

**OUR LADY IMMACULATE & ST MICHAEL,
BATTLE**

with

**ST TERESA OF LISIEUX, HORNS CROSS
14 Mount Street, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 0EG**

Contact Office on

01424 773125

e-mai: battle@abdiocese.org.uk

PARISH PRIEST – FR RICHARD BLYTHEN

e-mail: richard.blythen@abdiocese.org.uk

07721 397895

website: battlewithnorthiam.parishportal.net

**Cycle A for Sundays and Solemnities
Year 1 for Weekdays**

Arundel and Brighton Trust is a Registered Charity No. 252878



Weekend 25th / 26th March

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Saturday 25/03 6pm	Battle	The Fifth Sunday of Lent	John Spall RIP & Intention of Katie Spall
Sunday 26/03 9am	Northiam		People of the Parish
Sunday 26/03 10.45am	Battle		People of the Parish
Monday 27/03	NO MASS		
Tuesday 28/03 6pm	Battle	Tuesday of the Fifth Week of Lent	No Intention
Wednesday 29/03 10am	Battle	Wednesday of the Fifth Week of Lent	No Intention
Thursday 30/03 6am	Battle	Thursday of the Fifth Week of Lent	No Intention
Friday 31/03 10am	Battle	Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent	No Intention

Sacrament of Reconciliation available after all Masses and upon Request

Introduction to the Scripture Readings for Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord:

- **First Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7**
Trust in God enables us to be eloquent in our witness.
- **Second Reading: Philippians 2:6-11**
Humility allows God our Father to achieve his plan for us.
- **Gospel: Matthew 26:14 – 27:66**
The faithfulness and trust of Jesus are not in vain.

We pray for the Sick and Housebound Members of our Community:

From Our Lady Immaculate & St Michael: Margaret Thunder, Stephen Bould, Pauline Fraser, Michael Conroy, Sheila Lilley, Madeleine Salter, Gretta Johnson, Ruth Ayres, Helen Powell, Tom Dodd, Dilys Fraser, Suzanne McAdie, Hazel & Helena Lobo, Keith Bourne.

From St Teresa's: Christine Mooney, June Nottage, Maureen Webster, Brian O'Connell, Eileen O'Shaughnessy, Margot Leahy, Jacquelyn Solly, Lawrence Youlten.

Prayer Intentions - please remember the following people in your prayers this week:

Una Wade, Frances Cresswell, Guy Hooper, Judith Bridge, Maureen Ashing, Henry Cheung, Gerard Leahy, Mark Clemence RIP, Richard Widenka RIP, Jo Watkins.

- If you used to receive a visit from one of our Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist (Special Ministers), please contact the office on 01424 773125 if you would like these visits to recommence, with a Minister or with Fr Richard direct on 07578 725914 or email battle@abdiocese.org.uk.
- Fr Richard is happy to receive Mass Intentions, please pop them in the new letter box outside the office, or let Maggie know on 773125, e-mail battle@abdiocese.org.uk, thank you.
- If you wish to follow a live Mass please follow this link from our Diocesan website <https://abdiocese.org.uk/livestream> or via <https://www.churchservices.tv/>
- **Parishioner Survey:** Thank you for all the ideas that have come in so far, we are still looking for more feedback so your thoughts and ideas on what sort of activities you would like to be held in our Parish Room would be very welcome and helpful – so keep them coming! Send either by e-mail or pop the form in the post-box outside the office. Thank you!
- **Reminder - Coffee and cake in the Parish Room** next Wednesday, 5th April after the 10.45am Mass in the Parish Room. Everyone is very welcome!
- **CAFOD in Eastbourne and St. Leonards Deanery** invite you to a Workshop on Catholic Social Teaching on Saturday 1st April, 11 am to 1 pm, in Concordia Hall, Church Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 6HB. Come and explore with us the history and practice of Catholic Social Teaching which informs and underpins the work of CAFOD. Hot Cross Buns, coffee and tea provided. This is not an "April Fool" but an opportunity not to be missed!
- **CAFOD Syria-Turkey Earthquake Appeal:** CAFOD is responding with support of provision of food, water, shelter, medical assistance and winter kits for survivors. Your donations in recent months have made that quick response possible. Let us join CAFOD in praying for our sisters and brothers affected by the earthquakes and the winter weather. Your

support for CAFOD throughout the year allows our Catholic agency to act quickly when disasters strike. For more details visit CAFOD's Syria Turkey Emergency Appeal online at <https://cafod.org.uk/give>.

