

In Touch

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)
31st January/1st February 2026
No. 1456

Dear Parishioners

I hope that you and your families are all well. I send you all my prayers.

This Sunday we are asked to pray for **racial justice**: *Whoever loves God must also love his brother*" (1 John 4:21)

We offer below some reflections by Jonathan Kuttub, writing for a group called FOSNA. (Please see below for their mission statement.) He begins with a reflection prompted by the celebration of Martin Luther King Day in the United States. He writes: *As I watched the programmes and listened again to his speeches, one thing that struck me is this: MLK considered the problems of race and oppression largely in spiritual terms, and the solutions he proposed were equally spiritual. He stated that the issues were not simply political, social or economic, and therefore many of the different solutions proposed were inadequate. He saw that there was something seriously wrong, spiritually, with the entire system, a spiritual sickness which needed to be fought. The entirety of American society, he felt, was truly sick and no progress was possible until it was healed of the sickness of racism, of the ideology that white people were somehow superior to Black people and whose superiority needed to be maintained through segregation, suppression and the denial of political power or voting rights.*

Reflecting on this, I can also see that much of the problem in Palestine also needs to be understood in spiritual terms, and that political solutions necessarily fail if they do not address such maladies. While discussion often centres on issues of land, borders and demography, the issues run far deeper. Israeli Jews are badly traumatized by millennia of discrimination and oppression primarily in Christian Europe culminating in the horror of the Holocaust. Zionism offers a "solution" to the problem of anti-Jewish bigotry based on brute force, overwhelming power, and the creation of a Jewish state wherein Jews are dominant and superior to all others. It is a state which needs to be built at the expense of the local population, and which can only be maintained through overwhelming force, nothing else.

A sense of racial superiority seems to be a part in many of the conflicts in our world: We might think especially of Sudan and of Burma. Please pray that God's spirit of peace will move the hearts of the leaders of our world.

I send my very best wishes. *Fr Paul*

Friends of Sabeel—North America Mission Statement

Friends of Sabeel—North America (FOSNA) is dedicated to the support of Sabeel, an ecumenical liberation theology movement founded by Palestinian Christians in the Holy Land. As friends of Sabeel, we share its mission to amplify the voice of Palestinian Christians and to work with peace builders of all faiths and convictions who stand with the oppressed and who work for a just peace in Palestine/Israel. FOSNA challenges distortions of the Bible and theologies that lead to violence and racism, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and condemns all acts of violence, whether done by states, individuals or groups. We organize and participate in educational events and nonviolent advocacy campaigns that advance the cause of peace and justice for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Mass Times at Worth Abbey: Sundays - 9.30am (family Mass, with choir) Mondays to Fridays - 5.30 pm Saturdays - 9am and 5pm (First Mass of Sunday), Feast Days 5.30pm Days of Obligation - see website . Second Collection: Racial Justice Sunday	Inside this week's In Touch... ✓ Prayers and Mass Readings, page 2 ✓ New! Prayer for Racial Justice Sunday, page 2 ✓ Worth Parish Community Billboard, pages 3-4 ✓ Parish Activities and Announcements, pages 4-5 ✓ Other Activities and Announcements, pages 5-6 ✓ New! Pope Leo on Technology, page 6 ✓ New! Community of Saints – Saint Charbel page 6-8
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Mass Readings: (1 February – 8 February)

