

"5 VALLEYS CATHOLIC COMMUNITY"

THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR

**The Immaculate Conception, Stroud; Our Lady & St Therese, Painswick,
St Joseph's, Stonehouse; and The Annunciation, Woodchester.**

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Diocesan Safeguarding Tel. 0117 954 0993 The Diocese of Clifton undertakes to ensure that any allegations of a safeguarding issue are responded to promptly and to liaise openly with statutory authorities to support investigations, responding sensitively and compassionately to those in need, and ensuring perpetrators are held to account. We affirm our undertaking for the Diocese of Clifton to be a place where all can come in confidence, and that they will be cared for and loved by their Christian Community.

PLEASE NOTE: THIS NEWSLETTER COVERS TWO WEEKS
5th & 6th Ordinary Time Year A

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A Psalter Wk 1

Date	Mass Times	Celebrations	Intentions
SUNDAY 8 th Feb	Sat 7 th 6:00pm Woodchester	Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	
	9:00am Stonehouse		Tony Kett RIP
	11:00am Stroud		Theresa & Frank McCauley Int

Psalm Response: A light rises in the darkness for the upright.

Gospel Acclamation: I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life.

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A Psalter Wk 2

SUNDAY 15 th Feb.	Sat 14 th 6:00pm Woodchester	Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	
	9:00am Stonehouse		
	11:00am Stroud		Candace Bingham INT
Tues 17 th Feb.	9:30am Woodchester		Ordinary Time

Psalm Response: Blessed are those who walk in the law of the Lord!

Gospel Acclamation: I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom to little children.

18 th Feb ASH WEDNESDAY	9:30am Stroud	Ash Wednesday Masses	People of the Parish
	12:00 Noon Woodchester		
	7:00pm Stonehouse		Private Intention

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

**Gospel Acclamation: Glory and praise to you, O Christ Harden not your hearts today, but listen to the voice of the Lord.
Glory and praise.....**

Thurs 19 th Feb	9:30am Stonehouse	After Ash Wednesday	
	7:00pm Stroud	Stations of the Cross	
Fri 20 th Feb	9:30am Painswick	After Ash Wednesday	Paddy Dowling RIP
Sat 21 st Feb	11:00am Clifton Cathedral	Rite of Election - Clifton	
	6:00pm Woodchester	1 st Sunday of Lent	People of the Parish

RECONCILIATION: There will be NO Sacrament of Reconciliation on Saturday 7th/Saturday 14th/Saturday 21st February in my absence.

Diocesan Prayer Links: We pray for the parish of The Abbey Church, Downside with St Benedict, Stratton-on-the-Fosse and 6th Sun: St Stanislaus, Dulverton, with Sacred Heart, Minehead, with Watchet

Pope Leo's Prayer Intention for FEBRUARY 2026 - 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.

My grateful thanks to Canon Michael Fitzpatrick, who will be covering the weekends of the 7th/8th & 14th/15th February 2026, while I am away.

GENERAL NEWS:

ASH WEDNESDAY ~ 18th February 2026. A day of Fast and Abstinence. It is not a Holy Day of Obligation, so there is no obligation to attend Mass, but often people like to receive the blessed Palm ashes, used to mark the beginning of Lent. There will be 3 Masses in the community. 9.30am Immaculate Conception, Stroud, 12noon The Annunciation, Woodchester and 7.00pm St Joseph's, Stonehouse. Ashes will be blessed and distributed at all Masses.

FASTING: The Church requires all Catholics from ages 14-59 to fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. As long as you are in good health, this means that you should only eat one full meal, plus two smaller meals that do not equal a full meal.

