

Towards understanding

SUNDAY Plus

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Divine Office Week II Year A

18 JANUARY 2026

E & W: Peace Day

18-25 January: Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity



A new start

One of the most frequently travelled roads between Jerusalem and Galilee ran through this region [of the River Jordan]. Near where it crossed the river, at a place called Bethabara, John began to preach from a natural pulpit among the rocks overlooking the grove of sycamores that sheltered his listeners from the burning sun of midday pouring down upon John's own unprotected head...

As word of John's fiery preaching in the wilderness began to spread, more and more people stopped on the way to and from Jerusalem to hear him. There had not been a real prophet in Israel for hundreds of years...

Bethabara could hardly be called a town. Actually, it was little more than a customs station where the traveller from Jerusalem passed from the area

ruled by the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate, into the region presided over by Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee and Peraea. A small post of frontier guards was stationed at the fords, more to keep order than to disturb the travellers, who could move freely from any part of the Roman Empire to another so long as they paid the necessary tolls.

John understood that baptism was not, in Jesus' case, an act of repentance, an acknowledgement of sin and a washing away of all uncleanness, as it had been with the others he had baptised. Instead, this was Jesus' way of publicly announcing his subservience to the will of his Father and his willingness from thenceforward to do only God's purpose.

Frank G. Slaughter, The Crown and the Cross: the life of Christ



St Mary Magdalene: betrayal, repentance, forgiveness

By Sr Thérèse Garman OLP

We first meet Mary in Luke 8:1-3, having been freed from evil spirits. It is not said, but it is strongly suggested, that Jesus freed her. She abandoned her former life and accompanied Jesus. Mary was there at the crucifixion; present also when his body was placed in the tomb. She was the first to meet the risen Lord and to announce this good news. Hers is a story of transformation, demonstrating that Jesus can change our lives, freeing us from old ways and leading us into his new way, involving evangelisation: Mary joyfully told others that Jesus was risen because she had met him. That message is given to us to share also. Through us, Jesus still reaches out to people who are marginalised, including them in his circle of friends and giving them a place on his mission team. Mary reminds us of the great privilege we have been given, which is to tell others about our encounter with the risen Lord and the difference he is making in our lives.

Sr Thérèse Garman is a Sister of Our Lady of Providence and a treasured former member of the Redemptorist Publications Editorial Team.

Looking for God

And if you would know God,
be not therefore a solver of riddles.

Rather look about you and
you shall see him playing with your children.
And look into space;
you shall see him walking in the cloud, outstretching
his arms in the lightning and descending in rain.
You shall see him smiling in flowers,
then rising and waving his hands in trees.

Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

May the cross of Christ also guide us on
our daily journey towards full unity, in
harmony with one another and with all
creation. Amen.



The Catholic Parish of St Mary & St John Fisher, Denton

Parish Priest, Father Joseph Gee

Parish Sister, Sr Dolores

Office: St Mary's Presbytery, Duke Street, Denton, Manchester M34 2AN.

Tel: 0161 336 2358

Email. rcdenton@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Website www.stmaryandstjohnfisherparish.co.uk

Registered Charity no: 250037

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
18th January 2026

The Word This Week

There is no break between Christmas and Ordinary Time – one flows almost seamlessly into the other through the Baptism of Jesus. We ended our Christmas Season thinking about the “revelation” of the Son of God – people realising who this “Jesus of Nazareth” actually was – and this continues today, as we interject a passage from Saint John before we begin our weekly reading through Saint Matthew’s Gospel. New Year is about beginnings, and as we return to the beginning of Our Lord’s public ministry there is a sense of something exciting about to happen – even though we know the story, we dive into it once more, like returning to a favourite novel or film. So it is with joy that we stand in the country of the river Jordan, and recognise Jesus of Nazareth as the Chosen One of God, who offers himself to do God’s work.



Mass Times 18th January 2026

Sunday 18th	Vigil - Saturday 17th	4pm - Parish
	Sunday Morning	11am - Oscar
Monday 19th	Mass	9.30 - Ian John Stierl
Tuesday 20th	No Mass	
Wednesday 21st	Mass	9.30 - Mary Griffiths <i>Faith in Action meeting</i> 6.30-8.30pm
Thursday 22nd	Mass	6pm Exposition 6.30pm - Tom Lally (A) Bridget Lally (A) Martin Mitchell Patrick Corium (BM) Forgotten Souls
Friday 23rd	Mass	9.30 - Tom Lally, Forgotten Souls
Saturday 24th	Vigil Mass	4pm - Ella Krool (LD)
Sunday 25th		11am - Parish
Saturday & Sunday	Sacrament of Reconciliation	Available 30 minutes prior to the start of Mass

Mass Offerings :-

Mary Patricia Murray x 3 (A); William Kavanagh (A 23th Jan); Ella Krool (RIP); Tom Lally (RIP); Agnes Richmond (A); Angela Cuomo Coppola (BM 21st Jan) Renia Kopicka (LD); Maureen Lyons (A)

Please obtain permission from any living beneficiary of a Mass offering before sending it in.)