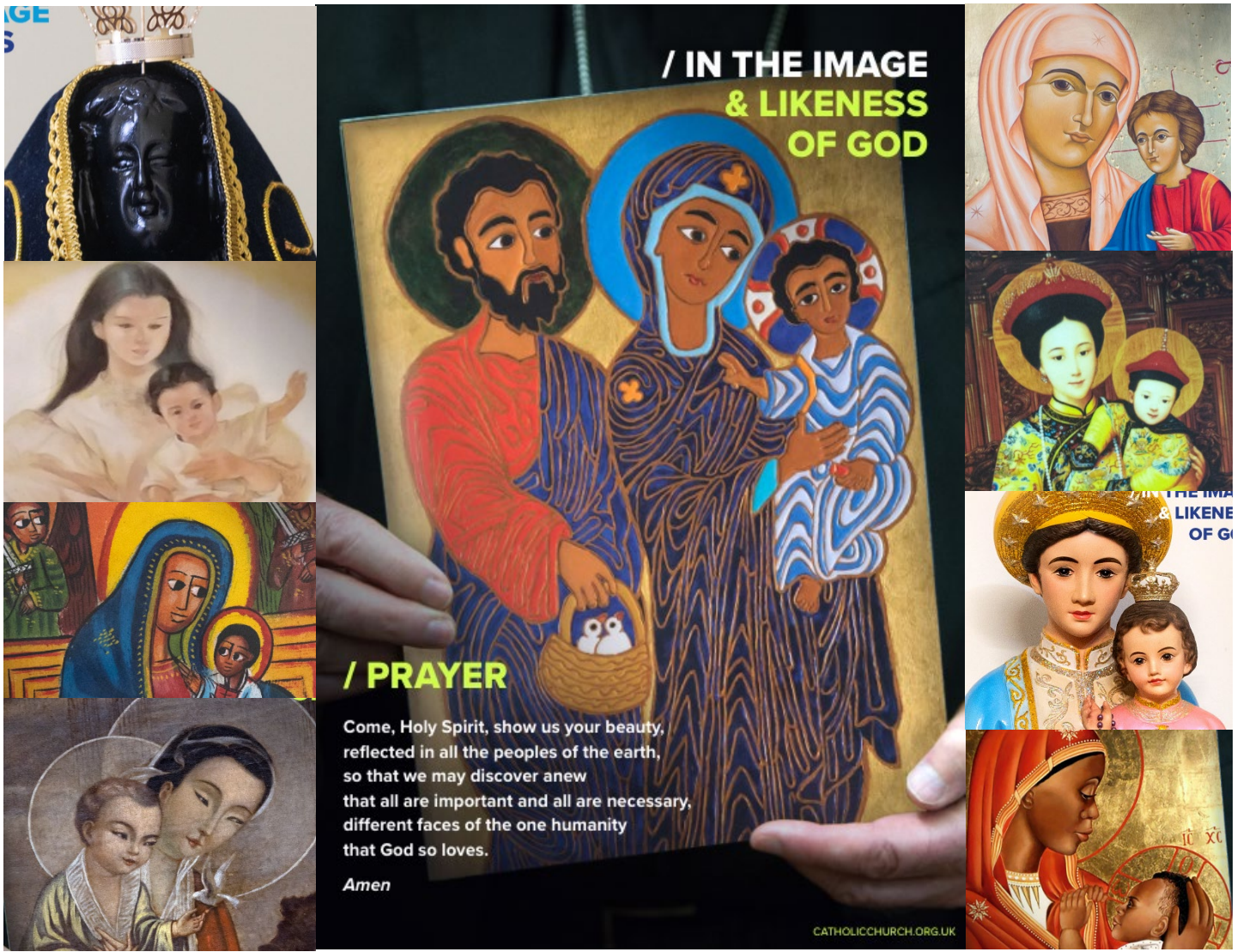
Sun 1 Feb 2026: 1st Reading – Zephaniah 2: 3, 3:12-13 2nd Reading – 1 Corinthians 1:26-31 Gospel – Matthew 5:1-12a
Mon – Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 2:22-40 **Thu** – 1 Kings 2:1-4, 10-12; Mark 6:7-13
Tue – 2 Samuel 18:9-10, 14b, 24-25a, 30-19:3, 17-19; Mark 5:21-43 **Fri** – Sirach 47:2-11; Mark 6:14-29
Wed – 2 Samuel 24:2, 9-17; Mark 6:1-6 **Sat** – 1 Kings 3:4-13, 10-12; Mark 6:30-34
Sunday, 8 February: 1st Reading – Isaiah 58:7-10 2nd Reading – 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 Gospel – Matthew 5:13-16

Prayers

Please pray for the sick of our parish: John Maher, Elfriede Huckstep, John Mulhall, Sandra Flexman, Margaret Ogden, Anne Wise, Mandy Horton, Patricia Horsman, Stella Higham, Jim Tierney, Krysia Smith, Catherine Elia, Patrick Cambridge, Barry Wingrove, Rowena Leaney, Beryl McNulty, Lin Eade, Jelly Labto, Sheila Charman, Hal Clarke, Gillian Maher, Pamela Bagwell, Terry and Susan Scoble, Sue Pearson, John and Sue Rutherford, Demelza Waring, Liz Hicklin, Mike and Jill Carter and Laura Rawlinson. And please pray for the healing of our Diocese Youth Adviser Lizzie Wakeling.

