

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST, TIMBERHILL with ST JULIAN, NORWICH

March 2021



PARISH PEOPLE

Parish Priest

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PCC Secretary

Liz Kilshaw

PCC Treasurer

Chris Bushnell

Gift Aid Secretary

Michael Watson

Organist

Keith Buxton

Head Server

John Foottit

Electoral Roll Secretary

Elizabeth Sutherland

Safeguarding Officer

Shirley Buxton

Deanery Synod representatives

Liz Kilshaw, Rhys Lewis

Parochial Church Council

Mary Barnes-Clay, Fr Peter Barnes-Clay, Andrew Knights, Susan Snasdell, Elizabeth Sutherland, Melissa Symes, Nigel Waller

Sidespeople

Garret Cronin, Barbara Donnelly, Andrew Knights (*Senior Sidesman*), Michael Rayner, Wendy Rayner, Nichola Rose, Diane Sheen, Susan Snasdell, Dorothy Tinkler, Richard Tinkler, Stuart Tinkler, John Woodrow

The Julian Centre Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1QT
01603 767380 • www.julianofnorwich.org

The Centre is currently closed for refurbishment

On the Way of the Cross

Dear friends,

What connects tenth century Muslim Spain, French Benedictines, and St John the Baptist, Timberhill?

This year, each Solemn Mass during the first few weeks of Lent has begun with the solemn Lent Prose, beautifully sung by a cantor with sensitive accompaniment on the organ. As we don't have organ preludes before the Mass during Lent, we first hear notes from it as the Lent Prose is intoned after the sacristy bell rings and we rise to our feet. The Prose is sung as the procession makes its way to the sanctuary and the altar is honoured with incense, preparing it for the offering of the Sacrifice and expressing the prayer of the People of God, which, like incense, rises in his presence.

The Lent Prose is a plainsong responsory, beginning 'Hear us, O Lord' (or, in Latin, *Attende Domine*). The words originated in the tenth century, the product of the Mozarabs, the Christians who lived under Islamic rule on the Iberian Peninsula from the eighth century onwards. The music, meanwhile, comes from a bit of plainsong used in the late nineteenth century by the monks at Solesmes in France, famous as the source of the restoration of Benedictine monastic life after the French Revolution.

Collecting a text from tenth century Spain and music from nineteenth century France, we come to our own St John's Timberhill, where the organist from 1885 was W. J. Birkbeck. He introduced plainsong here, including for a while daily Sung Evensong; he himself studied plainsong at Solesmes during the 1880s. As well as playing the organ on Timberhill, Birkbeck became one of the editors of a new hymnbook, destined to transform English worship and church music – the English Hymnal – and when it was published in 1906, it included Birkbeck's arrangement of the Lent Prose, bringing the pleas of tenth century Mozarabs in Muslim Spain to Anglican choir stalls in England, where across the country its plaintive tones continue to mark the days of Lent: 'Hear us, O Lord, have mercy upon us, for we have sinned against thee.'

Having addressed Jesus as 'Corner-stone, Right Hand of the Father, Way of Salvation, Gate of Life Celestial', the hymn implores God to 'bow down and hearken to thy weeping children: pity and pardon all our grievous

trespasses.’ Then it brings us away from thinking about ourselves to contemplate what the Lord has done for us in his Passion:

*Innocent, captive, taken unresisting,
Falsely accused, and for us sinners sentenced:
Save us, we pray thee, Jesu our Redeemer.*

Each Friday during Lent, when we make the Way of the Cross (12 noon at St John’s), we seek to enter into that sorrowful journey when the One who was ‘innocent, captive, taken unresisting, falsely accused and for us sinners sentenced’ carried his own cross to the Place of a Skull and there was crucified.

Lent calls us to a wholehearted and humble embrace of the mystery of the Cross. It’s an invitation to renewal and transformation for the whole Church, summoning us to the new life which is ours in Baptism. At the start of Mass on Ash Wednesday, the priest explains that ‘by carefully keeping the days of Lent, Christians take to heart the call to repentance and the assurance of forgiveness proclaimed in the Gospel, and so grow in faith and in devotion to our Lord.’



