

Catholic Parish of St Edward the Confessor, Romford



Living Lent in the Parish Anniversary Year 2026

It is interesting to think about Lent 1856, in this parish. All the excitement as the new church became ever closer to completion. I have wondered at what point the Stained Glass windows would have been fitted. When did the pews go in? When did the scaffolding come down?

It would surely have been difficult for “Alleluias” not to burst into Lent 1856 as each final step of the building of the church was marked off, as each day brought the original nine families closer to having a church in which to worship.

Our world – and our lives – are very often full of contradictions and tensions; through Lent and Easter we are shown that Jesus is there at each moment of the journey. The times when a new Grandchild arrives into a family that are mourning the recent death of a Grandparent. The times when a child who has hated school nonetheless succeeds at exams. The miracle of a survivor pulled from rubble – sometimes literally, sometimes as a metaphor for a moment within our life.

Lent includes betrayal, wounding, injustice, crucifixion. It also includes immense bravery and courage, the light of the Last Supper, the tenderness of Veronica, the model of service that is Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. Your Lent, and mine, will no doubt have its own contradictions – not least as we look at the troubles, evils and hatred of the world and yet see shining moments of hope, peace and love. We navigate it all with the great pillars of Lent; prayer, fasting (which can mean giving things up in all sorts of senses) and charitable action. This Lent our parish charitable focus is precisely on the Holy Land of the very first Lent and Easter – there is more about that within this leaflet, as well as many opportunities to live all three pillars of Lent.

Above all we notice that Lent, like life, does not end with crucifixion, and we place our hope in the Easter Alleluias. In 1856 they signalled the completion of this church. Where do we seek an Alleluia in our lives this Easter? Where might we look for signs of it, even during Lent?

Fr Dominic

Lenten opportunities 2026

Lenten Charity 2026 – Friends of the Holy Land

The Holy Land includes so many places that are in a desperate state of conflict, with immense suffering. Large parts of Gaza are rubble. Children are educated in tents, with scarce resources. Israelis fear attack, while in the West Bank Israeli settlers drive Palestinians from ancient homelands. Some of the conflicts are recent, some go back decades; for well over a century not more than a few years have passed free from war. Yet **this is the land where Jesus lived, taught and prayed. The land of parables and miracles, healing and forgiveness.**

One way in which people suffer most is when energy and water supplies are cut off. This Lent our hope is to raise funds for a project which will **give self-sufficiency in energy, heating and hot water to 500 people**. Working with local partners, the Friends of the Holy Land (FOHL) will assist a village to **dig a well serving 500 people. Water will be stored in two large tanks, and solar panels will provide energy, including heat for water and homes**. To do all of this costs £1600. If our fundraising goes well, we could perhaps help 1,000 people? At Masses on the weekend of 21st/22nd March Edmund Adamus will share more with us, and we will take a dedicated collection. For more information: www.friendsoftheholyland.org

Fridays in Lent – a spiritual oasis – starting Friday 20th February

8.00am Mass

Mass at St Peter's school – all are welcome

(on 20th February Mass will be in the church, as it is Half Term)

10.30am

Stations of the Cross in Polish, Ukrainian and English

Led by members of the Polish and Ukrainian Communities. All are welcome.

Polish Community serdecznie zaprasza na Drogę Krzyżową w każdy piątek Wielkiego Postu o godz. 10.30. Śpiew pieśni wielkopostnych pomoże nam wspólnie przeżywać Mękę Pańską, a rozważania w językach: polskim, ukraińskim i angielskim połączą nas we wspólnej modlitwie.

5.00pm – 5.50pm

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

A time of prayerful peace and stillness in the church. Arrive at any time during the hour; stay for whatever time is possible.

During Adoration

Celebration of Reconciliation

A chance for Confession – whether for the first time in years, or the first time in weeks. A vital part of Lenten preparation. Reconciliation is also available on Saturday evenings 5.45pm – 6.15pm

6.00pm – 6.40pm

Stations of the Cross in English, led by different parish groups:

Friday 20th February Petals

Friday 27th February Live Simply Group

Friday 6th March Legion of Mary

Friday 13th March Beavers, Cubs and Scouts

Friday 20th March Confirmation Group

Friday 27th March St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)

Deepening our personal faith

Lent is a significant time to give extra attention to understanding our faith. There are many ways to be able to do this, including spending extra time **reading the Bible**. This year a good focus would be **Matthew 26-28**, as this is the Gospel we are mainly using at the moment. The chapters cover Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Resurrection and Ascension: every line can be prayed over. **The Catholic Bishops Conference** have a new resource for this Lent, called “we dare to ask”. It is a course of teaching, reflection and prayer to take at your own pace: www.cbcew.org.uk/we-dare-to-ask