ABSTINENCE: Another powerful invitation to grow in your spiritual life is abstaining from meat. Catholics age 14 and older do not eat meat on Ash Wednesday and all Fridays during Lent, including Good Friday. Instead of meat many Catholics choose to eat fish instead. No matter what your circumstances are, Lent is a powerful invitation to create small sacrifices, making yourself 100 percent available to God. One traditional Catholic sacrifice is giving up meat on Fridays during Lent, but if you or someone you know is a vegetarian, Fridays in Lent are an opportunity to make an alternative sacrifice. Some vegetarians might choose to give up sweets, coffee, or seasonings on Friday instead.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: A traditional Lenten liturgy is the Stations of the Cross. These services will help you to celebrate one of the observances attached to Lent ~ Prayer. The Stations of the Cross can be celebrated as personal prayer, in groups and also as a more 'formal' service. Deacon Bogdan, Deacon Steve and Fr Eugene will celebrate the Formal Service of the Stations of the Cross in our Churches during Lent. **Wednesday 19th Feb. 7.00pm Immaculate Conception: Tuesday 24th Feb. 7.00pm St Joseph's: Tuesday 3rd March 7.00pm The Annunciation: Tuesday 10th March 7.00pm Our Lady & St Therese. Wednesday 18th March 7.00pm Immaculate Conception: Wednesday 25th March 7.00pm St Joseph's: Wednesday 1st April 7.00pm The Annunciation.** Previous practices of the Stations are still able to be celebrated outside these times.

LENTEN PENITENTIAL SERVICES:

Tuesday 17th March 7.00pm The Annunciation: **Tuesday 24th March RECONCILIATION WITH BISHOP BOSCO 7.00pm Christ the King, Thornbury:** Friday 27th March 7.00pm St Joseph's: Tuesday 31st March 7.00pm Immaculate Conception.

LENT MASS FOR THE ANOINTING OF THE SICK: Sunday 22nd March 3pm St Joseph's, Stonehouse. (This will also be a Sunday Mass and will fulfil your obligation to attend Sunday Mass).

CHRISM MASS: Wednesday 1st April 11.00am Clifton Cathedral. This is a Mass celebrating the Sacramental priesthood and the Royal priesthood of all. Together, with Bishop Bosco, there will Priests, Deacons, Religious and People from all the Diocese gathered in the Mother Church of the Diocese, The Cathedral of Ss Peter and Paul, Clifton. During the Mass the priests and deacons will renew the commitment to their ministry. Also, the Oils to be used in the celebration of the Sacraments will be blessed by Bishop Bosco. The Oil of Catechumens used in the Sacrament of Baptism. The Oil of the Sick for the Anointing of the Sick, and the Bishop and Priests will Consecrate the Oil of Chrism, used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Ordination. The Oil of Chrism is also used consecrate Bishops, Churches, and Altars. If you would like to attend this Mass, there will be a Coach from the three parishes. **It will pick up from and return to stroud and Stonehouse.** Details of cost and timings will be available soon. To show interest in being on the coach please email: stroud.immaculateconception@cliftondiocese.com

REST IN PEACE: We pray for those who have died recently, and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time, those who have died alone with no one to mourn them, and those who have died because of violence and aggression. Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. AMEN.

HAZEL DOWLING RIP: Requiem Mass 11.15am Tuesday 24th February 2026, Immaculate Conception, Stroud.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: THOSE WHO ARE SICK in hospitals or nursing and care homes, those awaiting test results, undergoing treatment, those suffering physically or mentally. We pray Our Lord will send his healing love upon them.

JOURNEY IN FAITH (RCIA): RITE OF ELECTION ~ SATURDAY 21st FEBRUARY 11am, Clifton Cathedral The Journey in Faith course will continue on **THURSDAY 26th FEBRUARY 2026, 7pm ~8.30pm Upper Room STROUD.**

10 years of LAUDATE SI: Continuing Helen Knight's talks on '10 years of Laudate Si, the next 10 years'. **2nd talk: At The Immaculate Conception, Stroud, Wednesday 4th March, 11am** "Our responsibility to serve each other." **3rd talk:** The Immaculate Conception, Stroud, Wednesday 18th March, 11am. **4th talk:** At The Annunciation, Woodchester, Wednesday 22nd April 11am. Everyone welcome. Please see posters for all dates.