After Lenten purple softens briefly to rose on Refreshment Sunday (also called Mothering Sunday, this year on March 14), our worship becomes more austere as the crosses and images in the church building are shrouded in purple, hidden from our sight. It seems curious to conceal the Cross at the very time when the Church seeks to draw our attention to it, but we veil the image and representation of it in order to test what impression the Cross has made on our hearts and mind. Passiontide leads us into Holy Week and the centre of the history of salvation. ‘Although he was a Son,’ says the Letter to the Hebrews, ‘he learned obedience through what he suffered; and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him’ (*Hebrews 5.8-9*).

Holy Week, which begins with Palm Sunday on March 28, is the heart of the Christian year and celebrates those mysteries which are at the heart of the Christian life. I encourage you to enter as fully as you are able into Holy

Week, the more so as we were unable to celebrate it together last year. This is the week to be at Mass every day, if at all possible: the principal Mass from Monday to Thursday will be in the evening at St John's, including an address each day. Make the time for it. There will also be opportunities every day during Holy Week to make your Confession and receive the gift of Absolution. If you have never done this, or not for some time, do not be afraid: the priest will be glad to help you. If you are not able to come to church, still do not let Holy Week pass you by: walk with your brothers and sisters along the Way of the Cross by reading the accounts of the Passion in the Scriptures, by meditating on them in your prayers, by offering some self-denial.

Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Night together constitute a single unity in which we celebrate the Passover of the Lord from death to life. I love those powerful, pregnant words which open the Gospel on Maundy Thursday: 'Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end' (*St John 13.1*).

His hour had come: he loved them to the end. He gave himself fully, entirely; he held nothing back. On the Cross, he made (as the priest sometimes says at Mass) 'a full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.' That was his offering. The memorial to the Lady Julian in the cell at St Julian's puts it so simply beneath the crucifix: 'Lo, how I loved thee.'

I pray that as we climb together up the hill of sacrifice and discover there the Cross and the Crucified, we might find in them the fullness of life and peace, the means of grace, the hope of glory.

Your friend and parish priest,

R. Richard

*Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the Cross I spend;
Life and health and peace possessing
From the sinner's dying Friend.*

Holy Week and Easter

Sunday 28 March • Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

9am Blessing of Palms and Low Mass (*St Julian's*)

10.30am Blessing of Palms and Solemn Mass of the Passion (*note early start*)

6pm Stations of the Cross and Benediction

Monday 29 March • Monday of Holy Week

10am Low Mass (*St Julian's*)

7pm Low Mass and Address

Tuesday 30 March • Tuesday of Holy Week

12 noon Low Mass

7pm Low Mass and Address

Wednesday 31 March • Wednesday of Holy Week

12 noon Low Mass

7pm Low Mass and Address

Thursday 1 April • Maundy Thursday

7.30pm Solemn Mass of the Lord's Supper

followed by the Watch at the Altar of Repose until midnight

Friday 2 April • Good Friday

9am Morning Prayer and Office of Readings

10am Stations of the Cross

2pm Solemn Liturgy of the Passion and Death of the Lord

8pm Compline (*St Julian's*)

Saturday 3 April • Holy Saturday

9am Morning Prayer and Office of Readings

Easter Night

8.30pm The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night

Sunday 4 April • Easter Day

9am Low Mass (*St Julian's*)

11am High Mass

6pm Solemn Evensong and Benediction

Confessions before Easter

A priest will be in St John's to hear Confessions, give spiritual advice and pronounce the forgiveness of sins at the following times before Easter:

Monday 29 March	6.30pm to 7pm	<i>The Parish Priest</i>
Tuesday 30 March	11am to 12 noon 6.30pm to 7pm	<i>The Parish Priest</i> <i>Fr Peter Barnes-Clay</i>
Wednesday 31 March	11am to 12 noon 6.30pm to 7pm	<i>Fr Peter Barnes-Clay</i> <i>The Parish Priest</i>
Maundy Thursday	6.30pm to 7pm	<i>The Parish Priest</i>
Good Friday	after the 2pm Liturgy	<i>The Parish Priest</i>
Holy Saturday	2pm to 3pm 5pm to 6pm	<i>The Parish Priest</i> <i>Fr Peter Barnes-Clay</i>

'If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

1 John 1.9

The Call to Holy Week

It was in the Passion, says St John of the Cross, that Christ "finished that supreme work which his whole life, its miracles and works of power, had not accomplished: the union and reconciliation of human nature with God." Here we learn all that it means to acknowledge him as our Way, our Truth and our Life. I suppose no soul of any sensitiveness can live through Holy Week without an awed and grateful sense of being incorporated in a mystery of self-giving love which yet remains far beyond our span.'