- **CAFOD Family Fast Day – Lent Appeal:** This Lent, your donations to CAFOD's Family Fast Day Appeal will help families fighting the climate crisis and ensure that our Church network can quickly respond to emergencies, like the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey. Give today using the envelope or at cafod.org.uk/give and please join us in praying for CAFOD's development and emergency response work all over the world.
- **The Big Lent Walk for CAFOD:** Team Forge (Vicky Chainey, Ingrid Finch & John Reid). Vicky & John are continuing their running/walking 5km per day in the beautiful scenery of West Yorkshire so further support would be very much welcomed via [The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development \(CAFOD\): The Big Lent Walk \(enthuse.com\)](https://www.enthuse.com)). We are most grateful to our supporters who have helped raise about £400 (plus Gift Aid) so far.
Vicky, Ingrid & John

- **Battle Foodbank** – Thank you so much for all the support you provide to us, we really appreciate it and it makes such a difference. On the one hand, we are sad that there is still a need for a food bank in such a developed country but on the other, we're pleased to do God's work and serve our local people. I'm sure you will be delighted to hear that the Battle foodbank was recognised by the Town Council at the Parish Assembly on 4th March 2023. We received an award for outstanding service to the town of Battle and this award goes to every one of your congregation who has supported us over the last nine years. A special thanks must go to St Mary the Virgin Church Battle as they have so generously hosted us all the time we have been in the town and this makes the world of difference, especially since we have found our new home in the Upper Church Hall. This room is the perfect space for our service and our clients feel comfortable and supported when they are with us. We'd welcome a visit from any of the churches if you'd like to see in action what we do, just get in touch with me and we'll arrange a day.

Please continue to pray for the work we do; here are a few prayer pointers -

- That physical donations to the foodbank increase as we have seen quite a decline
- For the health and wellbeing of our amazing volunteer team (we are so well supported)
- For strength and wisdom for Amy, our CAB Partnership advisor who is helping clients to maximise their income and then, therefore, move on from using the foodbank.
- For our clients to know the peace that only our Lord can provide in their often desperate situations.

Everyone who leaves the foodbank to leave feeling more hopeful than when they arrived. Also, if you'd like someone from the foodbank to come along and share on a Sunday or at a weekday meeting please let me know and we can organise this. We're also looking for opportunities to reach out into the community and to gently advise people about our service and help them to break down the stigma of using a foodbank. We have found coffee mornings, toddler groups and such to be perfect for this.

Needs this week are Tins of Cold Meat and Potatoes; Cartons of Juice; Small bags of sugar; Tins of Dog Food; Female Deodorants, Shower Gel and Toilet Rolls. Thank you.

- The office is open on Mondays and Thursdays from 9.30am – 12.30pm.
- Fr Richard and the Parish Pastoral Team send all parishioners their prayers and good wishes.

News from our Diocese

Diocesan run events

- **Liturgy of the Word with Children - Saturday 13 May 2023 9.30-1pm The St Philip Howard Centre, 4 Southgate Drive, Crawley:** Training for liturgy leaders. Book your place through the diocesan website. If you wish to discuss your engagement with this training please email E: Katherine.bergin@abdiocese.org.uk
- **Annual Pilgrimage Day to West Grinstead for Grandparents and all those who fulfil this role in so many different ways. Wednesday 14 June 2023 11- 3pm.** This is always a joyous day of celebration with Bishop Richard and friends from across the Diocese. Booking is now available through the diocesan website.
- **Mass for Engaged Couples – Friday 16 June 2023 7pm at Arundel Cathedral**
Join Bishop Richard for a special Mass celebrating the momentous journey of discernment that is engagement towards the lifelong commitment made by couples preparing for marriage. Mass will be followed by refreshments in the Cathedral Centre.
- **World Youth Day:** Are you aged 18-35? If you are, we invite you to join the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lisbon to meet with the Holy Father. 31 July -7 August 2023. Join millions of other young people from all over the world to celebrate our faith and make life long friendships. The week will include a trip to Fatima as well as all the amazing festival activities, not to mention Mass with Pope Francis. To find out more about this amazing opportunity please contact E: lizzie.wakeling@abdiocese.org.uk

To find out about and book events hosted by the Diocese please visit our website events calendar W: <https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/diocese/events>

We have also created a news page for Formation Team Events

W: www.abdiocese.org.uk/news/formation-team-courses-events which we will aim to keep live and updated.

