

# Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

## Parish of The Most Holy and Undivided Trinity

### The Catholic Church in Grimsby, Cleethorpes & Immingham



#### Contact Us

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**Deacon Stephen Durkin**  
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Parish Sister  
**Sister Ann Helen Byrne**



Please wear a mask provided  
if you are recovering from  
colds and flu.

## Newsletter



<https://www.pexels.com/photo/a-wooden-bowl-with-rock-salt-with-wooden-spoon-6690894/> - Copyright Free

The Gospel this Sunday is from *St. Matthew 5:13-16*. No less an authority than Christ himself calls his true followers the "salt of the earth." and the "light of the world." These are titles of honour, surely, and of the greatest distinction. Christ is putting his true follower on almost a level with himself. He was the light of the world; he was the salt of the earth.

In true humility, we can all say that we are far from worthy of any such honourable titles. Yet in all sincerity too, many if not the majority among us, are doing their little bit of Christ's work, in cultivating their own small corner of his vineyard. The parents who teach the Christian way of life to their children by word, and especially by example, are spreading the Christian faith. The workmen, whether in office or factory, who show that they are Christians by their honesty, charity for their fellowmen, their respect for God, and the things of God, in their speech, are spreading their Christian faith. All those who show moderation in their personal expenditures and donate some of their savings to help their brothers, their fellow men who are in need, these are true disciples of Christ and are cooperating with him in bringing God's children back to their Father who is in heaven.

Unlike the salt that has lost its flavour, and the light that is kept under the bushel, the Christian who has thus behaved can change his attitude, provided he is aided by God's grace which is never refused. He can become once more what he ought to be—a life-preserver for his neighbour.

Life on earth is short. The demands of our Christian life may not always be easy, but we know that if we live up to them, we are other Christs. We are continuing his great work by our own good example to our neighbour, and we are giving glory to God, and are earning for ourselves the eternal light of heaven.

—Excerpted from *The Sunday Readings* by Fr. Kevin O'Sullivan, O.F.M.

## Lent



### Stations of the Cross during Lent

#### Immingham

Wednesdays at 9:30am

Mass 10am

#### Cleethorpes

Fridays at 5:45pm

Mass 6:30pm

#### Grimsby - Malayalam

Fridays at 7.30pm

#### Grimsby

Sundays at 2.30pm

### Ash Wednesday – 18<sup>th</sup> February

Grimsby – 9.30am

Immingham – 12.00pm

Cleethorpes – 6.30pm

## Holy Week

### Palm Sunday – 29<sup>th</sup> March

Immingham – 5.00pm

Cleethorpes – 9.00am

Grimsby – 11.00pm

### Confession Tuesday – 31<sup>st</sup> March

Immingham – 10.00am – 11.00am

Cleethorpes – 12.00pm – 3.00pm

Grimsby – 5.00pm – 8.00pm

### Chrism Mass – 1<sup>st</sup> April

Nottingham – 11.30am

### Maundy Thursday – 2<sup>nd</sup> April

#### Mass of the Lord's Supper

Cleethorpes – 7.00pm

### Good Friday – 3<sup>rd</sup> April

#### The Passion

Cleethorpes – 3.00pm

### Good Friday – Stations of the Cross

Immingham – 10.00am

(10.30am Walk of Witness Immingham)

Grimsby – 7.00pm

### Easter Vigil – 4<sup>th</sup> April

Grimsby – 7.00pm

### Easter Sunday – 31<sup>st</sup> March

Immingham – 9.00am

Cleethorpes – 11.00am

## News for the Pews

**Annual “Valentine” Marriage Mass** - The Annual Diocesan Marriage Mass, where married couples are able to renew their vows before the Bishop and receive his blessing on their Marriages, will take place on Sunday 15th February at 3pm at St Barnabas Cathedral. This Mass is open to all married couples and their families, but is especially appropriate to those recently married, or celebrating a significant anniversary. All are welcome.

**Scholastica and Benedict** - gave themselves totally to God and gave top priority to deepening their friendship with him through prayer. They sacrificed some of the opportunities they would have had to be together as brother and sister in order better to fulfil their vocation to the religious life.