Evelyn Underhill, 'Light of Christ'



Lent continues

The daily Mass

Mondays, 10am at St Julian's
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays
and Saturdays, 12 noon at St John's
Fridays, 5pm at St Julian's

Cocoa and Compline

Wednesdays in Lent, 9pm, on Zoom
3, 10, 17 and 24 March

Holy Hour and Benediction

Thursdays in Lent, 11am, at St John's
4, 11, 18 and 25 March

Stations of the Cross

Fridays in Lent, 12 noon, at St John's
5, 12, 19 and 26 March

Reading 'The Way of Julian of Norwich'

Fridays in Lent, 3.30pm, on Zoom
5, 12, 19 and 26 March

Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary

Saturdays in Lent, 11.30am, at St John's
6, 13, 20 and 27 March

The Bishop's Lent Appeal

Envelopes available in church:
please return them by 11 April (Low Sunday)

Other diary dates

Sunday 14 March • Refreshment Sunday

Distribution of flowers at the 11am Solemn Mass

Wednesday 17 March

7.30pm PCC meeting (*postponed from 3 February*)

Friday 19 March • Feast of St Joseph of Nazareth

11am Low Mass (*St John's*) • 12 noon Stations of the Cross (*St John's*)
5pm Low Mass (*St Julian's*)

Sunday 21 March • Fifth Sunday of Lent

Passiontide begins; crosses veiled • 4pm Deanery Synod (*on Zoom*)



Thursday 25 March • Lady Day

Feast of the Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary

11am Holy Hour and Benediction

12 noon Low Mass

7.30pm Solemn Mass

*'The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,
and she conceived by the Holy Ghost.'*



From the Parish Registers

Communicants and collections

	<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Weekday</i>	<i>Collection</i>
<i>Week beginning</i> 14 February †	39	80	£247.50
21 February	43	32	£55.00
28 February	53	32	£178.30

† *Public worship, having been suspended, resumed on Sunday 14 February.*

The collection figure above does not include the amount given by standing order, which averages £3,000 a month.

Funerals and committals

'Lord all-pitying, Jesu blest: grant them thine eternal rest'

9 February Ludmila (Ade) WARNER, aged 88

19 February Sylvia ALDIS, aged 90

'If we could go picking and choosing the trials we should like to have, and rejecting the rest, we should not be imitating our Spouse who, deeply though his prayer in the garden showed that he felt his Passion, ended with the words: Thy will be done.'

St Teresa of Avila

March 2021

1	Mon	St David
2	Tue	Feria of Lent
3	Wed	Feria of Lent
4	Thu	Feria of Lent
5	Fri	Feria of Lent
6	Sat	Feria of Lent
7	Sun	The Third Sunday of Lent
8	Mon	Feria of Lent (commem. St Felix)
9	Tue	Feria of Lent
10	Wed	Feria of Lent
11	Thu	Feria of Lent
12	Fri	Feria of Lent
13	Sat	Feria of Lent
14	Sun	The Fourth Sunday of Lent: Refreshment Sunday
15	Mon	Feria of Lent
16	Tue	Feria of Lent
17	Wed	St Patrick
18	Thu	Feria of Lent (commem. St Cyril of Jerusalem)
19	Fri	St Joseph of Nazareth 11am and 5pm LM
20	Sat	Feria of Lent
21	Sun	The Fifth Sunday of Lent (<i>Passiontide begins</i>)
22	Mon	Feria of Lent
23	Tue	Feria of Lent
24	Wed	Feria of Lent
25	Thu	THE ANNUNCIATION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY 12 noon LM; 7.30pm SM
26	Fri	Feria of Lent
27	Sat	Feria of Lent
28	Sun	PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD
29	Mon	Monday of Holy Week 10am and 7pm LM
30	Tue	Tuesday of Holy Week 12 noon and 7pm LM
31	Wed	Wednesday of Holy Week 12 noon and 7pm LM

We pray for...

