

ALL SAINTS NEWS

22nd March 2026
5th Sunday of Lent
Passion Sunday

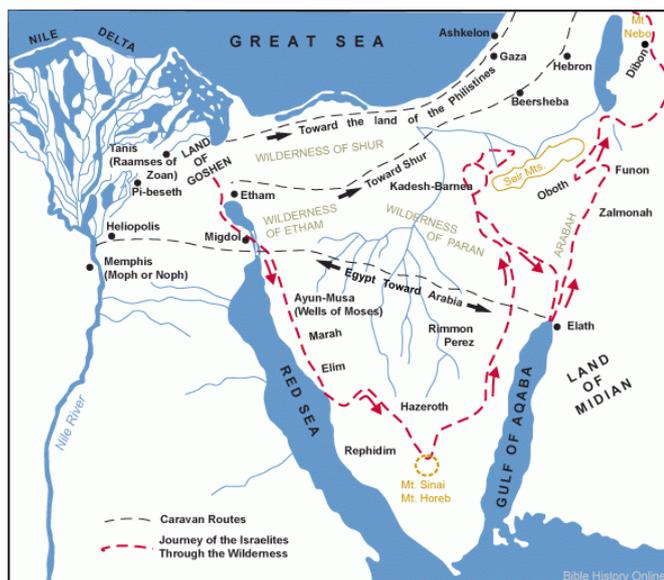
Why Forty Means Something!

A Focus on Forty

'Forty days and forty nights, thou wast fasting in the wild'as the well-known hymn puts it.

It was at the end of those forty days that Our Lord was tempted by the devil, as though going without sustenance for forty days (and nights) wasn't temptation enough. The fasting gave him the strength to withstand the three temptations.

But why 40 days?

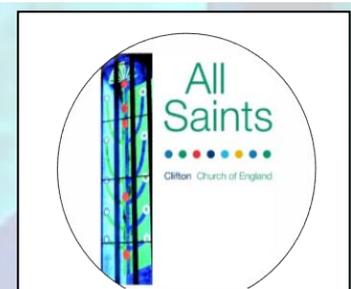


The Biblical writers stress the number, so clearly it is significant. The most obvious parallel is the 40 years that the Israelites spent in the wilderness having been liberated from slavery in Egypt before they were allowed to occupy the 'promised land.' Whereas the Israelites failed their test of faithfulness to God in the desert and complained bitterly about the lack of food and drink, but nevertheless were miraculously fed and watered by God, Jesus remained loyal to his Father in heaven. So, Jesus together with those baptised into his body can be seen as a newly constituted Israel, a people that would remain faithful and loyal to the one true God. Jesus, as it were, recapitulates the Israelites' time of testing and whereas they failed, he succeeds.

But there are many other instances of the number 40 in the scriptures and many of them amplify our understanding of what we hope to achieve through our Lenten observance.

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Other Instances of the Number 40

As we heard on the Sunday before Lent in the reading from Exodus. **Moses** was summoned by God to the top of Mount Sinai in order to receive the commandments inscribed on two tablets of stone. The glory of the Lord settled on the mountain and Moses remained there in the direct presence of God forty days and forty nights. While our faith tells us that God is with us always, we are not always conscious of that. Lent provides us with an opportunity to practice the presence of God, to remind ourselves of Emanuel, *God with Us*.

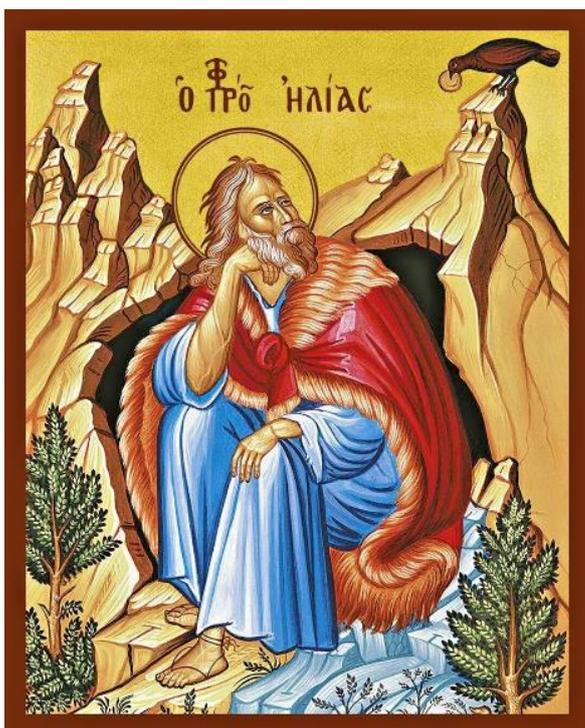
As Psalm 139 puts it: *"Where can I go then from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I climb up to heaven, you are there; if I make the grave my bed, you are there also. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, Even there your hand shall lead me, your right hand hold me fast."*