**The season of Lent** - begins with a grittiness. Ashes made from last year's palm branches form a rough and imperfect symbol upon our foreheads. The gritty cross reminds us of our own mortality and sin before God but also points us toward the way of reconciliation and ultimate redemption.



**Ash Wednesday**  
**18<sup>th</sup> February**

**Mass & Ashes**  
Grimsby – 9.30am  
Immingham – 12.00pm  
Cleethorpes – 6.30pm

### Stations of the Cross

**Immingham** - Wednesdays at 9:30am - Mass 10am

**Cleethorpes** - Fridays at 5:45pm - Mass 6:30pm

**Grimsby - Malayalam** - Fridays at 7.30pm

**Grimsby** - Sundays at 2.30pm



**Thank You - HCPT Group 39**

**Appeal & Retiring Collection** at all three of our Masses last Weekend.

Total giving so far: **Total £999.11**

**QR Code for Giving On Line**



**St Joseph & St Mary - School Corner**  
**This Coming Lent Term**  
**Our Children move into Lent**  
**Branch Three: Galilee to Jerusalem**  
**Branch Four: Desert to Garden**  
**Hear - Believe - Celebrate - Live**

## Parish Office

Holy Trinity Presbytery  
Grimsby, DN32 9DZ  
01472 342301  
**Monday,**  
**Tuesday & Wednesday**  
9.00am until 12.30pm  
Outside of these times the office  
will not be available.

## Fr Robbie's Friday Spiritual Surgery

Holy Trinity Presbytery  
Grimsby, DN32 9DZ  
01472 342301  
Each Friday Morning  
by Appointment Only  
via the Parish Office  
Appointment Times Available:  
9.00am, 10.00am and 11.00am

## Parish Finances Last Week 31 / 1 February

Thank you for your generosity  
to the work of the Church!

Loose Plate	£ 461.48
Contactless	£ 191.00
S/Orders	£1,156.17
(S/O Each week averaged out)	
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,808.65</b>

In your Will, please remember  
your Church.

## Parish Finances Last Month January 2026

04/01/26	£ 1,805.86
11/01/26	£ 1,740.40
18/01/26	£ 1,642.87
25/01/26	£ 1,880.22
<b>Total</b>	<b>£ 7,069.35</b>

Sign up for the Parish Bulletin



## News for the Pews

### Safeguarding Refresher Training - Final Mop-Up Session

Thank you to everyone who attended one of our three safeguarding refresher courses. We truly appreciate you giving up your time and recognise how seriously you take your ministry. Unfortunately, a number of volunteers did not attend, and many did not make contact with a Parish Safeguarding Rep. (thank you to those who did). A final "mop-up" session will take place:

**Monday 9th February 2026**

**Time: 5.30pm - 6.30pm**

**Venue: Holy Trinity Parish Hall, Cleethorpes**

*(Next to Corpus Christi Church)*

This will be the final opportunity to attend a safeguarding refresher course. Any volunteer who does not attend any of the refresher sessions will, regrettably, be unable to continue in their ministry.

At Holy Trinity GCI, we take safeguarding extremely seriously. It is essential that all volunteers are fully trained to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone in our parish community. Safeguarding guidance changes, and it is vital that all volunteers know how to respond appropriately to a variety of situations. As Parish Priest, Fr Robbie is responsible for all parishioners and must be confident that every volunteer will act correctly in any safeguarding situation, as he must delegate this responsibility. Many thanks for your cooperation and continued commitment to safeguarding.

Kind regards, Safeguarding Team, Holy Trinity GCI

### Under 18s - Registration Requirement

All Under 18s, whatever their ministry (altar serving, reading, stewarding, or any other ministry), must be registered. Some paperwork may have been completed previously; however, updated forms are now required. All Under 18s must be registered using the new forms by the end of this year. You may request a paper pack or complete the forms electronically. Please contact:

Sarah Pollard - [sarah.pollardPSR@dioceseofnottingham.uk](mailto:sarah.pollardPSR@dioceseofnottingham.uk)

Deputy Parish Safeguarding Representative

Once registered, Under 18s will receive a blue lanyard. Under 18s must not take part in any ministry without wearing a blue lanyard. Many thanks for your cooperation and continued commitment to safeguarding. Kind regards, Safeguarding Team, Holy Trinity GCI



**1ST PRIZE - £500    2ND PRIZE - £200    3RD PRIZE - £100**

**We are reopening the 200 Club for the Final Draw of the 2025-2026 200 Club**

Everyone who entered at the beginning and has played all year is automatically entered into the draw with your number(s) as you have already paid for these.