Please continue praying for the souls of Pope Francis; and for Fr. Kevin Taggart and parishioners Tony Hicklin and Peter Annabring, who died recently. Please pray for the souls of Mike Brayshaw, Maurice Johnson, Mrs Rutherston, Alice Yaldren, Joseph Curran, John Hull, Ernest Walker, Rosemary Jansen, Violet Ferguson, Dom Hugh O'Neill, Dom Oliver Brayden, Michael Godfrey, Elizabeth Fresne, Edgar Stanford, Josephine Chamberlain, Eda Dunbar, Joan Witham, Jim McClusky, Fra Andrew Bertie and Angus MacDonald whose anniversaries are this week. ***Eternal rest grant unto them, oh Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.***

Prayer for Racial Justice Sunday



**/ IN THE IMAGE
& LIKENESS
OF GOD**

/ PRAYER

Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,
so that we may discover anew
that all are important and all are necessary,
different faces of the one humanity
that God so loves.

Amen

CATHOLICCHURCH.ORG.UK

Worth Parish Community Billboard

Worth Abbey Pilgrims Dates for Your Diary - Saturday 14th February 2026

We are very pleased to share the dates for our upcoming events in the first half of 2026. Please make sure to add them to your diary! We begin our programme of events in 2026 with a Lent Talk from Abbot Mark, an event you will not want to miss. Abbot Mark is an exceptional speaker, and the feedback from those who attended his previous talks has been outstanding.

Facing What Is: Lent, Listening, and Hope in a Time of Change

At the beginning of Lent, this Saturday morning of reflection at Worth Abbey draws on the wisdom of the desert and the monastic tradition to explore how Christian faith learns to tell the truth, about ourselves, the Church, and God, without losing hope. Rooted in Scripture and monastic spirituality, this morning invites us to discover Lent not as escape or self-improvement, but as a gentle and faithful way of coming closer to God in a time of change.

The morning will follow the familiar structure of our Lent and Advent talks:

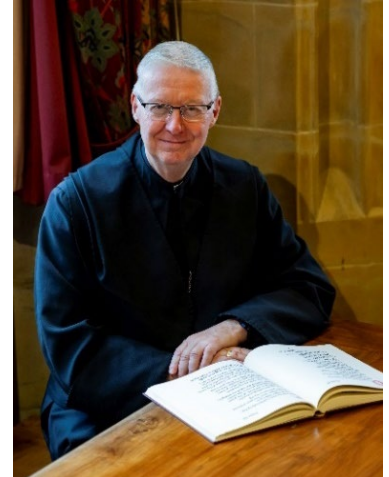
10:30 am – Coffee and registration

11:00 am – Prompt start for the talk in the Unity Room

After the talk, you are welcome to join us for lunch (available at a small charge), followed by

1:00 pm – Midday Prayer with Abbot Mark and the community

To reserve your place, please email kohara@worth.org.uk and let us know whether you would like to stay for lunch. For more information visit <https://worthabbey.net/latest-news/>



Worth Pro Earth - Listen to the Podcast

One of our parishioners, Paul Mallinder, has been working with Worth Pro Earth to trial short podcasts covering some of the important work taking place.

We are now pleased to share a link and would ask parishioners to follow the link and listen to the podcast.

The "AI Worth Listening" YouTube Channel link is: <https://www.youtube.com/@AIWorthListening>

Did you listen? What did you think?

This has been generated using AI. Do you think we could use AI for other things?

Would you like other types of podcast?