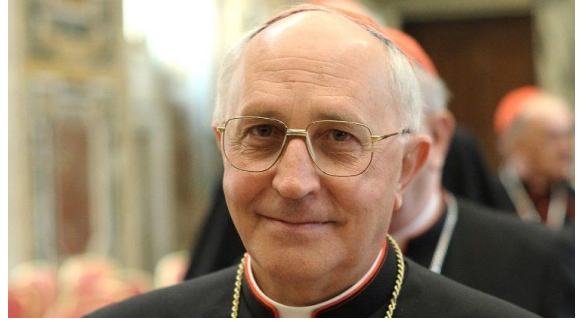
Externally run

- **Men's Way of the Cross – 31 March 2023** starting from Christ The King church in Eastbourne and walking through the night over the cliffs to Birling Gap. Join for a prayer over the South Downs Beachy Head trail to rediscover yourself and reflect on your God given purpose on this earth. Poster attached.
- The next **Chilworth Abbey Study Day** is on Saturday 1 April led by Fr John Seddon OSB, of Bishop Barron's 'Catholicism', Episode 8, 'A Vast Company of Witnesses: the Communion of Saints. Mass 9am, Talks 10.15am-3.30pm. Bring a packed lunch and a friend if possible. See W: chilworthbenedictines.com for more details.
- **Worth Abbey - Young Adults (18-35) Easter Triduum Retreat Thursday 6 –Sunday 9 April.** You are invited to Worth Abbey to celebrate the greatest feast in the Christian calendar; the celebration of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Accommodation at St Mary's, one of the Worth school boarding houses at £180 per person. There is also the opportunity to be part of a Cross Walk pilgrimage setting off from Brighton on Palm Sunday and arriving at Worth Abbey on Maundy Thursday. Cost £60 per person. To book online go to: worth.co.uk/retreats/retreat-programme. For further information contact 01342 710318 or email: retreats@worth.co.uk.

Vatican News

20th anniversary Iraq war: 'The Church never abandoned its people'

Cardinal Fernando Filoni says one of the toughest periods of his life was the war in Iraq. He was speaking to Vatican News exactly 20 years after the outbreak of the conflict in the Middle Eastern country, where he served as apostolic nuncio in the early 2000s, remaining at his post in Baghdad amid bombings and suicide attacks. Filoni was appointed as the Vatican's ambassador to Iraq and Jordan in January 2001, and was at the apostolic nunciature in the Iraqi capital during the US invasion which began on 20 March 2003.



"I remember this period as one of the most tough periods of my life."

"This was the moment," he said, "in which not only myself but also the bishops, the priests, the faithful and the people in Iraq, we had the perception of our incapacity to give a different perspective than that of war". He recalled that Pope John Paul II spoke often of the conflict and about the possibility of solving it through dialogue.

Pope St John Paul's numerous appeals and initiatives for peace: Pope St John Paul II repeatedly called for peace. When the winds of war were making themselves felt on the horizon, he addressed the diplomatic corps accredited to the Holy See and said "No to war! War is not always inevitable. It is always a defeat for humanity." When war seemed inevitable, he announced a day of prayer and fasting for peace in the Middle East, which was to take place on 5 March 2003. Just ten days later, speaking during the Angelus on 16 March, he said: "In the face of the tremendous consequences that an international military operation would have for the population of Iraq and for the balance of the Middle East region, already sorely tried, and for the extremisms that could stem from it, I say to all: There is still time to negotiate; there is still room for peace, it is never too late to come to an understanding and to continue discussions."

He reminded the United States, England and Spain - without expressly naming them - that "the use of force represents the last recourse, after having exhausted every other peaceful solution, in keeping with the well-known principles of the UN Charter."

But based on the assumption that Saddam Hussein had "weapons of mass destruction", the US President ordered air strikes over Baghdad, marking the beginning of a military operation "to disarm Iraq, to free its people, and to defend the world from grave danger." US forces toppled Hussein's regime in a matter of weeks and the search for evidence of Iraq's so-called "weapons of mass destruction" intensified. The weapons were nowhere to be found.

The US military remained in Iraq for 8 years. During that time some 4,600 US soldiers and 270,000 Iraqis, mostly civilians, were killed.

Pope John Paul II's prophetic words regarding "the extremists that could stem from [the war]" proved dramatically true, and insecurity spiralled, fuelling insurgency. Historians believe that this helped spawn the Islamic State (ISIS) terror group and created a battleground where civil war could take place.

