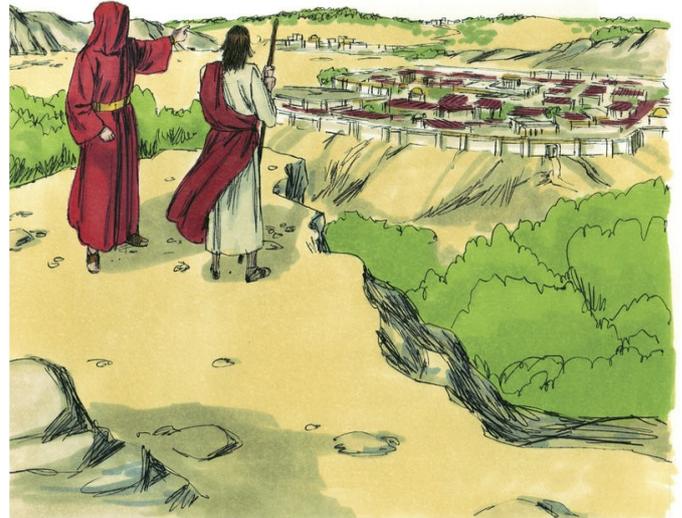
St George's Hospital: 02087253069 / 02086721255)

Kings Hospital: If outside hospital—02032993522. inside the hospital call extension 33522

Croydon University Hospital: 02084013105

St Thomas' Hospital: 02071881187/02071881186

Guy's Hospital: 02071881185/02071889576



PARISH SCHEDULES

Sunday Mass Times :

6:30pm (Sat), 9am and 11am

Week Day Mass Times:

Tuesday ; 7pm

Wednesday & Friday; 9:30am

Thursday; 11am @ British Home

First Fridays; 12noon.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Tuesdays; 6:00pm

Baptisms, Marriage, Funerals: Contact the Parish Office.

Youth Club:

4:30pm Every 3rd Saturday

RCIA: Contact Parish Office

RECONCILIATION/CONFESSIONS

Saturdays: 5:30pm to 6:15pm and on call.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Open Office: Fridays 10am to 12:30pm and 2:30pm to 4:30pm.

Other days with appointment, please.

UCM:

12noon Every First Friday

CHOIR REHEARSALS:

Wednesdays; 7:30pm @ the Church.

DIVINE MERCY GROUP

Sundays; after 11am mass @ the Divine Mercy Altar

We are grateful for all you do to support the parish.

Setting up a Standing Order is the most efficient way to make a donation to the parish without incurring fees. You can use the following details for one-off donation or to set up a Standing Order or Direct Debit. NatWest Bank: Account Name: RCAS Norwood West, Sort Code: 60-23-19; Account Number: 44115369. Thank You!