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Parish of Our Lady Help of Christians & St Lawrence
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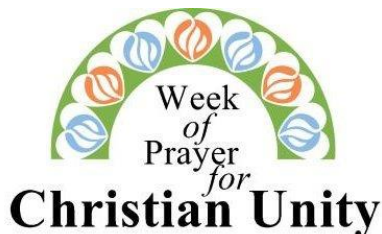
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19 th January 2025 Psalter Week 2	Second Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ Year C WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY	
First Reading	Prophet Isaiah 62:1-5 <i>The bridegroom rejoices over the bride.</i>	
Responsorial Psalm	Proclaim the wonders of the Lord among all the peoples.	
Second Reading	1 Paul to the Corinthians 12:4-11 <i>The one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.</i>	
Gospel Acclamation	Alleluia, alleluia! God called us through the gospel, so that we may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Alleluia!	
Gospel	John 2:1-11 <i>This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee.</i>	
Saturday 18th January +	6.00pm 6.30pm	Confession Mass – (Pro Populo)
Sunday 19th January +	10.30am	Mass – (Fr Don Breen RIP)
Monday 20th January St Fabian - Pope & Martyr St Sebastian - Martyr	9.15am 10.00am	Adoration with Confession Mass (Chloe Hall Ints.)
Tuesday 21st January St Agnes – Virgin & Martyr	9.15am 10.00am	Adoration with Confession Mass (Sr Maria Coffey – Ints.)
Wednesday 22nd January St Vincent – Deacon & Martyr		No Parish Mass today
Thursday 23rd January <i>Feria</i>	10.00am 10.30am 12noon	Mass (Harriet Furze Ints.) Adoration with Confession
Friday – 24th January St Francis de Sales – Bishop & Doctor	9.15am 10.00am	Adoration with Confession Mass (Patrick Cockings RIP)
Saturday – 25th January CONVERSION OF ST PAUL	9.15am 10.00am	Adoration with Confession Mass – (Linda Hewitt RIP)
Third Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ Year C		
Saturday – 25th January +	6.00pm 6.30pm	Confession Mass – (Pro Populo)
Sunday – 26th January +	10.30am	Mass – (William Brooks RIP)

This Weekend: Second Collection - White Flower Appeal (SPUC)

Thank you for your Weekly Offering

- Offertory: £424.05
- Digital Collection Plate: £65.00
- Standing Orders of £487.00
- TOTAL: £976.05



OCTAVE OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

Begins on **Saturday, 18th January** and runs until **Saturday 25th January**. This year's theme is: **Do you believe this?** We are asked to pray for the unity of all our Christian brothers & sisters across the world – we think especially of the entire Christian Community here within our parish.

May they all be one. Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you, so that the world may believe it was you who sent me. **John 17:21**

Thought for the Week: *Grant that we may be one flock and one shepherd! Do not allow your net to be torn, help us to be servants of unity!*

Pope Benedict XVI



Bishop David – as part of his visit to the Pastoral Area of St Paul (Milton Keynes) we warmly welcome Bishop David **next weekend Saturday 25th January and Sunday 26th January**. Fr Biju & Deacon Peter are very grateful to our Parish council who, along with the Social Committee & others have worked very hard in preparing for the visit of our Bishop. The programme for the weekend is available at the back of the church – please do take a copy. The programme is also available to view on the parish website under the 'Newsletter Tab.' It is not often that we are able to welcome the Bishop to our parish and it is as great opportunity for us all to engage with him. Bishop David is very keen to meet as many of you as possible and to spend time in conversation.



Confirmation Preparation – The parish Confirmation Preparation programme will begin on **Friday 31st January 7.30pm** here in the parish hall. If there is any young person aged 12 and above who may want to be confirmed, **please contact either Fr Biju or Deacon Peter** direct. We plan to hold one class per month ending in July – the Confirmation Mass will be held in the Parish on **Monday 8th September** when Bishop David will celebrate the Mass and Confirm our young people. Please keep our young people in your prayers as they journey towards the Sacrament of Confirmation.



Message from the Social Committee - If you are having a post-Christmas spring clean and find that you have surplus items that could be used as potential raffle prizes, we would love to take them off your hands. For the next few weeks there will be a crate in the porch so feel free to pop your items in there. Many thanks.



Jubilee Year 2025 – Pilgrims of Hope - On Christmas Eve 2024, Pope Francis inaugurated the Jubilee year 2025 with the opening of the holy door at St Peter's Basilica. There will be five holy doors across the four major Basilica's in Rome; St Peter's, St Mary Major, St John Lateran and St Paul outside the Walls. The fifth holy door will be at Rebibbia Prison in Rome.