The people of Wales	1
Freedom from our own hypocrisy	2
Perseverance in our Lenten penance	3
The homeless in our city	4
Women's World Day of Prayer	5
Shrine of our Lady of Walsingham	6
Our Parish and People	7
The nations of the Commonwealth (Commonwealth Day)	8
Our Deanery of Norwich East	9
The Julian of Norwich Partnership	10
The shops and businesses of our parish	11
Those suffering from Coronavirus disease or its effects	12
The Sisters of St Margaret at Walsingham	13
Our Parish and People	14
Norwich Foodbank	15
The departed: Year's Minds for March	16
The people of Ireland	17
Norman and Graham, our Bishops	18
Foster-fathers and guardians	19
Diocesan Synod, meeting today	20
Our Parish and People	21
Faithfulness in walking the Way of the Cross	22
Our servers and sacristy team	23
Community of the Holy Cross, Costock	24
Thanksgiving for the Angelic Salutation	25
Those who hate or ignore Christ	26
A faithful keeping of Holy Week	27
Our Parish and People in Holy Week	28
Reconciliation with those from whom we are divided	29
Penitents and confessors	30
Peace for Jerusalem and the Holy Land	31

From the Bishop of Norwich

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

2020 was an extraordinary year bringing challenges in difficult times and opportunities for us all to share the Gospel and demonstrate God's love in the communities we serve.

I have been stunned by the generosity of parishes towards the mission and ministry of the church: both your collective efforts as well as your individual contributions. The Parish Share received for the year ending 31 December 2020 totalled £6.160 million (77.28% of the total request). Whilst this is a decrease of £926,398 compared to 2019, and £1.812 million less than the requested amount, it is a phenomenal effort.

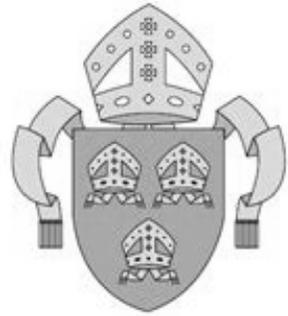
With many of our church buildings still closed for public worship, and most diocesan staff working from home, we understandably won't be producing an annual thank you certificate to put up in your church porch. However, I am keen that we encourage one another with God's faithfulness and generosity, and I ask that you pass on my thanks to your parish for all they have given this past year.

Significant work has already been done to limit expenditure and secure additional grant funding, but there is more to do as we review our activities – both centrally and locally – and we will continue to keep you updated as we move forward with our new vision to be transformed by Christ to be prayerful, pastoral and prophetic. For now, though, please accept my gracious thanks for your parish's commitment and ministry.

This comes with the assurance of my prayers and every blessing.

Yours sincerely,

+ *Graham Norvic:*



Thanks to your generous giving, our Church Family gave **£61,500** in our Parish Share last year. It was just short of the £65,000 requested, but a magnificent effort, and the largest amount we have ever given – no small achievement in such an extraordinary year. **God bless you. Thank you.**

Parish notes

Easter Communion

The Church of England teaches that **'every Parishioner shall receive Holy Communion at least three times a year, of which Easter is to be one.'** It's called our Easter duty, but it is really our Easter JOY. Don't miss it. During the Octave of Easter, Coronavirus restrictions permitting, Fr Richard will be delighted to bring Easter Communion to those who are unable to get to church.

Easter flowers

We warmly welcome **contributions towards the cost of the flowers** for the Altar of Repose on Maundy Thursday and for Easter, so that our two churches may be beautifully decorated as expressions of our rejoicing. Gifts may be given to Fr Richard or Lynton Johnson, and there'll be a retiring collection after the Masses on the Fifth Sunday of Lent, 21 March. We also really welcome **offers of help** with arranging the Easter flowers in either church on Holy Saturday.

Lent course is all over the place!

People from Norwich, Wymondham, Surrey, Oxford, Warrington, Wakefield, Derbyshire, Truro, Worcester, Mull, the Isle of Wight, France, northern Italy, Tuscany, the Netherlands, Seattle, Ohio, West Sacramento, South Carolina, Oregon, Texas, North Carolina, Nashville and many more places around the world took part in the most recent session of our Lent series. One of the blessings of this Lent has been this online series discussing chapters of Sheila Upjohn's new book *The Way of Julian of Norwich*). Led by the clergy of Norwich Cathedral and Fr Richard, the six-part series is being offered jointly by the Friends of Julian of Norwich and Norwich Cathedral. Amazingly we've got over 260 participants registered from all over the world, sharing and learning together.