Anyone who has not been a part of the 200 club all year can enter this final draw, it is £12.00 for one number to enter the Superdraw. This ensures every player has paid the same amount to enter, this is a legal requirement, keeping it fair for all players.

*(You will essentially pay for the full year of draws having only entered the final draw)*

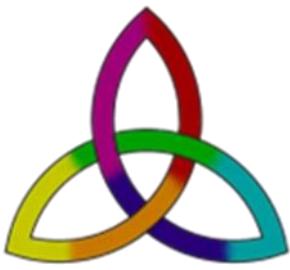
Those who have played all year can pay to enter another number into the final Superdraw, again, this is £12.00 for one number for the reasons previously outlined.

*By entering, you consent to having your name publicised as a winner, should you win a prize.*



**To enter the draw please scan the QR code and you will be taken to the Parish's Online Store to Purchase your entries.**

(100% of proceeds from entries to the superdraw from this point onwards will be donated directly to Parish Funds and will not add to the prize pot)



## Our Schools

**St Marys Catholic Primary Voluntary Academy**  
Wellington Street  
Grimsby  
DN32 7JX

**Mr Joseph O'Connor**  
Headteacher

**Tel: 01472 357982**  
[office@smp.nelcmail.co.uk](mailto:office@smp.nelcmail.co.uk)

**St Joseph's Catholic Voluntary Academy**  
Philip Avenue  
Cleethorpes  
DN35 9DL

**Mrs Michelle Steeper**  
Acting Headteacher  
**01472 690672**  
[office@sjp.academy](mailto:office@sjp.academy)

## Our Hospital

**Diana, Princess of Wales Hospital**  
Scartho Road  
Grimsby  
North East Lincolnshire  
DN33 2BA  
01472 874111

## Parish Safeguarding Team

**Richard Mellows**  
(lead)  
&

**Sarah Pollard**  
(deputy lead)  
**01472 342301 (ext 6)**

**richard.mellows@psr@dioceseofnottingham.uk**  
**07513 725509**

**sarah.pollard@psr@dioceseofnottingham.uk**

## Sunday: Yr. A - Euch Prayer: II - Psalter I

### Saturday 7th February - Feria

10.00am - Holy Hour in Cleethorpes  
10.00am until Noon - Confessions in Cleethorpes  
5.00pm - **Immingham** - Mass - Elsie Dunn RIP - Maureen Emmett  
6.00pm - Grimsby - Polish Language Vigil Mass

### Sunday 8th February - Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

9.00am - **Cleethorpes** - Mass - Pat Spencer RIP - Karin Lund

11.00am - **Grimsby** - Mass - Fr J.P. Entwistle RIP (Elaine & Dick Loest)

### Monday 9th January - Feria

No Mass/No Service

### Tuesday 10th February - Saint Scholastica, virgin

9.00am - Grimsby - Rosary - Sorrowful Mysteries  
9.30am - Grimsby - Mass - Wellbeing of Mark John Paul (David & Marilyn)

11.00am - Cleethorpes - Deanery Meeting - Parish Hall

### Wednesday 11th February - Our Lady of Lourdes

10.30am - Grimsby - Rosary - Glorious Mysteries

11.00am - **Grimsby** - Requiem Mass - Rita Hall RIP

### Thursday 12th February - Feria

9.00am - Cleethorpes - Rosary - Luminous Mysteries

9.30am - Cleethorpes - Service of Word & Holy Communion

### Friday 13th February - Feria

5.45pm - Cleethorpes - Eucharistic Adoration with Confessions

6.30pm - Cleethorpes - Mass - Margaret & Leo Solomon RIP (Ruth & Family)