The Holy door has been concretely sealed since the last jubilee year, an extraordinary jubilee in 2016, the year of mercy. Passing through a holy door symbolises entering a new life with Christ,

beginning a path of conversion and reconciliation.

The papal bull for the Jubilee *Spes non confundit*, explains that the Pope will begin the ordinary jubilee year with this liturgical action, taking place once every 25 years. The jubilee year will end with the closing of the holy door on the Solemnity of Epiphany on the 6th January 2026.

The theme for the year is 'Pilgrims of Hope.' Bishop David began the jubilee year for our diocese on 29 December, the Feast of the Holy Family, with the Solemn opening at Northampton Cathedral. He said: *"Our hope needs to be constantly fed with the loving words of the Lord. As Jesus taught us, 'Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake?' Our heavenly Father gives us everything we need for the journey as pilgrims of hope."*

During the jubilee year, Catholics are encouraged to make a pilgrimage to Rome to obtain indulgences. Our diocese travels on pilgrimage to Rome in March 2025.

Other ways in which Catholics can obtain an indulgence include making a pilgrimage to our Cathedral in Northampton or one of the other designated holy sites across our diocese, **St Joseph and the Child Jesus in Bedford and St Peter's Catholic Church in Marlow**. Other ways include: performing works of mercy or acts of penance and sacrifice.

Catholic indulgences are spiritual benefits offered by the Church to lessen the temporal consequences of sins, drawing from the "treasury of merit" accumulated by Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints. They are obtained through acts of prayer, penance, or charity, typically alongside sacramental confession and receiving the Eucharist. Although indulgences do not absolve sins, they are intended to promote spiritual renewal and a deeper separation from sin. Bishop David ended by saying *"And so, we pray for each other. We ask the Lord to open our hearts to the many graces he wishes to give to us in this Jubilee Year. We pray for our families, that the longing and yearning of each heart within our family will be moulded to the love, the faith, and the hope of the Holy Family."*

'The door of hope has opened wide to the world. God speaks to each of us and says: there is hope also for you! There is hope for each of us. And do not forget, sisters and brothers, that God forgives everything, God always forgives. Do not forget this, which is a way of understanding hope in the Lord.' – **Cardinal Vincent Nichols – 29th December 2024**

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time – Scripture Reflections



From Fr Biju's desk... This week we are at a wedding in Cana where Jesus reveals Divine power by transforming water into wine. The Bible begins with one wedding, that of Adam and Eve in the garden (Gn 2:23-24), and ends with another, the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rv 19:9, 21:9, 22:17).

At Cana, Jesus also blesses human marriage, perhaps at that moment instituting the Sacrament of Matrimony. Throughout the Bible, marriage is the symbol of the Covenant relationship between God and His chosen people. God is the faithful Bridegroom and humanity is His beloved bride. Let us pray for God's daily miracles in our families.

We see this theme beautifully presented in today's first reading, where Isaiah uses the metaphor of spousal love to describe God's love for Israel. God's fidelity to his people is compared to a husband's fidelity to his wife. Isaiah predicts God's salvation of Jerusalem after the return of the Babylonian exiles and visualizes it as a wedding between God and Jerusalem. Jesus' provision of abundant wine for the wedding feast in Cana signifies that the day foreseen by Isaiah has arrived.

In today's second reading, St. Paul reminds us that the new wine that Jesus pours out for us is the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to His Bride.

In today's Gospel, John describes the first of the seven "signs" by which Jesus showed forth His Divinity. When the wine "ran short," Jesus' Mother told Jesus about it. At first Jesus seemed to refuse to do anything about it. But later he told the servants to fill six large stone jars with water and take some of the miraculous water-made-wine to the headwaiter. When they did so, the headwaiter expressed his surprise that such a great wine had been reserved for late use.

Let us, "invite Jesus and Mary to remain with us in our homes" when we feel shortages in our family lives. Let us follow Mary's instruction, "*Do whatever He tells you.*" This is the only recorded command given by Mary in the New Testament, and it is a prerequisite for miracles in our families.

The Bible tells us how to do the will of God and effect salvific changes in our daily lives. Just as Jesus filled the empty water jars with wine, let us fill the empty hearts around us with love. By the miracle of Cana, Jesus challenges us also to enrich the empty lives of those around us with the new wine of love, mercy, concern, and care.



With our love and prayers, Fr Biju, and Deacon Peter