

CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST EDMUND OF CANTERBURY

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Sunday 19 April 2026 Yr A

Today's second collection is a diocesan collection to raise funds for the maintenance of St George's Cathedral.

Dear Parishioners,

Many of you will have been deeply troubled this week by Donald Trump's outlandish remarks about Pope Leo, as well as by his AI-generated image depicting himself in the likeness of Christ, drawing explicitly on the imagery of the Divine Mercy. You would be right to be shocked, as I was: this enters into the sphere of blasphemy and heresy. Indeed, in Daniel 4:30, we learn of Nebuchadnezzar, who in his pride exalted himself above God. This reveals how easily human ambition can distort what is holy.

Trump's attacks against Pope Leo were deeply disrespectful, and are an insult to our spiritual leader and shepherd, who responded: "Enough of the idolatry of self and money! Enough of the display of power! Enough of war! True strength is shown in serving life." Throughout the week the insults escalated, with JD Vance questioning Pope Leo's understanding of the Just War Theory; he was unequivocally corrected by the US Bishops, who said: "When Pope Leo XIV speaks as supreme pastor of the Universal Church, he is not merely offering opinions on theology...he is exercising his ministry as the Vicar of Christ". The Pope later said that "a handful of tyrants...turn a blind eye to the fact that billions of dollars are spent on killing and devastation, yet the resources needed for healing, education and restoration are nowhere to be found." Indeed: \$11 million dollars of funding to Catholic charities in Miami, which shelter migrant children, was subsequently cancelled.

Trump and his supporters (and it is regrettable that some amongst them are purported Catholics) claim that criticism against them comes from the far Left. However, disgust at his remarks and of his co-opting of Catholic imagery has come from many sides, including from his ally, Italy's prime minister Giorgia Meloni, who said: "I find President Trump's words toward the Holy Father unacceptable. The pope is the head of the Catholic church, and it is right and proper that he calls for peace and condemns all forms of war."

It is not just Christians whom Trump has insulted. To Muslims, Jesus is a prophet, hence the response from Iran's president Masoud Pezeshkian: "On behalf of the great nation of Iran, I condemn the insult to Your Excellency and declare that the desecration of Jesus (peace be upon him), the prophet of peace and brotherhood, is unacceptable to any free person." When so many voices, irrespective of their political enmity, converge in defence of the dignity of Christ and His Church, it reminds us that truth is not the preserve of one political camp or another. It also highlights the importance of interfaith dialogue. The very fact that Pope Leo has been in Algeria this week praying alongside Muslim leaders is an example of how, despite our different beliefs, shared reverence for God can be a bridge rather than a battleground.

Aptly for this period of Eastertide, we remember that Jesus' first words to His disciples after the Resurrection were: "Peace be with you" (John 20:19). At every Mass, we echo this greeting with the sign of peace. Yet instead we are hearing the 'leaders of the free world' sowing discord and confusion. Some have pointed to the 'good' that Trump has done in promoting select Christian causes, making him a favourite with some Christian US voters. But we would do well to understand that a deeper pattern is at work: spiritual warfare and the manipulation of religious language, not for God's kingdom, but for earthly power and personal political ambitions, i.e. to 'divide and conquer'. Scripture warns us: "God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (1 Corinthians 14:33). When confusion reigns, we must ask: whose voice are we truly hearing?

We may think this is something happening 'over there' (in America, or the Middle East). But the seeds of discord can take root anywhere, even within our own communities. Fear, suspicion, and anger can quietly shape our thoughts and actions, as we often see in our own politics. We might look at all the problems in the world and feel deep anxiety and despondency. But remember: "Perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18). We are not powerless: God has given us free will. We all have it within us to take action, however small may be our sphere of influence.

First, we must pray. As Pope Leo has urged, we are to pray for peace. Padre Pio once said, "Pray, hope, and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer." When all hope seems lost, prayer is our recourse. Second, we must live the Gospel in our daily lives. We must forgive one another; that is one of the basics that we teach children at school. Jesus teaches us to forgive "seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22). In a world that thrives on outrage, forgiveness is a radical act.

Third, we must be discerning. Not everything we read or hear deserves our trust. We should ask ourselves: does this reflect the voice of Christ? Or is it feeding fear and division? We must remember: those who profit from outrage (whether politicians or social media platforms who profit monetarily from clicks) benefit from our anger. But the Holy Spirit is there to guide us to the truth (John 16:13). We must listen. St Maximilian Kolbe said: "No one in the world can change Truth. What we can do and should do is to seek truth and to serve it when we have found it".

Fourth, we must care for the poor. This includes recognising climate poverty, as Pope Francis consistently reminded us. As Jesus said: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40).