### Saturday 14th February - Saints Cyril, monk / Methodius, bishop

5.00pm - **Immingham** - Mass - Welfare of Pauline (and her knee)

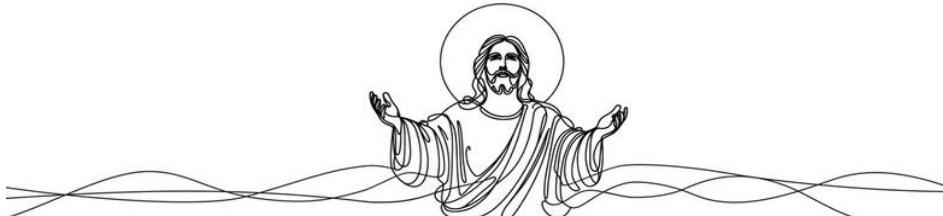
6.00pm - Grimsby - Polish Language Vigil Mass

### Sunday 15th February - Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

9.00am - **Cleethorpes** - Mass - Emily & Hall Vernon RIP (Marie-Therese)

11.00am - **Grimsby** - Mass - Dean Purdon RIP (Nanette Brown)

**Please note the change in time for Mass and Rosary  
in Immingham on a Wednesday each week.**



**Rita Hall RIP** - It is with sadness that I announce the passing of Rita. Her Requiem Mass will take place at St Mary on the Sea Church, Grimsby on **Wednesday 11th February** at **11.00am** followed by committal at **Scartho Cemetery**. Please keep her family in your thoughts and prayers at this sad time. **Requiescat in pace**  
(This Funeral Mass will be in honour of Our Lady of Lourdes)

**Terence Robinson RIP (Terry)** - It is with sadness that I announce the passing of Terry. His Funeral Service will take place at **Corpus Christi Church, Cleethorpes** on **Friday 20th January** at **10.30am** followed committal by **Grimsby Cemetery**. Please keep his family in your thoughts and prayers at this sad time. **Requiescat in pace**



*Revised 29<sup>th</sup> August 2020*

**By order of the Bishop, the following statement is to be published  
on the weekends in February and October each year**

Marriage is a lifelong vocation of a man and a woman to a community of life and love open to children, and, between the baptized, it is a Sacrament. Aware of the many pressures today which can endanger family life, the Church is constantly concerned to make sure that those of you planning to marry are prepared as well as possible. We would like to remind those who wish to marry of the following:

1. It is important that a couple go to see their priest in good time before their wedding. Normally, at least six months' notice should be given.
2. Marriage preparation is carried out by the priest, often assisted by a group from the parish. Courses arranged on a Deanery basis are recommended.
3. Catholics are reminded of their obligation to preserve their faith and to do all they can within the unity of their partnership to have all their children baptized and brought up in the faith and practice of the Catholic Church.
4. Non-Catholic partners will be informed of this promise, but they are not asked to make this or any similar promise.
5. Dispensation for a marriage between a Catholic and a non-Catholic to take place in a non-Catholic church can only be granted for a serious reason. Couples who wish to marry in a non-Catholic church should discuss the matter with their priest in good time before their wedding day to see whether a dispensation could be granted.

All couples marrying these days need the support of the local Church. In this way they will be strengthened in their preparation for marriage, in celebrating their marriage, and in living out their covenant with one another.

We wish to thank all those married people who show such constancy and fidelity to their vocation of marriage. May their example inspire those planning to marry in the Church.

**Right Reverend Patrick McKinney**  
Bishop of Nottingham



## ALTAR SERVERS RETREAT

A TIME OF FUN, FRIENDSHIP, AND RENEWAL, WHERE YOU CAN PAUSE, RECEIVE, AND JOURNEY ALONGSIDE OTHERS WHO SHARE YOUR MINISTRY.

8-10<sup>th</sup> May 2026

THE BRIARS CATHOLIC  
YOUTH RETREAT CENTRE,  
CRICH, DE4 5BW

DOES YOUR PARISH HAVE ALTAR SERVERS IN YEAR 7-13?

THIS WEEKEND RETREAT IS FOR YOU!