Would you like to be able to listen to any parts of InTouch?

Please let us know what you think.

Contact Charles McCarthy charles_mccarthy@hotmail.co.uk



WE NEED YOUR FEEDBACK!

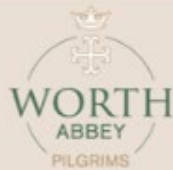
Do you have a spare 5 minutes? We would love to get some feedback on whether you have interacted with Worth Pro Earth. Please follow the link below and tell us your thoughts!

[Worth Pro Earth feedback form – Fill in form](#)

Thank you for your parish's kind support of Sea Sunday 2025 from Stella Maris

Thank you very much to all at Our Lady Help of Christians Crawley parish for your kind support of the work of Stella Maris (formerly the Apostleship of the Sea) through our Sea Sunday 2025 appeal. We are most grateful for your parish's donation.

The generosity shown by your parishioners will help ensure that seafarers and fishers in this country and around the world continue to receive the care and support that they need. For fishers and seafarers, life at sea can be extremely challenging. In current times, it is particularly perilous for those who travel through the Black or Red Seas due to the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. Our port chaplains and volunteer ship visitors provide a beacon of hope, demonstrating the love and care the Good Samaritan showed to the stranger that he found upon the road. We offer welcome, support and friendship to seafarers and fishers, bringing hope to those who feel forgotten or lonely and reminding them they are not alone – *Tim Hill, CEO/ National Director – Stella Maris*



WORTH ABBEY PILGRIMS DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2026

LENT TALK

A time of preparation for our hearts and minds as the Lenten season begins. Following the format of our Advent Talks, we turn our attention to the desert season of fasting and repentance.

Saturday, 14th February 10.30am



MONASTIC WISDOM FOR TODAY'S WORLD

Join us for a retreat talk at our Retreat Centre. This talk will feature monastic insights shared by Abbot Mark Barrett, Abbot Christopher Jamison, and Fr Luke Jolly, former Abbot of Worth.

Saturday, 11th April



COME AND SING

Back by Popular Demand! Our much-loved *Come and Sing* returns this year – a day of uplifting music and collaboration. You will not want to miss it.

Saturday, 18th April



CELEBRATE CORPUS CHRISTI WITH US

Join us for Mass, a procession of the blessed sacrament, and a community gathering as we honour this feast. Bring a picnic, enjoy the beauty of the Abbey estate, and afterwards explore the grounds with family or friends.

Sunday, 7th June



For more information on all our events, and guidance on how to register visit the News section of our website

www.worthabbey.net/latest-news/



Scan the QR code to join our mailing list.

Parish Activities and Announcements

DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES...

Sunday 1st February - Racial Justice Sunday. There will be an optional collection after mass this weekend for the Catholic Association for Racial Justice. Medals of St Stephen given to servers

Monday 2nd February - Presentation of the Lord, Candlemas Mass at 5.30pm

Sunday 8th February - There will be a second collection for the **Lourdes Pilgrimage Fund** (Gift Aid)

Wednesday, 18th Feb - Ash Wednesday, Mass at 5.30pm (no evening mass)

AND OUR REGULAR ACTIVITIES...

Sacrament of Reconciliation – Sundays 08.45–09.15am in the church, or by appointment with Fr. Paul.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament – Wednesdays 2:30-3:30pm; Sundays 6.30pm after vespers, and every first Sunday of the month, 10:30am (right after Mass)–11am

Rosary Group – Mondays 7:10-8pm in the church after vespers. Please contact Rachel Davies: 07801 696354.

Lectio Divina – Tuesdays at 8pm via Zoom. Please contact Jenny Chapman jenny_chapman@sky.com. All are welcome!

Christian Meditation - Unity Room, 7-8pm, 4th Wednesday of the month

Vigil for Vocations – Every first Friday of the month at 8.30-9pm, after compline.

Bible Study Group – Mondays, 11am at St Benedict's (Parish Office). Please contact the Parish Office.