Altar Prayer Candles W/C 18th January 2026

The Sanctuary	Anthony Scanlon
Sacred Heart	
Our Lady	Lesley Sidebottom

Vigil Mass: 4pm St Mary's, Denton; 5pm St Josephs, Reddish; and 6.30pm Holy Family, Dane Bank

What's coming up in our parish

Dates for the Diary:

Scripture Course

Wednesday Evening from 6.30m in the Parish Hall. The dates are:

2026 28th January; 11th February; 4th March; 1st April (Holy Week); 6th May; 11th June

YOUTH GROUP— CALL TO LEAD NEXT MEETING WED 21st JANUARY 6.30pm — Thank you to all who contributed to the Christmas collection £302 was raised

Food Bank Donations

Please donate something for the food bank at this time of heavy demand. There is a box at the back of church.

Suggested items needed:

Tinned Vegetables; corned Beef; Curry; stew' spaghetti; soup; etc

Other Items:

Long life milk; tea; coffee; sugar Jars of Pasta or Curry sauces; Rice; Savoury Rice; Noodles; Smash; Baked Beans' Jam; Cordial; etc

Polite Reminder

We love our families coming to Mass but please can we ask families with toddlers to refrain from eating snacks during Mass. (Sadly we don't have regular cleaning at present). We have some children's Missals to help them follow the Mass.

Luncheon Club

Luncheon Club for January 29th and February 26th, last Thursday of the month, at Victoria Park Community Centre, Market Street, Denton.

Cllr Denise Ward will be serving up a two-course hot meal for anyone who needs it, completely FREE. We start at 11.30 till 1, with Tea and Coffee.

Relics of St Carlo Acutis to Visit Diocese of Salford

This month, the relics of St Carlo Acutis will be hosted at two of our churches over five days, during which time the Diocese will welcome schools, parishioners and people from all over for veneration.

Carlo is the first millennial saint, and is celebrated for his profound faith and his use of the internet to log Eucharistic miracles from around the world. He was passionate about spreading the teachings of the Catholic Church up until his death from leukaemia at the age of 15.

The relics will be presented at St Mary's Church, Burnley from 28-29 January 2026 before they travel to St Patrick's Church, Collyhurst from 30 January to 1 February 2026. For more information and to view the schedule for the visits, please visit: <https://dioceseofsalford.org.uk/relics-of-st-carlo-acutis-to-visit-diocesan-churches/>

Mass for Engaged Couples to be celebrated by Bishop John Arnold

On Saturday 14 February, Bishop John will be celebrating a special Mass for engaged couples across the diocese. The Mass provides couples with an opportunity to seek God's blessing to guide and strengthen them during this time of preparation. Newly-married couples are also invited to receive a blessing in their first year of marriage. The Mass will take place at St Patrick's Church in Collyhurst on Saturday 14 February 2026 at 1:30pm.

New Monthly youth Group for Yr4,5 & 6

As part of our young people's Faith in Action programme, **we will be offering a group for children in school years 4, 5 and 6.**

The group will take place monthly and be from 6:30pm until 7:30pm.

Our Faith in Action young people will run it (though there will be adult supervision as well) and it will consist of liturgy alongside games and activities.

There is a maximum of 20 places and this will be on a first come first serve basis. The dates are as follows: 21/01/26; 25/02/26; 18/03/26; 22/04/26; 20/05/26; 17/06/26

This is a lovely opportunity to allow our Faith in Action young people to develop their skills further as well as bringing the young of the Parish together.

If you are interested in your child attending or would like any further information please could you speak to Claire Cull after Sunday mass for a parental application form.



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N	L	A	M	D	B	E	N	L	E
B	E	S	O	S	M	A	L	O	N
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S	R	P	A	I	L	R	S	I	N
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N	I	B	I	I	H	I	H	A	E
T	L	T	S	C	S	O	T	R	I
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LAMB

SIN

ISRAEL

WATER

SPIRIT

HEAVEN

DOVE

BAPTISE

HOLY

WITNESS

CHOSEN

ONE