Fifth, we are beholden to examine our conscience. Often it is our own fears and insecurities that lead us to prejudice. We are swept up in rhetoric that gives us temporary reprieve from feelings of fear – of change or loss of status perhaps. But deep down, we know something is not right. In the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), Jesus challenges us to see beyond boundaries and ask "Who is my neighbour"?

Finally, do not look up to phoney idols, but to the saints. The Catholic tradition is rich with men and women who lived the Gospel with courage and humility. In a time when false prophets are in abundance, the witness of the saints calls us back to what truly matters.

Last week, while politicians were sewing discord and hate, Artemis II astronaut Victor Glover said from space: "In all of this emptiness ... you have this oasis, this beautiful place that we get to exist in together". It calls to mind the words of St Julian of Norwich, who said 700 years ago in her Revelations of Divine Love: "[God] showed me a little thing the size of a hazelnut, in the palm of my hand, and it was as round as a ball. I looked at it with my mind's eye and I thought, 'What can this be?' And the answer came, 'It is all that is made' ... and all things have being through the love of God." We should not give up hope and we must find a way to share this world, protect it, and live in peace together. Hope is a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Let us ask ourselves: how can we spread hope and love here, in our own parish? Perhaps it begins with a kind word, a listening ear, a refusal to engage in division. Small acts, rooted in love, have a power far greater than we realise. And in all things, let us return to Christ, who is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). And let us never forget that "Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord".

DEBORAH'S PALM

Every last Thursday of the month the Sisters of St. Peter Claver offer the opportunity for people to come to the convent in the afternoon, share a cup of tea, chat with the Sisters, share their thoughts and needs and, if they so wish, also pray with them.

At 3.00 pm we will pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy (10 minutes) and from 6.00 pm till 7.00 pm we will have adoration. All are free to come and participate if they so wish.

From 3.10 pm till 6.00 pm one or other of the Sisters will be available to talk to whoever may desire to come to the convent at 89 Shortlands Rd, Bromley, BR2 0JL

Sr. Assunta Giertych

What is Deborah's Palm?

The Book of Judges in the Old Testament tells of one of the rare examples where people were going to a woman to ask advice and settle disputes. She, Deborah, would receive them under a palm tree.

FORTHCOMING RETIRING COLLECTIONS

April 19	Maintenance of St George's Cathedral
April 26	Priests' Training Fund
May 10	Collection for Living Well
May 17	World Communications Sunday
May 31	Lepra

300 CLUB

Congratulations to the winners of the April draw for the 300 Club.

Peter Nash	£100
Elizabeth Bell	£50
Mavis Alagar	£25

Thank you to those who have come forward to enquire about running the 300 Club. Isabelle is speaking to them in turn and we hope we will have a new organiser soon.

Coffee, tea, squash and biscuits are available in the Hall every Sunday after 9.30 am Mass. Please do come over and take time to chat with your fellow parishioners.

GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY, 26 APRIL SUPPORT OUR FUTURE PRIESTS

The priesthood has always been at the heart of the Church. This Good Shepherd Sunday, we pray for vocations and support for the Priest Training Fund, which forms men for service as priests and deacons across our parishes, schools, hospitals, and communities. We currently have nine seminarians, each costing around £30,000 per year over six years of formation. Your generosity helps make their calling possible.

Donate online: www.rcaos.org.uk/donate/PTF

Call: 020 7960 2504 (weekdays, 9am–5pm)

Or use the envelopes at the back of church.



Leave a lasting legacy to the Church

Please consider remembering our church or the Priesthood in your Will. Find out more: www.rcaos.org.uk/donate/leave-a-legacy.

Thank you for your prayers and support

Archdiocese of Southwark Fundraising

CAKE SALE NEXT WEEKEND

I am Michael Conneely and I am in Year 10 at Langley Boys. I am raising funds for a 10-day school trip to India in October and Fr Steve has kindly let me hold a cake sale in the church hall on the 26th of April after the 9:30 Mass. There will also be a raffle for the chance to win a cake cooked by a local professional baker.

PATSY BROWN RIP

The funeral of Patsy Brown, mother of Mary Elliott, will be held at the chapel in Morden College, Blackheath, at 11.30 am and 1.00 pm at Eltham crematorium on Thursday 30th April.

PRAYER FOR POPE LEO XIV

Archbishop John has encouraged us to pray the following short prayer for our Holy Father and for peace.

*Let us pray for Leo XIV, our Pope.
May the Lord preserve him, and give him life,
and make him blessed upon the earth,
and deliver him not up to the will of his enemies.*

UPPER ROOM EXPERIENCE

The All Nations Catholic Charismatic Group invites all to come to the celebration of the feast of Pentecost at St Andrew's Church, Thornton Heath, Croydon CR7 7RD on Sunday 24 May from 3.00 pm onwards. The feast of Pentecost is an integral part of our Christian life so let us come together to celebrate the birthday of our church. Food and drink will be provided after the celebration. Please see the poster on the notice board for more information. Thank you.