Islamic State also exploited sectarian tensions following the invasion to entrench itself in both Iraq and Syria, causing the US to send troops back to Iraq three years after first withdrawing from the country.

Twenty years later, no one knows with certainty how many people have been killed and wounded in Iraq since the 2003 US invasion. However, we know that between 275,000 and 306,000 civilians have died from direct war-related violence caused by the U.S., its allies, the Iraqi military and police, and opposition forces from the time of the invasion through October

2019. Despite more than \$100 billion committed to aiding and reconstructing Iraq, many parts of the country still suffer from lack of access to clean drinking water and housing.

Accepting the inevitable

What was "really terrible," the former apostolic nuncio said about the days following the outbreak of war, was not having the opportunity to foster dialogue and promoting peace, and he remembered how they were forced "just to accept - fatally – the war."

"We tried to live this moment witnessing the faith, and our solidarity with the people", Filoni continued, showing that it was possible to "do something" in a situation of war.

The Church stays, despite it all: His presence, he said, was intended as a witness that the Church would never abandon a situation where things were difficult, where war was ongoing.

An apostolic nuncio, he explained, is not just like an ambassador whose mandate is to foster bilateral relations or business interests: "We are there for solidarity, to assure peace, to defend rights, to be close to Christians, to Catholics, to dialogue [with the other parties]"

"If this is the real reason for our presence, if there is a war, we cannot leave."

As Church, he continued, we believe that "we must show ourselves as a part of the people there. We are inserted in the reality."

So, he added, his team experienced the same difficulties and sorrows as the people of Iraq, of the Christians, the Catholics, the minorities: "this was, I think, a very positive aspect in the difficulty of the war."

Iraq underwent a profound change as power changed hands, and Christians were deeply affected. During the period of Saddam Hussein, he noted, "the Church was respected."

The Cardinal explained that in Iraq at the start of the millennium, most Christians were Chaldeans, and then there were the Orthodox. He said the Latin-rite Church was very small, and there were also other minorities, all of whom were respected.

He noted that although it was a Muslim country and Christians did not enjoy religious freedom, they had freedom of religion, meaning that missionary activities were prohibited but they were free to practice their faith, and were respected in their diversity and identity.

Uncertainty and questions: The question often discussed with the bishops, Cardinal Filoni continued, was what Iraq would look like after the war. "What kind of attitude would we assume in case Saddam Hussein's regime came to an end?"

They took it slowly, "step by step", he said, but always defending the right of the people, the Iraqi people to be free, and the right of the Church to continue to be there for the people.

"We defended the right of the Church to be here because it's part of the life of the Iraqi people."

When the power shifted from the minority Sunnis to the Shiites, he said, many questions were asked about being able to keep the same guarantees of freedoms. "We had to adapt "to this uncertain moment and go step by step."

"We suffered a lot because, after the end of the regime of Saddam Hussein, the first to be attacked by [fundamentalist] groups were Christians and Catholics," he said.

"Churches were destroyed, and there were many martyrs."

The Churches were suffering due to incertitude, Filoni continued, and Church representatives were unable to appeal to those in power: firstly, because the groups didn't respect any law, and secondly, because the State and government had no capacity to defend their citizens. He noted that the government itself came under attack many times, "so it could not defend us against others."

We had to find ways, he said, to "defend at least those who were going to Mass, so near the churches there were fences", and security to check those who were coming in and to be sure that



no one could be harmed in the churches.

“There were very difficult moments.”

Slowly, Cardinal Filoni said, things improved, “although the churches are still watched by soldiers and police, but the situation has evolved for the better “, especially after the visit of Pope Francis.”

“I think the situation of better understanding is on the way.”

Christian exodus from the country: Cardinal Filoni said Pope Francis’s visit to Iraq from 5 to 8 March 2021 was much more than a simple visit: “It was a pilgrimage to Iraq, not to for the holy sites of Abraham and many other prophets who lived there, but also a pilgrimage for the many martyrs” both inside and outside the Church, because thousands of Iraqi people, including Muslims, “suffered a lot”.

It was a pilgrimage, the former apostolic nuncio said, that Pope St John Paul II had wanted to undertake, and it was a sign of hope for the future for Christians.



“If the Pope came here, we may still have hope for the future.”

A new reality, he said, is in the building day by day, although he does not have much hope that those who left will ever go back.

Security is improving, Filoni remarked: some shrines and churches have been rebuilt, and some areas are stable, but the Christian presence in the country is more than halved.

“We have to think that at least half of the Christian population is no more in Iraq.”