

St Joseph's, Bedford & Our Lady's, Kempston

Parish Priest: Canon Seamus Keenan. Assistant Priest: Fr Liam Castle.

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EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

3rd August 2025



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2026

Enrolment forms for First Holy Communion Classes beginning in the autumn are now available from the sacristy. Child must be in year 3 or above. Completed form must be returned by Sunday 28th September.

CONFIRMATION 2026

Enrolment forms for the sacrament of Confirmation programme will be available later in the autumn.

AFTERNOON TEA

We are invited to an ecumenical Afternoon Tea at St Andrew's Vicarage Garden, 1 St Edmond Road on Sunday 10th August at 3.00pm. Bring scones or cake. Tea and coffee provided. If the weather is wet the Tea will be in St Andrew's Church Centre. All are welcome.

HEALING SERVICE

There will be a short healing service after the 6.30pm Mass next Sunday to pray for healing before the Blessed Sacrament.

Mass Times – St Joseph's, Bedford

Sunday 8.15am People of the Parish
9.30am Tommy Donegan, RIP
11.00am Lily Kissack
6.30pm Jean Petts, RIP

Monday *St John Vianney*

10.45am Mary Orr, RIP

Tuesday *Dedication of the Basilica of St Mary Major*

10.45am Barbara Jun, RIP

Wednesday *Transfiguration of the Lord*

10.45am Fr Galeji

Thursday *Feria*

10.45am Rosemary Mitchell

Friday *St Dominic*

10.45am Joan & Douglas Martin, RIP

Saturday *St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*

10.45am Merin Bino

Mass Times – Our Lady's, Kempston

Saturday 6.00pm Mary Connolly, RIP

Confessions – St Joseph's:

Saturday 11.30am – 12.30pm (Exposition)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: O Lord, you have been our refuge, from generation to generation.

ROSARY: Daily at 10.20am

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION: Thursday 11.30am-7.00pm

CLEANING: S Masih, D Cummings

FLOWERS: Mrs Bino

NEXT SUNDAY: Nineteenth Sunday of the Year

Readers & Ministers: Rota Week 3

Children's Liturgy: None until September

SVP MINNIE VINNIES

We would like to establish a SVP Minnie Vinnie group in the parish. These are for children aged 7 to 11. If you are interested in helping to set up and organise a group, please let Canon Seamus or Jim Keane know (07753 612080). All helpers will have to be DBS cleared. Please take a leaflet from the back of the church with more information.

CHURCH CLEANING

We need of more volunteers to help clean St Joseph's church. This is operated on a rota basis, usually after the 10.45am Mass each Friday. Please inform Canon Seamus if interested in helping.

CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP

A new prayer and event publicity service initiative has been launched in Bedford by a Catholic Charismatic Prayer Group which meets twice a month in SS Philip & James Church. It is launching a Facebook page where we can instantly post prayer requests and also advertise local Catholic events. Please see poster for further details and pick up a flyer from the back of the church.

ST FRANCIS LEPROSY GUILD

SFLG is the UK's only Catholic leprosy charity, founded in 1895 and with Cardinal Vincent Nichols as its patron. It supports over 30 centres in 13 countries caring for people who have been marginalised by leprosy. It also funds research projects and hospitals in the treatment of this disease. For more information, please visit www.stfrancisleprosy.org or drop an email at parishes@stfrancisleprosy.org. See also the poster in the church porch.

A MESSAGE FROM SPUC

At the end of June, MPs voted to decriminalise abortion up to birth and to legalise assisted suicide. These recent events have been a result of determined efforts by activists eager to expand the culture of death. At SPUC, we are as determined as ever to defeat abortion and assisted suicide, and we believe we can do this by mobilising adequate pro-life support. To this end, there are some postcards in the porch and the back of the church to fill out and return to the church if you would like to become more involved in the protection of unborn children and those at the end of life. Thank you.

REFLECTION

There is a story in the gospel of St Mark (Mk 10: 17-22) about a rich young man who knelt before Jesus and asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus listed the commandments, and the man replied that he had kept these all his life. Then we are told that Jesus looked steadily at him and loved him, and said to him, *"You lack one thing. Go and sell all you own and give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come follow me."* But his face fell at these words and he went away sad, for he was a man of great wealth. What I like about this story is the gaze of love that Jesus directed towards the man who earnestly entreated

him. That look of love is also directed at you and me without context, without going into our sinfulness and imperfections. He looks beyond all that and simply loves us. On a human level we would find that hard to do in relation to another or, indeed, to ourselves. We can't get beyond the glaring imperfections we see and so we limit our love. When we turn our gaze on ourselves we can feel the same and become discouraged and unable to love or accept ourselves. We then begin to think that this is how God must feel when he looks at us. That is a big mistake. Jesus looks at us and loves us. No equivocation, no conditions. He simply loves us. But are we convinced of this unconditional love? Love is a vision of the person in depth. He looks steadily at us and sees the good and the bad and still loves us. How amazing is that! Once we are convinced of this, then we can make progress in the spiritual life. We are told in the gospel that the rich man lacked one thing, and Jesus proceeds to tell him what it is and challenges him to change. So yes, Jesus loves us, but precisely because he does so, he wants us to move from where we are in our spiritual journey to somewhere better, a place worthy of such love. That one thing we lack, or many things perhaps, holds us back, such as a particular habit of sin, an attitude of mind or a way of behaving which betrays our immaturity and selfishness. The list goes on, but whatever it may be, we need to work at it, calling upon the Lord in our weakness, knowing that his grace and forgiveness are always freely available. Despite all that may be unsavoury in us, we must remain convinced that Jesus looks at us and loves us. That conviction makes all the difference because it allows the Lord to freely act in us and bring us to perfection. This is the path to real happiness and holiness. The alternative is like the rich young man who was not willing to change and went away sad. Open, then your hearts to the gaze of God and in the light of his loving gaze experience mercy and healing. A true encounter with Jesus in this way will not result in sadness but liberating joy because we know we are loved despite everything. The only sadness we should have is sadness for our sins. But this sadness brings life and freedom. His look of love is an invitation to follow him on a journey that leads to union with him and the fullness of life and love that we cannot begin to imagine. Let us begin that journey now.

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

Offertory

St Joseph's £1424.07

Our Lady's £250.00

Thank you