Family Faith Formation – Monthly, every 3rd Sunday. **New parishioners, all families welcome!**

Car Parking on Sunday mornings:

Please do keep the parking spaces adjacent the church piazza, for less mobile parishioners. Could we also keep the parking area directly outside of Compass House free for residents and groups using the building. Many thanks.



Worth Intercessory Team (WIT):

Soon, we hope to start a new group of prayer warriors. We'll meet online via Microsoft Teams at 8pm on the first Wednesday of the month (45 min - 1hr), creating a welcoming space to pray together. Would you like to join? Please sign up and we'll get this prayer group started.

This is a chance to grow in prayer, deepen parish connection, and make a difference—without leaving your home. If you'd like to join, please email worthabbeyparish@gmail.com. Come join us. We look forward to praying with you!

***"For where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in their midst."* – Mt 18:20**

Would anyone like to learn more about the Catholic Faith?

Please get in touch to join a group which meets on Tuesday evenings, from 7.30 pm.

If you know of anyone who might be interested, please pass on this invitation.
Please contact the office.



Other Activities and Announcements

Mental Health Awareness training - Saturday 7 February 2026

10am-3pm at the St Philip Howard Centre, Crawley

Cost: £40

One of the challenges that we are experiencing in our modern world is the growing number of people, of all ages, experiencing the darkness and challenge of various mental health conditions. Thanks to the support of Mental Health England, we are able to offer this training, to explore the realities, symptoms and impact of living with these many debilitating conditions. Thanks to the support of the trainer, we are able to highly subsidise the event. Tickets are now £40 per delegate (usual price £120).



To register scan the QR code or go to the Events page of the Diocesan website. If you have any questions about this course, do not hesitate to contact Simon South, Marriage & Family Life Adviser at simon.south@abdiocese.org.uk

Applications for the Arundel & Brighton Lourdes Pilgrimage this July are now open!

The Diocese takes more than 700 pilgrims to visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes each year, including young people, families, and those who are sick, disabled, frail or elderly and need our help to make the journey.

Is Our Lady calling you to Lourdes this summer?

To find out more about our pilgrimage week in France [click here](#) and visit the diocesan website (<https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/lourdes>)



Pope Leo: Technology must serve the human person, not replace it

In his message for the 60th World Day of Social Communications, Pope Leo XIV highlights the importance of ensuring that technological innovation, particularly artificial intelligence, serves the human person rather than replacing or diminishing human dignity.

Face and voice are unique traits of every person and form the foundation of human identity and relationships. Pope Leo XIV focuses his message on digital communication and artificial intelligence, highlighting the need to protect human dignity in an age increasingly shaped by technological innovation.

Human beings, the Pope recalls, are created in the image and likeness of God and called into relationship through the Word. Preserving human faces and voices, therefore, means preserving the divine imprint present in each person and upholding the irreplaceable vocation of every human life. *“Preserving human faces and voices, therefore, means preserving this mark, this indelible reflection of God’s love. We are not a species composed of predefined biochemical formulas. Each of us possesses an irreplaceable and inimitable vocation, that originates from our own lived experience and becomes manifest through interaction with others,”* he writes.



The Pope warns that digital technologies, especially artificial intelligence systems capable of simulating voices, faces, and emotions, risk altering essential dimensions of human communication. The challenge, he stresses, is not primarily technological but anthropological; it is a matter of protecting human identity and authentic relationships.

He draws attention to the impact of social media algorithms that prioritise rapid emotional reactions over reflection, weakening critical thinking and fostering social polarisation. *“By grouping people into bubbles of easy consensus and easy outrage, these algorithms reduce our ability to listen and think critically, and increase social polarisation,”* the Pope explains. The growing reliance on artificial intelligence for information, creativity, and decision-making, he adds, also risks diminishing analytical skills, imagination, and personal responsibility.

Pope Leo highlights the difficulty of distinguishing between reality and simulation in digital environments, where automated agents and chatbots can influence public debate and individual choices, shaping emotional responses and personal interactions. Such dynamics, he notes, may affect not only individuals but also social and cultural life.