The story of **Noah and the Ark** remains a favourite children's story. It's relevance to Lent is to alert us to the need to repent of our sins in our lives, for the wickedness of the human race had become so great that God decided to wipe it out and make a new beginning. The flood, the result of rain for 40 days and nights, prefigures baptism, death of sin by drowning, and a new beginning marked by God's promise that he would never do the same again signified by the rainbow. Lent reinforces our faith in God's ever-present readiness to forgive.

The number 40 does seem to be associated with themes of repentance and forgiveness. A further example is in the book of **Jonah**. He is perhaps most famously remembered for being swallowed by a large fish, having tried to run away from his calling as a prophet. But, when reluctantly, he does go to the city of Ninevah, and preaches to the people that they have only 40 days to repent of their wicked ways, he is somewhat miffed when he is taken seriously, the people put on sackcloth and ashes and God does not destroy the city as he had threatened.

Among the many other instances of the number 40 the most significant incident, with a bearing on Lent, concerns the **Prophet Elijah**, who we last encountered on the Sunday before Lent on the Mount of Transfiguration where he appeared, talking with Moses and Jesus.

The Story of Elijah



The wicked queen Jezebel, a worshipper of the false god Baal, who the Israelites characterised as being worshipped with child sacrifice amongst other wickedness, enraged that Elijah has killed the prophets of Baal, threatened to kill him.

Elijah fled for his life, continued alone into the wilderness, and finally sat down under a shrub, praying for death and eventually falling asleep.

At length an angel roused him gently, telling him to wake up and eat. When he woke he found bread and a jar of water, so he ate, drank, and went back to sleep. The angel then came a second time, telling him to eat and drink afresh, because he had a long journey ahead of him. (See I Kings 19).

Elijah travelled for forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb (also known as Mount Sinai) where Moses had received the Ten Commandments. He sought shelter in a cave. Elijah was told to "*Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.*" There came a mighty wind, then an earthquake and then fire, but the Lord was not in any of these, and then came what is usually translated as 'a still small voice' but might equally be rendered as a 'voice of thin silence'. Whereupon Elijah was given further instructions from God.

Encountering God may not go as we expect

Elijah's 40 days led to an encounter with God that was completely contrary to what might have been expected. Often in our seeking after God we have preconceived notions concerning what we might expect. Lent encourages us to seek God afresh, that we might be surprised and amazed at the mystery of the resurrection when we arrive at Easter.

Fr Clive Welham

All Saints Parish Retreat

Llangasty House - Friday 15 to Sunday 17 May 2026

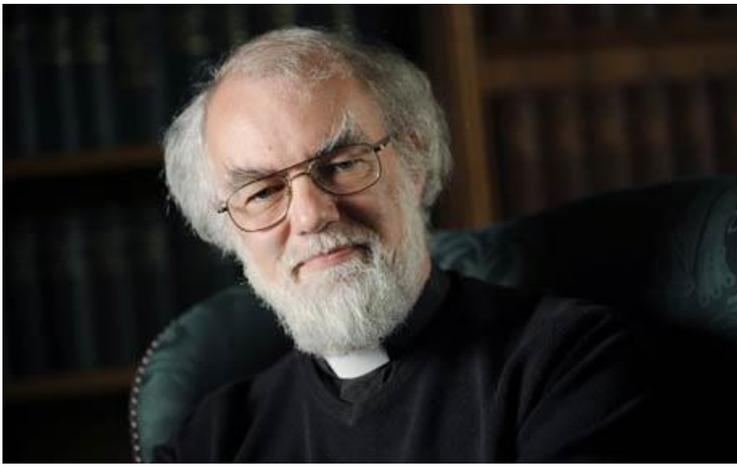


This year's Parish Retreat will be led by Fr Charles. The theme, very appropriately for today, will be based upon '***From Blindness to Vision***'.

We will engage in reflection on moving from blindness to sight, recognising the opportunity for spiritual transformation from our shared humanly impaired vision, toward a divine enlightenment through Christ and in creation.

In this spiritual place we have space to open the "eyes of faith" and perceive God's truth, grace, and presence in everyday life and the fullness of creation. (Have a read of today's Gospel: John 9).