Just £65\* per young person  
Group Leaders - free

\*Early Bird Offer - First 20 places £50

MORE INFORMATION:

EVENTS@NDCYS.COM OR (01773) 852044

↗ Download your Leaders pack at [ndcys.com/sanctuary](http://ndcys.com/sanctuary)

**F**AITHER JERRY PAUL ENTWISTLE was born in Rossendale in Lancashire, on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1931, and became a Catholic when he was 22 years old, in 1953. He trained as a concert singer at the Royal Academy of Music in London, having gained a scholarship there. Having decided to become a priest he went to study under the Jesuits at Campion House, Osterley, for two years, and then entered Saint Hugh's Charterhouse, at Parkminster, being ordained as a Carthusian on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1963. After 19 years of Religious life, 13 of them as a priest, which taught him as he said 'to know how to be holy', he was incardinated into Nottingham Diocese by Bishop McGuinness, and worked as assistant priest in the parishes of Saint Joseph, Leicester (1976-77); Our Lady and Saint Thomas of Hereford, Ilkeston (1977-80); Saint Pius X, Grimsby (1980-82); and Saint Anne, Buxton (1982-84) before being appointed parish priest in Saint Norbert's parish, Crowle, in 1984, where he remained until his retirement in 2000.

He lived out his retirement largely in the presbytery next to Saint Margaret's School, Gamesley, supported by his faithful housekeeper, Mary. After her death in 2024 Father Paul moved to the Mercy Care Centre, Derby, joining some of the other retired priests of the diocese there. Bishop Patrick was able to visit Father Paul three days before he died, and he was anointed, and received Holy Communion, before being taken into hospital in Derby, where he died the following evening, late on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2026.

At the time of his diamond jubilee, in 2023, Father Paul wrote the following reflection of the early part of his life, undedr the title "From Poverty to Priesthood":

I was born, the first child and only child, of young working-class parents whose first house was one of a row, with one ground-level room and one bedroom, plus a very small cellar for coal only; we shared an outside tippler toilet. When we went to the cinema, on returning home, my mother and I used to wait outside until my Father had lit the gas light and then got rid of all the cockroaches!! My parents both worked in the near-by cotton-mill: my father as a spinner walking bare-footed on the wooden floor all day long, while my mother, a weaver with four looms in the noisy 'long-room'. Mother would not turn out cloth with faults, consequently she did not earn much money for her quality cloth; not enough of it for that!

My parents had me baptized, but themselves never went to Church. They worked from 07.30 (08.00) 'till 17.30 with an hour for lunch; from 18 months old I was 'looked after' by Nannie Swain, mother of a large Catholic family of 5 young working sons and an adopted daughter, until I started school at 5 years of age. My life really began for me, however, when I felt "called" in my heart to go to Church on Sundays. My parents would not let me go, on my own, to Church until I was six, whereupon I started what has never since ceased: following a path not of my own choosing. On Sundays, I walked alone, from home to the up-hill Church of St. Annes, about half-a-mile plus; I met choir-members there, but only as choir members; after the service I walked back home, alone. That went on for perhaps seven years, but I never felt lonely. I always wanted to go Church even though I thought the vicar's sermons 'not much', nor did I like always what happened in the choir when the vicar was preaching. When I was about 8 we moved to a house over a mile from St. Annes, and I eventually asked my mother (dad was in the RAF) if I could go to the nearby Methodist Chapel, which I then regularly attended three times on Sundays: Chapel morning; Sunday School afternoon, and Chapel evening.

I never thought either the Anglican Church or the Methodist Chapel was the Church Jesus founded; nor did I ever enter the Methodist body, formally; however, I was prominent there because of my singing ability, and also because I did well at Scripture, getting 100% at the yearly inter-Chapels Scripture exams once, coming 10<sup>th</sup> in all England. The teachers at St. Annes urged my parents to put me in for a scholarship to the Bacup and Rawtenstall Grammar School which I won aged nine. I began there when ten, and went on to gain the Higher School Certificate of those days before leaving at the age of 16.