To address these challenges, the Pope identifies responsibility, cooperation, and education as essential pillars. Technology developers, political authorities, media professionals, and educators are called to promote transparency, safeguard human dignity, and ensure the integrity of information. *“The task laid before us is not to stop digital innovation, but rather to guide it and to be aware of its ambivalent nature. It is up to each of us to raise our voice in defence of human persons, so that we can truly assimilate these tools as allies,”* Pope Leo says.

Collaboration among institutions and sectors, he writes, is required to guide digital innovation toward the common good. *“No sector can tackle the challenge of steering digital innovation and AI governance alone. Safeguards must therefore be put in place. All stakeholders — from the tech industry to legislators, from creative companies to academia, from artists to journalists and educators — must be involved in building and implementing informed and responsible digital citizenship,”* the Pope insists.

Finally, Pope Leo underlines the importance of education in media, information, and artificial intelligence literacy, fostering critical awareness, protecting personal identity, and supporting a responsible culture of communication. *“Just as the industrial revolution called for basic literacy to enable people to respond to new developments, so too does the digital revolution require digital literacy (along with humanistic and cultural education) to understand how algorithms shape our perception of reality, how AI biases work, what mechanisms determine the presence of certain content in our feeds, what the economic principles and models of the AI economy are and how they might change,”* he writes.

Renewed care for face and voice, he concludes, remains central to preserving the human dimension of communication and orienting technological progress to the service of the human person. *“We need faces and voices to speak for people again. We need to cherish the gift of communication as the deepest truth of humanity, to which all technological innovation should also be oriented,”* the Pope concludes.

Source: vaticannews.va

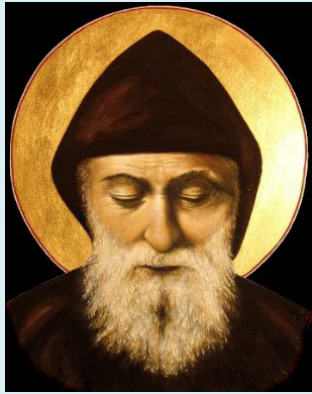
Community of Saints

Hello fellow parishioners! We are trying out a new format of our features on Saints. Last year, we tried read-along ones for the littlest of our parishioners, and this year, we are adding a version also for the adults. As In Touch is a community newsletter for you and with you, we do ask that you please send us feedback. Would you like to continue seeing more features of saints? Are there other features you would like to see in our Community Billboard section? Please email worthabbeyparish@gmail.com. We would love to hear from you!

Saint Charbel: A Hidden Monk and a Living Stream of Healing

Saint Charbel Makhlouf (1828–1898) lived a life that was almost completely hidden from the world. A Maronite monk and later a hermit in the mountains of Lebanon, he spent his days in silence, fasting, and deep devotion to the Eucharist. During his lifetime, he was known simply as a holy, prayerful man. Only after his death did the extraordinary reach of his intercession begin to emerge.

In the years following his burial, a mysterious light was reported over his grave, and pilgrims soon began arriving at his monastery in Annaya. What followed has continued for more than a century: **over 30,000 healings**, carefully recorded by the monks who guard his tomb. Because of this, the faithful often refer to Saint Charbel as the “*doctor of the sky*.”



Remarkably, these healings are not confined to the past. In early 2026, two new cases were officially recorded — one in the USA and one in Lebanon — each involving women whose recoveries could not be explained medically. In the USA, a woman suffering from a severe post-surgical infection endured nearly ten months of an open, unhealed wound. Surgery had been scheduled as a last resort. After prayer and the use of blessed oil associated with Saint Charbel — an ancient Eastern Christian practice still observed today — the wound healed completely, and the surgery was cancelled. In Lebanon, another woman was diagnosed with a tumour on her spinal column that doctors said required surgical removal. On the eve of her scheduled admission, she prayed simply before an image of Saint Charbel. The following day, a repeat MRI revealed that the tumour had entirely disappeared. Her physician stated there was no medical explanation for such an outcome.

Stories like these are not isolated. They echo thousands of others — physical healings, emotional restoration, renewed faith — offered by people of different cultures and even different religions, all drawn to this quiet saint.