If you are “on the go” then there are many resources online. Here are a few examples:

Cafod offer a daily email throughout Lent, with a prayer and reflection straight to your inbox, helping to keep a global perspective in your prayer <https://cafod.org.uk/pray/lent-calendar>

Pray as you go is both an App and a website. It offers a 15 minute guided reflection and prayer each day; ideal for a daily commute! <https://pray-as-you-go.org/>

The Jesuits have a spiritual tradition developed by St Ignatius. It comes to life on their website, a new Scripture passage, reflection and prayer each day: <https://jesuitprayer.org/>

Lenten Talks – Brentwood Cathedral – Wednesdays 7.30pm

Another way to deepen our personal faith is to listen to excellent speakers. This year the Lenten talks at Brentwood Cathedral take the theme of **What does it truly mean to be a Catholic?** The speakers are:

Wednesday 25th February **Abbot Hugh Allan, O Praem**
“I Believe...” *Living and Proclaiming the Catholic Faith.*

Wednesday 4th March **Rev Mgr Kevin W Hale, VG.**
Being Catholic and the call to holiness as seen in the lives of some recently canonised Saints.

Wednesday 11th March **Mr Mauro Iannicelli**
Prayer as the Foundation of our Catholic Life.

Wednesday 18th March **Rev Mgr John Armitage**
The uniqueness of Catholicism for British Society.

There is no need to register for these talks; just arrive at the Cathedral (28 Ingrave Rd, Brentwood CM15 8AT). Parking is limited, so you may find it easiest to get the train (the Cathedral is a 10 minute walk uphill from Brentwood Station) or bus 498 which is quite direct.

Enjoy a Saturday Lenten Lunch – 12noon – 2.00pm

There's a long tradition in the parish of people gathering for lunch in Lent. A simple lunch, with a raffle! The tasty lunch – ploughman's & soup – costs £6/adult or £2.50 for a child under 12. All monies raised will support the parish Lenten charity, Friends of the Holy Land. The raffle supports a different charity each week: Samaritans; St Francis Hospice; Brentwood Catholic Youth Service (BCYS); SMILE; Catholic Fellowship and Parish St Vincent de Paul (SVP). It is a wonderful lunch to meet new people, and to invite friends and neighbours as a way to see the parish in action. All of it as an excellent way to raise vital funds for charity.

Practical action and giving throughout Lent

In addition to the parish charitable giving, Lent is a good time to look wider, and perhaps find a charity to support for the rest of the year. Commit to a daily “good deed.” Or discover fresh information about the work of charities you have not come across before. It is spring time – why not dive in to something that sustains the world God has given us.

Our Diocesan Caritas has – as ever – done a great job of collating different ideas and resources: <https://www.caritasbrentwood.org/lent/>

Part of the Caritas resources is the creation of the Lenten calendar, responding to needs highlighted by the S.M.I.L.E. charity at 40 High Street. Collect one item each day of Lent, and bring to the church on Palm Sunday weekend. There are copies of the calendar at the back of the church, or in the Lent section of the parish website.

The Easter Triduum

The “three days” that are the most sacred in the Church Year. Come each day, if you can.

This year, we are delighted that five adults in the parish are on the journey to become Confirmed members of the Catholic Church; please pray for Chantelle, Doreen, Lauren, Sophie and Yevheniia, and join them in celebrating during the Easter Vigil.

Holy Thursday

Thursday 2nd April *7pm Mass of the Lord’s Supper
Followed by watching at the Altar of Repose until 10.00pm

Good Friday

Friday 3rd April 10am Discovering Holy Week for primary school age children
11.30am Prayer with town centre churches, Market Place
*3pm Service of the Passion of the Lord
5pm Stations of the Cross in Polish
Polska Wspólnota serdecznie zaprasza na nabożeństwo Drogi Krzyżowej w Wielki Piątek o godz. 17.00.

Easter

Saturday 4th April 7.30pm-10pm Easter Vigil, with music led by the choir. The Vigil includes the Baptism and Confirmation of adults who are becoming members of the Catholic Church; do pray for them.

Sunday 5th April 8am Dawn Mass for Easter – quiet, joyful and prayerful
*9.30am Family Mass, with music led by young adults
11.30am Mass with music led by the choir

***Livestream: Holy Thursday 7pm, Good Friday 3pm and Easter Sunday 9.30am**

For more information have a look at the dedicated website page:

www.stedwards-romford.org.uk/lent-and-easter/ - live from Ash Wednesday