I was too poor to land a job in a Bank ... 'Your Father owns a cotton mill? No, he just works in one'; too poor also to keep a job at a Chartered Accountant's office, because I had to travel there by bus and buy a meal at dinner-time, which my parents could not afford because my pay was little, since I was being trained to become an accountant. I then had to turn to work in a wholesale shoe and slipper traders for some money.

I just mentioned my singing, which was the most important aspect of my life until I became a Catholic. I began singing about 8 yrs. old. I was taught by the Mayor of Bacup, director of the Bacup Choral Union who was a

deeply religious man, and every week I would -- with another student -- catch two buses and then walk a couple of miles for my singing lesson. He always gave me religious songs or songs appreciated by Christians audiences. I was the centre-piece (literally, in the photograph!) of the 'Bhoys' as Mr. Hargreaves called a group of about seven of his pupils who did dozens of concerts around the Rossendale valley during the war. I also had personal concerts where I was paid -- which was helpful for my mother, whose wage was, as I have said, low -- but I would not sing if people were not listening! Once I went early to the concert hall and thought the piano unsatisfactory ... another one had to be brought in before I would sing. After winning a large festival at Burnley, when 18, I was urged (by the adjudicator) to go in for a Scholarship at the Royal Academy of music in London, which I won at the age of 19, and which gave me a total of three years help to study at the Academy. I won the opera prize there in 1953 singing a song 'cursing' God (Iago's aria)! My ambition, however, was to become a German Lieder and concert singer. Singing was always a religious matter for me ... I liked to think that people who listened closely to my singing, that is, to my interpretation of the words, might become better people for such understanding ... just very secret thoughts, hopes, at the back of my mind!

Whilst at the Academy I shared a top floor room in the Campden Hill Gardens home of Ashley Dukes and Marie Lambert of the Ballet Rambert -- with John a viola player. Though stable-companions, so to speak, our worlds at the Academy were quite different; and on Sundays, whilst John met with his friends, I would go to some Chapel, usually Methodist. Then I would go to Shepherd's Bush to be given a good Sunday dinner (my only real meal in the week!) by a distant relative. In the evening I often went to the Kingsway Hall service given by Dr. (later Lord) Donald Soper. He was a very good 'evangelist'! Intelligent and up to date, and always able to stand up for his Christian beliefs. I was impressed by him strongly enough to go to one of the Scripture groups at Kingsway Hall; but I was so disgusted by a plethora of personal opinions flaunted at the meeting that I never went again. I met a New Zealand cellist, Frances, at the Academy, with whom I occasionally talked about her Catholic faith. I read the *Imitation of Christ*, St. Therese of Lisieux, etc., and rethought the views I had gradually developed over previous years of dissatisfaction with the 'Jesus-authenticity' of the Anglican Church and the Methodist Chapel. The pot -- as it were -- slowly boiled until I finally agreed to go to a Catholic Mission at Ogle Street Catholic Church. The priest concerned, Fr. Michael O'Connor, convinced me -- not easily, because I was very proud of the England of war time and immediately after -- by baptismal statistics, that England was no longer a Christian country, and I began to go to a nearby Carmelite Church at Kensington on Sundays.

My ultimate conversion was occasioned by a catechism, 'This is the Faith', sent by Fr. O'Connor to Frances and given by her to me. That was the first book I literally cried over: such beautiful and authoritative Truth, such divine Goodness and mercy!! It was all I had vaguely thought God was and the Church should be! My former stable-mate, John, had gone on obligatory national service (I was unfit due to multiple operations on my left foot) in the meantime, and I remember him ringing me one evening, and my telling him that I had made a wonderful discovery that he too should look into ... Catholicism!! I became a Catholic in 1953, and John followed my advice, and became a Catholic himself! I wanted to learn how best to serve God, and the Carthusian lifestyle immediately seemed ideal to best teach me how to love God, and with the great help of the chaplain to London University, Monsignor Gordon Wheeler, I was able to visit the Carthusians.

Subsequently I spent two years working by day while studying and living at a parish 'set-up' in Walworth for late aspirants for the priesthood, under the guidance of the Rev. E. Holloway, a learned theologian (not at all sure of Karl Rahner's influence in the Church!) and a zealous priest. After another two years at 'dear old' Fr. Tigar S.J.'s Campion House, Osterley, I was then allowed to enter the Carthusians where I stayed for 19 years during which time I became a Catholic priest these 60 years ago.