ENCOUNTER PENTECOST: 23 MAY ST GEORGE'S CATHEDRAL

Volunteers needed

This is a day for people of all ages from across the Archdiocese to gather at St George's for worship, prayer, teaching and celebration.

We need plenty of volunteers to make this exciting event happen.

For more info or to sign up as a volunteer, visit encounterpentecost.com

PLEASE JOIN US ON A MARY'S MEALS WALKING PILGRIMAGE

Would you like to join a Mary's Meals walking pilgrimage this year?

Options include the Augustine Camino from Rochester to Ramsgate via Aylesford Priory, Canterbury Cathedral and Minster Abbey from 5-11 September, and The Way of Our Lady of Consolation from West Grinstead to Storrington and on to Arundel Cathedral from 8-9 May.

You are very welcome to join us for a single day, for several days, or for a whole pilgrimage. Come on your own or as a group.

To find out more or to sign up, please go to <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/get-involved/charity-events/walk-for-hope> or contact Roy Peachey from Mary's Meals at info@marysmeals.org.



MASSES

Sun 19 April	Third Sunday of Easter
6.00 pm VIGIL	Sheila Mangan RIP
8.00 am	Welfare of Bridget Carberry
9.30 am	For the people
11.00 am	William (Billy) Brady RIP
5.30 pm	Repose of the soul of Sheila Mangan
Monday 20 April	Feria
10.00 am	Uttamlal Chauhan RIP
Tues 21 April	St Anselm
10.00 am	Ints of Margaret & Cleo
Wed 22 April	Feria
10.00 am	Mark Humphreys RIP
Thu 23 April	St George
10.00 am	Happy repose of the soul of Rose Elgar RIP
6.00 pm CLAVER	Adoration
Fri 24 April	Feria
10.00 am	Paddy & Erika Curtin RIP
Sat 25 April	St Mark, Evangelist
10.00 am	Ann Elmer RIP
6.00 pm VIGIL	Michael Howard
Sun 26 April	Fourth Sunday of Easter
8.00 am	Benjamin Stanislaus Dunn & dec'd family members
9.30 am	Claver Sisters on the feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel
11.00 am	Ilgá Moys RIP
5.30 pm	Martin Lydon (Int of Killian Crow)

EXPOSITION

Monday to Thursday and Saturday from 9.00 –9.45 am and Friday after Mass

ROSARY

Monday and Wednesday after Mass, and Friday before Mass

CONFESSION

Saturday after morning Mass until noon and on Saturday evenings from 5.00 pm to 5.45 pm.

On occasion exposition or rosary will not take place owing to a funeral being held in the church

MASS TIMES AT ST ANTHONY'S, ANERLEY

Weekdays

9.30 am daily (Monday to Saturday)

Saturday

6.00 pm Vigil Mass

Sunday Mass

9.30 am
11.15 am

MASS TIMES AT ST MARK'S, WEST WICKHAM

Weekdays

10.00 am daily (except Tuesday)
6.00 pm (Tuesday only)

Saturday

6.30 pm Vigil Mass

Sunday Mass

8.00 am
10.00 am
11.30 am

We pray for all our parishioners

The recently deceased: Bernie Smith, Albie Houghton, Vincent Scully, Martin Lydon, Grace Ete Eseanobi, Luznidia Arias, Madeleine Ruddy, James Keogh, Patsy Brown, Seán Craig, Simon Waters, Eliza Ruchaj, Job Kariru Muriuki.

Those whose anniversaries are at this time:

Martin Lynch, Kevin Twomey, Patricia Paa, Don O'Reilly, Theresa Cooper, Josie Wait, John Mattison, Michael Howard, Edward Callaghan, Rose Dimeo, Anthony Kilcullen, Mary Dickson, Magdalene Thomas.

Those in ill health: Chris Elgar, Peter Anthony Jones, Katherine McLaughlin, Henry Ginn, Margaret Mattison, Elias Tchamba, Paul Hixson, David Back, Arlene Sinclair, Margaret Russell, Emma Rodrigues, Christine Parker, Don, Michael Northwood, Beatrice Allegretti.

And all those suffering with long term sickness.

May the Lord bless them and keep them – Amen.

DIARY

April

26

Cake sale in Hall after 9.30 Mass

29

Requiem for Simon Waters at 1.00 pm

30

Deborah's Palm at the Claver Convent

May

1

Requiem for Madeleine Ruddy at 11.30

5

Requiem for James Keogh at 12.30

June

6

Parish Fair

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION

Christian Meditation in the hall every Monday from 5.30-6.20 except on 2nd Mondays.

Quiet Monday in the hall on second Mondays from 5.30 - 6.20 - see flyer in porch.

Please note the need to arrive promptly and respect the need for silence.