MASS INTENTIONS: Thank you for the stipends sent in for Mass Intentions. When completing the envelope request for Mass Intentions please can you specify the following: **Location** (i.e: Stroud, Stonehouse, Woodchester, Painswick) and **Date preferred** (if possible). We will do our best to honour your requests but please note that there are just 7 Masses per week across all our churches - 3 of which are Sunday/Weekend Masses. Please consider Masses available on weekdays, but do specify the Location preferred whilst bearing in mind the new times and locations for weekday Mass. A telephone number would help us to discuss alternative dates/locations. Thank you.

STROUD and PAINSWICK NEWS:

SUNG VOTIVE REQUIEM MASS: On **Wednesday 25th February at 7:00pm at Immaculate Conception, Stroud** Mass will be that of a Votive Requiem Mass. We welcome singers from Josh Crunden's choir, Philomusica, who will be joining members of the parish choirs to lead us in singing the Gregorian chants for the Requiem Mass. Philomusica is performing the Duruflé Requiem in March, a work which borrows extensively from the chants, so this is an opportunity to explore the origins of these sublime melodies. Mass will be offered for Edward Elgar, whose anniversary falls at this time, as he holds a special significance both for the parish and for Philomusica. Please let Josh or Annie know if you want to be involved in singing. Music will also be provided to the congregation to enable all to participate.

FAMILY FAST DAY – The Immaculate Conception, Stroud will be on **Friday 27th February** and there will be a soup lunch at Noon in the Parish Hall..

NEW VOTIVE CANDLE STANDS at The Immaculate Conception. Cost of each candle is now 30p.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE will not be meeting in February (18th) as it falls on Ash Wednesday and it is felt that this is not appropriate. **We will meet again in March on Wednesday 18th as usual.**

WOODCHESTER & STONEHOUSE NEWS:

WOODCHESTER PRIORY CAFOD GROUP: Dates for your diaries.

We will be holding our annual Pancake Day sale on Shrove Tuesday, February 17th. We will be in St. George's Parish Rooms, Nailsworth between 11.30am and 1.30pm. This year we will be asking for donations (minimum £4) for 2 delicious pancakes + tea/coffee and there will be a raffle. A good community event raising funds for CAFOD. If you cannot attend but would like to contribute towards the ingredients, please see Angela or Bernadette at Mass.

JOB VACANCY: TREASURER FOR ST JOSEPH'S & THE ANNUNCIATION

This voluntary role does not require a person to have a financial background but he/she does need to be very organized.

Functions: 1. raise payments for the Parish Priest to authorize 2. record transactions on the Diocesan Online Parish Accounting System (OPAS)

3. advise the Diocese of second collection amounts 4. reconcile transactions each month with the bank 5. provide a year end return to the Diocese

6. provide a quarterly report and finance schedule to the finance committee of each parish 7. deal with ad hoc matters as they arise

This role can be performed by either one person for both Parishes (as currently) or one person for each Parish as previously. For further information please contact either Fr Eugene or Ray Parker

A Lenten Meditation, with Music and Readings Saturday 7th March, 2026, 7.30 pm at The Annunciation

Church, St. Mary's Hill, Stroud GL5 5HP Sung by the choir of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford Conductor and music director: Carlos Rodriguez Otero Doors open after mass at 7pm. Duration approx. 1 hr You are warmly invited to a concert of choral music and readings themed on the spiritual journey towards Easter. The programme will include music by Bach, Byrd, Fauré, Palestrina, Green and others. There will be light refreshments after the concert. Voluntary donations (on the door) are requested in aid of the Dominican Religious Community, Oxford, and St. Edmund's Hall choir. For further information, contact Catherine Mason: catherineemason@yahoo.com / 07582 784792 We would be grateful for all offers of help to publicize the concert. Leaflets available soon in the Annunciation church porch.