Saint Charbel reminds parents and families that God still works powerfully through prayer, humility, and trust. His life teaches us that holiness does not need a stage, and that even a hidden life, offered completely to God, can become a *river of mercy* for the whole world.

Story Time with our Little Saints

Saint Charbel: The Quiet Saint Who Helped People Feel Better

Once upon a time, in a country of tall mountains and cedar trees called Lebanon, there lived a quiet little boy named Youssef.

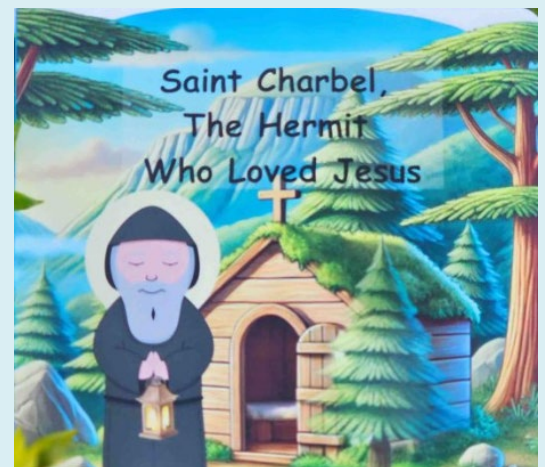
Youssef loved being outdoors. He liked the wind in the trees. He liked the sound of sheep bells. And most of all, he liked being quiet with God.

When Youssef grew up, he decided to give his whole life to God. He became a monk (like our lovely monks at Worth!) and was given a new name: Charbel.

Saint Charbel lived in a stone monastery high in the mountains. The walls were thick. The nights were cold. And it was very, very quiet. Charbel liked it that way.

Every day, Saint Charbel prayed. He prayed slowly. He prayed kindly. He prayed with his whole heart. He loved Jesus in the Eucharist more than anything else.

Sometimes, Charbel lived all alone in a little stone house with hardly any furniture at all. No TV. No toys. No noise.



Just God. And prayer. Peace and quiet.

When Saint Charbel died, something amazing happened.
A bright light shone over his grave!
People came to look. They came to pray.
They came because something special was happening! God had a surprise!

Soon, people who were very sick began to feel better after asking Saint Charbel to pray for them.
Some people could not walk... and then they could.
Some people were very ill... and then they were well.
So many people were helped – thousands and thousands enjoyed God's miracles!

Saint Charbel never spoke much when he was alive.
But after his death, God used him to help people all over the world.
Today, children and grown-ups still ask for Saint Charbel's help.
They ask him to help them trust God.
They ask him to help sick people.
They ask him to help their families.

Saint Charbel reminds us that you don't have to be loud to be brave.
You don't have to be famous to be holy.
And even quiet prayers can do very big things.

Goodnight, little one.
May God watch over you and keep you safe and loved. 🌙



Our Parish is committed to safeguarding children and vulnerable groups within its community. Safe-guarding reps are Charles and Ann McCarthy.

Report safeguarding concerns to the Diocese 01293 651148 or via email: sg1.worth@abdiocese.org.uk



At **In Touch**, we'd love to hear from you—what you've enjoyed reading, what you'd like to see more (or even less!) of, and any ideas for improvement. This is our parish community newsletter, and our hope is that it offers both inspiration and a useful service.

If you have any announcements, articles, or activities you would like us to publish in In Touch we need you to send them the Friday before the intended publication date please.

Please do get in touch! worthabbeyparish@gmail.com

Parish Priests: Fr Rod Jones and Fr Paul Fleetwood. To contact both, please call the Parish Office: 01342 710313

Parish Office: Maria Stribbling - 01342 710313

Parish Office Email: parish@worth.org.uk **Parish Website:** www.worthabbeyparish.co.uk

Nighttime emergencies only: 01342 710331

Cheques to be made payable to Worth Abbey Parish **Online banking payments** - Account 61076892 Sort Code 40-05-20.

Safe Spaces: 0300 303 1056 **Web:** www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/ **Email:** safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk

If you are unable to go to Mass and would like to receive Communion at home, or if you have prayer intentions, please contact Fr Paul