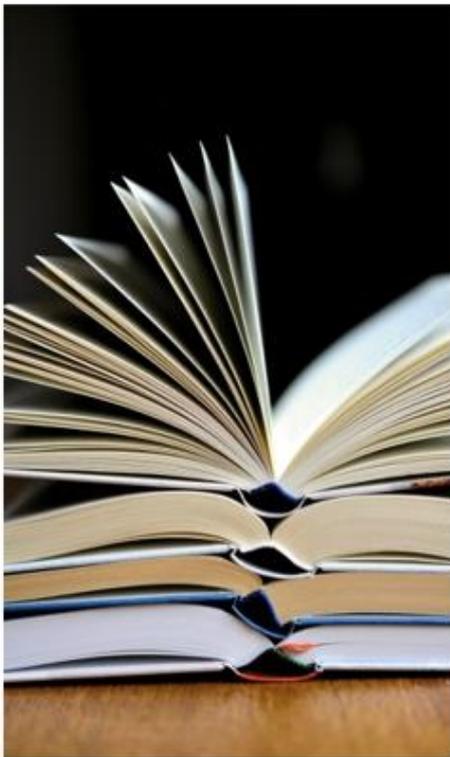


**Diary Date for November
2026!**

**Sunday 1st November 2026
All Saints Day**

On All Saints Day 2026 we will be joined by **The Right Reverend and Right Honourable Lord Williams of Oystermouth** – none other than Rowan Williams.

Fr Rowan will Preach and Preside at the Parish Mass.



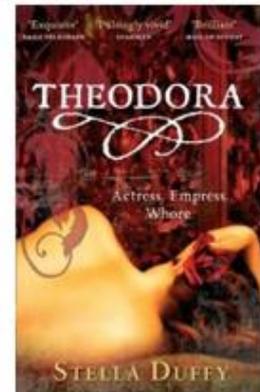
All Saints Book Group

**Wed 25th March 2026, 7-9 pm
in the Sacristy**

Join us for our bi-monthly book group in the Sacristy of All Saints. Every other month, a new book – bringing readers together for lively discussions and great company!

The book for our **March 2026** meeting will be:

***Theodora*
By Stella Duffy**



Palm Sunday Mass begins with the
Procession at 10.15 am

Silver Cleaning before the Easter services.

Please join the silver cleaning team
on Saturday March 28th
9.30 for 10 am
Refreshments



Easter
Eve
April
4th

April 4th

From 3pm in the Richard Chapel
Creation of the Easter Garden

All ages welcome to contribute to this .
If possible please bring along a small posy
or even a single flower or some greenery
– but there will also be some material
available in Church.

AND Hot Cross Buns

AND 4 to 4.25pm

A short service with blessing of the Easter
Garden

AND Mini Eggs

Wednesday Lectio Divina

Each Wednesday during Lent there is a Lectio in the Richard Chapel at 3.00pm. Each will focus on the Gospel reading for the following Sunday. This last week was the Samaritan Woman at the Well of Jacob and the Water of Life.

Lectio Divina (Latin for "Divine Reading") is a traditional Christian monastic practice of slow, contemplative, and prayerful reading of Scripture, aimed at fostering communion with God. It moves beyond intellectual study to transform the Bible into a "living word" through four distinct, meditative steps: reading, meditation, prayer, and contemplation.

The Four Steps:

- **Lectio (Read):** Slowly reading a, typically short, passage of Scripture multiple times, letting the words resonate.
- **Meditatio (Meditate):** Reflecting on the passage to understand how it speaks to one's heart and life.
- **Oratio (Pray):** A personal, spontaneous conversation with God based on the reflections.
- **Contemplatio (Contemplate):** Resting in silence to listen to God and experience His presence.

The origin of the practice was with early Benedictine communities and was encouraged by saints like Gregory of Nyssa and Benedict of Nursia. It has a very clear purpose. Untroubled by issues of context, interpretation, history, and literary criticism it provides an opportunity to listen to God's Word. It is used to deepen a relationship with God, allowing the Word to shape the reader inwardly.

Why ensure you are on the Electoral Roll

The Church Electoral Roll is the official register of lay membership in a Church of England parish, enabling members to vote at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM), stand for the Parochial Church Council (PCC), and take part in church governance. It requires applicants to be baptized, aged 16 or over, and either reside in the parish or have attended regularly (once a month-ish) for at least six months.