Coffee morning every Friday

We're having a Church Family coffee morning online **each Friday from 10.30am to 11.30am**. You have to bring your own coffee and biscuits, but it offers chance for a friendly catch-up with friends old and new while many of us are spending much longer at home than we'd choose! If you'd like to come, just let Fr Richard know and he'll send you the Zoom log in details – or click the link in our weekly parish e-newsletter.



Our Church Family supports the Norwich Foodbank.

Current needs at the Foodbank include long life fruit juice, tinned sponge pudding, tinned custard, teabags, tinned fruit and nappies (sizes 6 and 7). Contributions may be brought to St John's or to the Rectory at any time. In the twelve months to 28 February, Norwich

Foodbank gave 15,059 food parcels to local people, including 5,319 children.

Thank you...

The following (abridged) letters have been received from the three charities between which we divided the collections at this year's Christmas services.

...from the College of St Barnabas, Lingfield

On behalf of all our Residents, their families and the staff and volunteers here at the College, I would like to thank you for your recent generous gift of £177 from Christmas collections among your Church community.



You clearly understand that we are more than just a residential and nursing home, and you can obviously see the pride we take in providing top-quality care to our Residents together with a positive, supportive environment within a community that has Anglican devotion at its heart. In fact, in supporting our work you may even share in the sense of privilege we feel in being able to help this special group of people.

Your vital donation will help meet the support needs of our frailest and most vulnerable Residents by contributing to the overall cost of care, including equipment, social welfare work, activities and much more.

Your help is greatly appreciated and we are delighted to welcome you as valued supporters of our work. The help you have given is a truly amazing thing which really will make a lasting difference, so please do accept our sincere thanks.

...from the Magdalene Group, King Street

Thank you so much for your donation of £167. We are so appreciative of your support of The Magdalene Group. We have continued to support vulnerable women and young people throughout the last nine months, and the support has never been more needed. It is a challenging time for them all.



...from Médecins Sans Frontières

Thank you so much for your kind donation of £167 to Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF); your support means we can provide medical aid where it is needed most.



Old Fangak is 500 km north of Juba, the capital of South Sudan. It's a swamp region with a population of around 50,000. There aren't any roads to Old Fangak. During the rainy season, when the runway turns to mud, three helicopter flights and a boat trip are required to travel here from the capital. I work at the small MSF hospital here, and today it is raining.

Arriving at the maternity ward, I see the midwife has blood on her shoes. This isn't wholly unusually, but I can read from her facial expression that the situation is serious. A patient has given birth to a healthy baby girl. However, there have been complications and she is now haemorrhaging. Within a moment of my arrival, the patient loses consciousness.

Crammed into the tiny delivery room, where the temperature must be approaching 40°C, sweat is pouring from all the staff. We squeeze fluid into drips and I start the patient on a potent medication. Within ten minutes, she starts to groan, regaining consciousness. I call her *Nyame*. (*Nyame* is not her real name, but a polite form of address in the local language, Nuer.)

Nyame's condition requires surgical support. We don't have those facilities in Old Fangak, so we immediately begin the process to transfer her to another hospital. In the meantime, *Nyame* desperately needs blood. She has five children. If she doesn't survive, what will their future be?

Throughout the night I stay with Nyame. Her family camps in the same room. Nobody sleeps. At the same time, a team works to find a way to get her the surgery she desperately needs. But the runway is consumed by mud and, with planes unable to land, options are limited.

I check the clock and realise that I've been in the hospital for 26 hours and with Nyame for 18 hours. I hand over to another MSF doctor and take some rest.

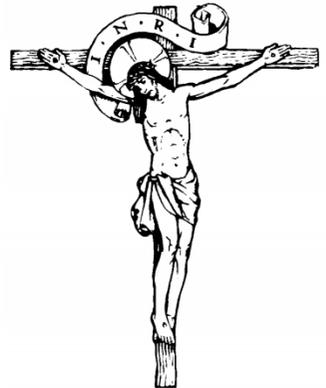
Nearly 24 hours after delivery, there's still no answer, but as the sun starts to set, we hear the most amazing news. Another humanitarian aid organisation will provide a helicopter to transport Nyame to Juba. In Juba, MSF will arrange and fund the surgical care. The earliest the helicopter can arrive is midday tomorrow. We have no more blood for Nyame, but we have hope on our side.