May Father Paul now receive the rewards of his labours, as we pray the Lord welcomes him into the glories of Heaven.

*Father Paul at the time of his diamond jubilee, 2023*





## Message of the Holy Father Leo XIV for the 34<sup>th</sup> World Day of the Sick

11<sup>th</sup> February 2026

### **The compassion of the Samaritan: loving by bearing another's pain:**

Dear brothers and sisters,

The thirty-fourth World Day of the Sick will be solemnly celebrated in Chiclayo, Peru, on 11 February 2026. For this occasion, I would recommend reflecting once again on the figure of the Good Samaritan, for he is always relevant and essential for rediscovering the beauty of charity and the social dimension of compassion. This reflection further directs our attention towards the needy and all those who suffer, especially the sick.

We are all familiar with the moving account found in the Gospel of Saint Luke (cf. *Lk* 10:25-37). Jesus responds to a scholar of the law, who asks him to identify the neighbour he must love, with this story: a man traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho was attacked by robbers and left for dead. While a priest and a Levite passed him by, a Samaritan took pity on him, bandaged his wounds, took him to an inn and provided for his care. I have chosen to reflect on this biblical passage through the lens of the Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, written by my beloved predecessor Pope Francis. There, compassion and mercy towards those in need are not reduced to a merely individual effort, but are realized through relationships: with our brothers and sisters in need, with those who care for them and, ultimately, with God who gives us his love.

#### **1. The gift of encounter: the joy of offering closeness and presence**

We live immersed in a culture of speed, immediacy and haste – a culture of “discard” and indifference that prevents us from pausing along the way and drawing near to acknowledge the needs and suffering that surround us. In the parable, when the Samaritan saw the wounded man, he did not “pass by.” Instead, he looked upon him with an open and attentive gaze – the very gaze of Jesus – which led him to act with human and compassionate closeness. The Samaritan “stopped, approached the man and cared for him personally, even spending his own money to provide for his needs... [Above all] he gave him his time.” [1] Jesus does not merely teach us who our neighbour is, but rather how to become a neighbour; in other words, how we can draw close to others.[2] In this respect, we can affirm with Saint Augustine that the Lord did not intend to show us who that man's neighbour was, but rather to whom he should become a neighbour. Indeed, no one is truly a neighbour until they freely draw near to another. Thus, the one who became a neighbour was the one who showed mercy.[3]

Love is not passive; it goes out to meet the other. Being a neighbour is not determined by physical or social proximity, but by the decision to love. This is why Christians become neighbours to those who suffer, following the example of

Christ, the true *divine Samaritan* who drew near to a wounded humanity. These are not mere gestures of philanthropy, but signs through which we perceive that personal participation in another's suffering involves the gift of oneself. It means going beyond the simple satisfaction of needs, so that our very person becomes part of the gift.<sup>[4]</sup> This kind of charity is necessarily nourished by an encounter with Christ, who gave himself for us out of love. Saint Francis expressed this beautifully when, speaking of his encounter with lepers, he said: "The Lord himself led me among them,"<sup>[5]</sup> because through them he had discovered the sweet joy of loving.

The gift of encounter flows from our union with Jesus Christ. We recognize him as the Good Samaritan who has brought us eternal salvation, and we make him present whenever we reach out to a wounded brother or sister. Saint Ambrose said: "Since no one is more truly our neighbour than he who has healed our wounds, let us love him as Lord and also as neighbour; for nothing is so close as the head to its members. Let us also love those who imitate Christ; let us love those who suffer due to the poverty of others, for the sake of the unity of the Body."<sup>[6]</sup> "To be one in the One" – through closeness, presence, and love received and shared – is to rejoice, like Saint Francis, in the sweetness of having encountered the Lord.