SHARING THE WORD

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 'A'

First Reading: **Is. 58:6-10** Isaiah has been talking about fasting. He tells the people that true (and therefore true religion) is necessarily linked with the practice of justice and with concern for the poor and the needy. Here he assures them that if they follow this way their lives will become luminous. this is the connection with the Gospel.

Second Reading: **1Cor.2:1-5** Paul is at pains to convince the Corinthians that their fascination with worldly wisdom and rhetorical skills can only weaken their faith. He points to himself as an example. When he brought the Gospel to them, he didn't rely on human cleverness. He came in weakness, preaching a crucified (and risen) Christ, to show that their faith doesn't depend on human cleverness but on the power of God.

Gospel Reading: **Mt 5:13-16** Matthew has already introduced Jesus as the light of a darkened world. Now the function of enlightening and guiding a morally confused humanity is shared with his disciples. Salt and light are powerful images. In the ancient world, salt was one of the most important necessities of life, especially for preserving and seasoning food. So too was light for obvious reasons. Both images are making the same point: Christians are called to bear witness to Christ before unbelievers through their good deeds. When the disciples stop witnessing through their deeds, they become as useless as salt that has lost its taste or a lamp that doesn't give light.

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 'A'

First Reading: **Eccles 15:15-20** Sirach presents obedience to God's law as the road that leads to life, and rejection of that law as the path to death. The choice is set before man: he can opt for life or death. The New Testament good news of grace generously poured out in Christ will transform this stark and forbidding morality.

Second Reading **1Cor 2:5-10** Christians have a wisdom unknown to others. True wisdom comes from God and reveals the wonderful things God has prepared for those who love him.

Gospel Mt 5:17-37 In this section of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew illustrates Jesus' attitude to the Law. Jesus does not dispense with the Law but asks for a deeper observance of it. Every small part of it is to remain, but only as radically interpreted by Jesus. His justice far surpasses the legalistic approach of the scribes and Pharisees. For the Pharisees the letter of the Law was everything. Jesus proposes new standards of goodness for his disciples. It is not enough for them to become better Pharisees. This justice is made explicit in six concrete examples. These (called antitheses') deal with murder, adultery, divorce, oaths and vows, retaliation, and hatred of enemies. The first four are dealt with in today's Gospel, the other two in next Sunday's Gospel. Murder and adultery are born in the heart. Jesus reinterprets the fifth commandment so that it embraces those angry feelings and emotions that may lead up to murder. And he reinterprets the sixth commandment so that it embraces lustful thoughts and desires that may lead to sexual sin and infidelity. As for oaths: he encourages his disciples to behave in such a way that oaths are superfluous. The disciples are simply to be truthful. Jesus' intention is to bring us beyond legalism and a literal interpretation of the law (the problem with the scribes and the Pharisees) and into the spirit of the law.

NEWSLETTER ~ COMMUNITY EMAIL. If you would like to receive the Newsletter by email on a SATURDAY, then please send your email and name to stroud.immaculateconception@cliftondiocese.com The mailshot will be 'blind sent' so no one's email is disclosed. The email will be in PDF format, so content cannot be altered. You can request to have your email removed at any time. Families of First Holy Communion children will be contacted via email and automatically added to the Newsletter database as will other Sacramental candidates. This system works well to communicate with those involved, should updates / news need to be disseminated to all at any time. Emails will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Local Catholic Communities Newsletter: Please, to help us we are asking that items for publication are submitted as soon as possible. The 'cut-off' for submission of items for the following Sunday will be **MIDDAY ON WEDNESDAY**. Please note the best item gives clear information Date – Time – Place – Reason – who to contact for more information – any costs. Please email items to stroud.immaculateconception@cliftondiocese.com

Newsletter: stroudcatholicchurch.com Parish Twitter: [@stroudRCchurch](https://twitter.com/stroudRCchurch)
Pastoral Area St Wulstan Website: www.saintwulstan.org.uk

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