The next day, the helicopter is waiting. Around 30 people are gathered outside the maternity ward, everyone wanting to offer a hand. We all watch as the aircraft rises and flies towards the horizon.

Over the coming days, we frequently refresh our emails, eagerly awaiting an update. Eventually we learn that Nyame is recovering well, and expected to return to Old Fangak in the coming week.

Nyame is alive and her children still have their mother because of the commitment, passion and generosity of many. Thank you for supporting MSF and showing this same commitment, passion and generosity, which will help us save even more lives.

O LORD CHRIST, who in thy bitter Passion didst taste death for all mankind, and hast borne our sins in thine own Body on the Tree: grant to us a truly contrite heart for all thy sorrows; the pardon which thou didst request even for thine enemies; the loosing of our sins in thy Blood: that being crucified with thee, we may henceforth bear in our bodies the marks of thy dying; live ever as those who have been bought with a price; and glory in nothing save thy holy Cross; who livest and reignest, God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**



The favourable time

A Sermon preached by Fr Richard Stanton, Parish Priest,
at the Solemn Mass on Ash Wednesday:

17 February 2021

Lections Joel 2.12-18: *Let your hearts be broken, not your garments torn*
II Corinthians 5.20-6.2: *Be reconciled to God*
St Matthew 6.1-6, 16-18: *When you give alms... pray... fast*

‘Now is the favourable time; this is the day of salvation.’ (II Corinthians 6.2)

It’s been said more than once in the run-up to this Lent that we seem to have already endured a year-long Lent, a Lent which began last February, took a sudden and unexpected turn after three weeks and has just carried on and on and on. Of course, there’s some truth in that perception, but it also reveals a problem with the way in which we think about Lent – as if Lent is a sort of endurance test, a time when we allot ourselves a stronger prescription of misery for a few weeks.

This is not a very healthy nor, indeed, a very truthful way to think about Lent. Lent is in fact a gift to us and a wonderful opportunity: a season of hope, optimism, growth and renewal – things for which we all long, this year perhaps more than most. We begin Lent with the stark reminder of our own mortality, in the form of ashes sprinkled (on this occasion) on the crown of our heads, an ancient and biblical way of receiving the ashes of penitence and a sign of our resolve to keep Lent faithfully, starting as we mean to go on, from a position of honesty and realism. We are, all of us, sinners in need of redemption; even in the midst of all the restrictions surrounding us, a thoughtful self-examination will reveal that the challenges of the past year have perhaps conspired to nurture within us weaknesses and faults – eating or drinking more than we ought, becoming more idle, being short-tempered and irascible with our family, friends and church community. And that’s just me.

Lent is an opportunity to do something about that, because although Lent begins with the dust of mortality and the ashes of penitence, it does not leave us there. Our faith has very little to say about sin on its own, and a great deal to say about redemption and change. Sin is an observable fact, not particularly interesting or spectacular most of the time, but there it is. The Christian faith notes this, recognises that it is common to all of us, and passes on – passes on to something far more interesting, which is what the Prayer

Book calls ‘the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ... the means of grace, and the hope of glory.’ Made sharers in the divine life of Christ through our Baptism, we share by grace in his victory over sin and death, over their vacuity, their emptiness, the way they turn us in on ourselves – and instead we participate in the glorious liberty of the children of God, the real freedom which is the new life of Easter.

The ashes which we receive on our foreheads tonight as solemn reminders of our mortality are not a dreary or depressing tattoo to make out those with a death sentence, like our own ‘best before’ date which waits to condemn us as we lurk in the back of God’s fridge. No: the sins which we very justly acknowledge and confess tonight, and for which we do penance during the Lenten season with prayer, fasting and almsgiving, are only to be seen in the light of our baptism: we look at sin in Lent, with sorrow for what we have made of our world, through the prism of our redemption in Christ, our dying and rising with him at the moment of our baptism. And then we have the gift of the weeks of Lent to open ourselves more fully to the Lord, to ‘come back to him’, as the first lesson put it, ‘with all our hearts’ – not just the bit of the heart that goes to church, while the rest stays at home, but all our heart. Lent works when we are whole-hearted about it.