## **2. The shared mission of caring for the sick**

Saint Luke continues, noting that the Samaritan "was moved with pity." Compassion, in this sense, implies a profound emotion that compels us to act. It is a feeling that springs from within and leads to a committed response to another's suffering. In this parable, compassion is the defining characteristic of active love; it is neither theoretical nor merely sentimental, but manifests itself through concrete gestures. The Samaritan *drew near, tended the wounds, took charge and provided care*. Notably, he does not act in isolation: "The Samaritan discovered an innkeeper who would care for the man; we too are called to unite as a family that is stronger than the sum of small individual members."<sup>[7]</sup> In my experience as a missionary and bishop in Peru, I have personally witnessed many who show mercy and compassion in the spirit of the Samaritan and the innkeeper. Family members, neighbours, healthcare workers, those engaged in pastoral care for the sick, and many others stop along the way to draw near, heal, support and accompany those in need. By offering what they have, they give compassion a social dimension. This experience, occurring within a network of relationships, transcends mere individual commitment. For this reason, in the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te*, I referred to the care of the sick not only as an "important part" of the Church's mission, but as an authentic "ecclesial action" (n. 49). I quoted Saint Cyprian to illustrate how this dimension serves as a measure of a society's health: "This pestilence and plague, which seems so horrible and deadly, searches out the righteousness of each one, and examines the minds of the human race, to see whether the healthy serve the sick; whether relatives love each other with sincerity; whether masters have pity on their sick servants; whether doctors do not abandon the sick who beg for help."<sup>[8]</sup>

"To be one in the One" means truly recognizing that we are members of a single Body that brings the Lord's compassion to the suffering of all people, each according to our own vocation.<sup>[9]</sup> Moreover, the pain that moves us to compassion is not the pain of a stranger; it is the pain of a member of our own Body, to whom Christ our Head commands us attend, for the good of all. In this sense, our service is identified with Christ's own suffering and, when offered in a Christian spirit, hastens the fulfilment of the Savior's prayer for the unity of all.<sup>[10]</sup>

## **3. Always driven by love for God, to encounter ourselves and our neighbour**

In the double commandment, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself" (*Luke 10:27*), we recognize the primacy of love for God and its direct consequences for every dimension of human love and relationship. "Love for our neighbour is tangible proof of the authenticity of our love for God, as the Apostle John attests: 'No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us... God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them' (*1 John 4:12, 16*)."<sup>[11]</sup> Although the object of this love differs – God, neighbour and oneself – and can be understood as distinct expressions of love, they remain fundamentally inseparable.<sup>[12]</sup> The primacy of divine love implies that human action is carried out not for self-interest or reward, but as a manifestation

of a love that transcends ritual norms and find expression in authentic worship. To serve one's neighbour is to love God through deeds.[13]

This perspective also allows us to grasp the true meaning of loving ourselves. It means setting aside any attempt to base our self-esteem or sense of dignity on worldly stereotypes – such as success, career, status or family background[14] – and recovering our proper place before God and neighbour. Benedict XVI observed, “as a spiritual being, the human creature is defined through interpersonal relations. The more authentically he or she lives these relations, the more his or her own personal identity matures. It is not by isolation that man establishes his worth, but by placing himself in relation with others and with God.”[15]

Dear brothers and sisters, “the true remedy for humanity’s wounds is a style of life based on fraternal love, which has its root in love of God.”[16] I genuinely hope that our Christian lifestyle will always reflect this fraternal, “Samaritan” spirit – one that is welcoming, courageous, committed and supportive, rooted in our union with God and our faith in Jesus Christ. Enkindled by this divine love, we will surely be able to give of ourselves for the good of all who suffer, especially our brothers and sisters who are sick, elderly or afflicted.

Let us raise our prayers to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick, asking her to assist all who suffer and are in need of compassion, consolation and a listening ear. Let us seek her intercession with this ancient prayer, that has been invoked in families for those living with illness and pain:

Sweet Mother, do not part from me.  
Turn not your eyes away from me.  
Walk with me at every moment  
and never leave me alone.  
You who always protect me  
as a true Mother,  
obtain for me the blessing of the Father,  
Son and Holy Spirit.

I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to all who are sick, to their families and to those who care for them – healthcare workers and pastoral workers alike – and in a special way to all participating in this World Day of the Sick.

From the Vatican

13 January 2026

**LEO PP. XIV**