Last year we were required to start the roll from 'new'. This means that everyone had to rejoin. This is a regular event to ensure the Roll is up-to-date and properly maintained. As a result, even though worship numbers have increased the Electoral Roll took a dip!

As mentioned, **the purpose** is to function as the voting register for the parish, allowing members to participate in decision-making and elect representatives to the PCC, Deanery, Diocesan and General Synods.

This is an important year for decisions being made at Synods – especially Diocesan and General. We do want to ensure we have voice and representation.

It also carries other **significance!** The size of the roll reflects the active, committed membership, which impacts the representation on church councils but also informs future decisions about the life of the parish.

Two items in particular:

1. The Electoral Roll number impacts the total PCC members we are allowed to elect and also our representation on Deanery Synod (both are calculated by a given ratio)
2. The future vacancy - when it happens!

You can apply by completing the form available in the Atrium and online or via the church office and submitting it to the electoral roll officer (Wendy) or a Churchwarden.

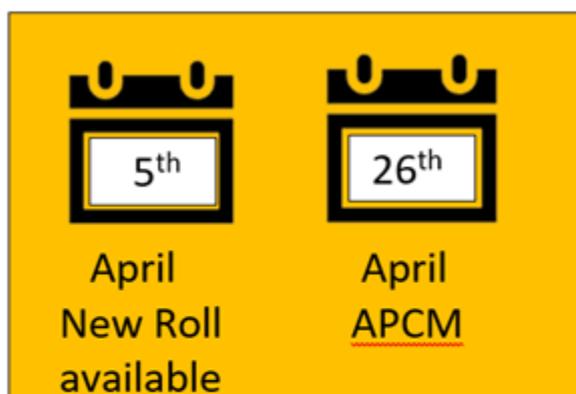
APCM and revising the Electoral Roll

The APCM will be held on Sunday 26th of April 2026 in the Randall Room.

The Electoral Roll is to be revised in 2026. Notice is given and Applications invited from Sunday 15th of March 2026.

The current Electoral Roll (names only) is available in the atrium for viewing. To be included in the Revised Electoral Roll please complete an application form and return it to the Parish Office.

All changes must be completed by 2nd of April at 11.00 am. The New Roll will be available for inspection from Sunday 5th of April for 14 days.

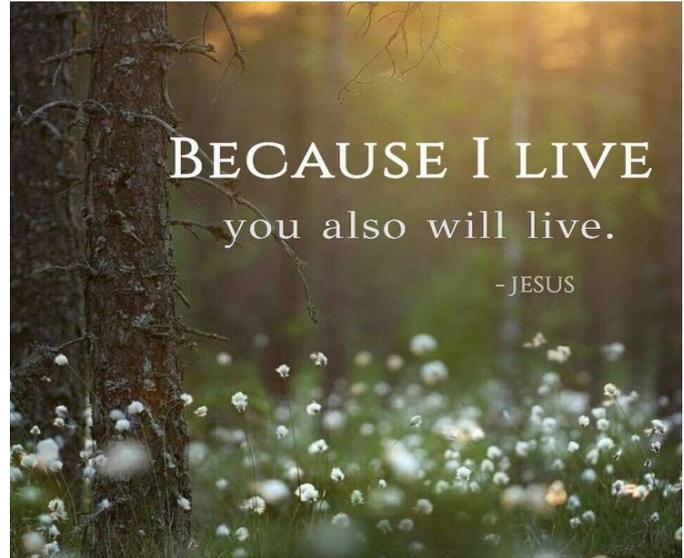


Prayers Requests

'In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.'

(John 14: 19).

Please let Fr Charles know of anyone who would like to be remembered within the weekly prayer list or anyone who you would like to be remembered in prayer.



Those of the parish and our hearts whom we remember in our Prayers:

Sunday

Tabitha Clark, Ruth and Richard Harding, Katie Norman, Neal Gordon, Joyce Shepherd, Cynthia Ashford Nicky Epinay Sarah Jean Bradford Ossama & Clare Sader

Monday

Tuesday.

Wednesday

Katrina and Katherine King, Philip Miles, Samantha Tucker, Maureen Mumford Jennie Williams

Thursday

Friday

Charlotte Hopkins, Caroline Semon, Nadine Benn The O'Sullivan family

Saturday

The Departed

Lucille Osafa Gwladys Hughes Antony Keyworth-Berridge Chris Griffin Jenny Oates

Years' Minds - this week we remember:

Moya Tandy Mary Harris Catherine McLean George Deverson John Hawley Cynthia Lloyd Elisabeth Morgan