In the Gospel which we hear today, at the start of Lent, the Lord sets out three great spiritual practices which have become the hallmarks of our growth in Christ and, therefore, particularly of our keeping of Lent when we consciously make more time for those things which we could do, but probably don’t, at *any* time. They are prayer, fasting and almsgiving, and it’s worth noting that when Jesus talks about them to his disciples, he doesn’t say ‘If you pray, if you fast’ but ‘When you pray, when you fast’.

Prayer is the union of the soul with God, and Lent offers us an encouragement to do something about the life of prayer, that hidden interior conversation of my soul with God, and my loving communion with the whole



Our Lady and the Child Jesus in St John’s during Lent. The doors of the great reredos have been closed and the altars are dressed in purple.

Church, the praying fellowship of the baptised. Can I not make some time for the prayer of intercession each day, commending to the Lord the people and places on my heart – and also those situations which (in truth) are *not* on my heart, but which perhaps ought to be? Can I perhaps be deliberate about setting a time for this each day, say at noon or 6pm along with the daily Angelus, the memorial of the Incarnation? Can I spend some time in silence, listening for the presence and voice of the Lord, or seeking him in the prayerful reading of scripture? Can I, perhaps, come more often to Mass, especially during the week, since so many of my brothers and sisters in the Church are unable to participate publicly in their sacramental worship at this time – maybe *I could* share in keeping the Eucharistic life of the Church vibrant and alive? When you pray.

‘When you fast.’ Fasting is not a kind of hunger strike by which we attempt to grab God’s attention and force his hand to do what we want. Fasting is a spiritual discipline and, itself, a form of prayer, which teaches us that we are not simply bodies, not simply flesh, with desires and appetites which are beyond our control. Abstaining from some food that we enjoy, perhaps not eating meat on Wednesdays and Fridays, reminds us not only of our usual lack of consciousness of our blessings, but also teaches us that we hunger for the Lord – and it expresses our solidarity with those around the world for whom fasting and hunger are not choices, but forced upon them by the circumstances of their life, by the governments under which they live, or by the fragility of harvests. It’s an invitation, too, to fast from the other things upon which our spirit likes to feed – judgement of others, negativity, harbouring a grudge. When you fast.

‘When you give alms.’ Almsgiving is the weapon which we take up against greed, greed which turns us in on ourselves, rapaciously seeking more and more for itself. ‘Where our treasure is,’ said Jesus, ‘there will our heart be also’, and almsgiving is the opportunity to grow in love and express it a practical way, using the resources which we have been given to help in the work of the Gospel and to cooperate with God’s purposes for his world. It isn’t just about money other – it’s about giving our help and our time, our energy and our responsible concern. When you give alms.

Prayer, fasting, and almsgiving: three keynotes for the days of Lent. May they bring for all of us a time of blessing and renewal, a time of growth and hope, as we enter into them with our sights set firmly on the joy of Easter. Now is the favourable time; this is the day of salvation.

WORSHIP WITH US

We warmly welcome you.

Sundays	9am Low Mass	<i>St Julian's</i>
	11am Solemn Mass and Sermon	<i>St John's</i>
	6pm Low Mass	<i>St John's</i>

Weekdays

<i>The Mass</i>	Monday 10am	<i>St Julian's</i>
	Tuesday 12 noon	<i>St John's</i>
	Wednesday 10am	<i>St Julian's</i>
	(but at 12 noon at St John's during Lent)	
	Thursday 12 noon	<i>St John's</i>
	Friday 5pm	<i>St Julian's</i>
	Saturday 12 noon	<i>St John's</i>

<i>The Rosary</i>	Monday 10.30am	<i>St Julian's</i>
	Saturdays in Lent 11.30am	<i>St John's</i>

Morning and Evening Prayer

The Daily Office is currently said privately in church, before opening and after closing

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

Physically-distanced Confessions may be heard at any time by arrangement with the Parish Priest

St John's and St Julian's are both **open daily** for prayer, quiet and visiting (except St John's which is currently closed on Mondays). The Blessed Sacrament is reserved on the High Altar of both churches for the Communion of the Sick and the devotion of the faithful.

We warmly welcome enquiries about **baptisms and weddings**. We will be pleased to help you in any way we can.



stjohnstimberhill.org



[stjohnthebaptisttimberhill](https://www.instagram.com/stjohnthebaptisttimberhill)

On the cover: The great Rood in St John's Timberhill, completed in 1893. Photo by Jeremy Warren.