



# In Touch

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)  
7<sup>th</sup> February/ 8<sup>th</sup> February 2026  
No. 1457

## Dear Parishioners

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

This weekend we are asked to pray for victims of trafficking – i.e. slaves. When I worked in the chaplaincies at the Immigration Removal Centres at Gatwick Airport, I met a number of people who had been trafficked into Britain and held as slaves. The root of the problem is the poverty which is found in so many countries, and which makes many people desperate to escape to a better life, frequently hoping for better conditions for their children. This circumstance is exploited by criminals, who lure them away with promises of jobs. (It is a more attractive form of crime for the perpetrators than trafficking drugs or arms, as it is more easily concealed.) It is estimated that there are eight thousand criminals involved in trafficking in the UK, and a recent count showed that 17,000 victims were discovered in the course of one year, of whom nearly half were children. Although many come from abroad, especially Albania and Eritrea, there are many British men and women working here in slavery. The organisation Medaille, which is supported by the Catholic Church, write: *Modern slavery is a crime in which people are exploited through fraud, deception, and coercion. It takes many forms, such as trafficking, forced labour, and domestic servitude. Victims are often trapped by their traffickers using various tactics, including confinement, violence, and the withholding of wages and documents. Modern slavery can happen in any community and often goes unnoticed, with victims working in various industries, including private residences. The hidden and complex nature of modern slavery makes it difficult to determine its true scale. Victims are often unseen, unable to leave their situation, or too scared to come forward.* Medaille remind us that we all have a part to play in discovering slavery and helping to set them free. Signs of which we should be aware include: Having no control of their identification documents, such as their passport; working long hours in harsh or unsafe conditions; living in dirty, cramped or overcrowded accommodation; not being able to move around freely and being under someone else's control.

Do please pray for all victims of slavery, and for those who work on their behalf. Please consider volunteering for Medaille: see their website <https://www.medaille-trust.org.uk/>

I send my very best wishes. Fr Paul

<p><b>Mass Times at Worth Abbey:</b> <b>Sundays</b> - 9.30am (family Mass, with choir) <b>Mondays to Fridays</b> - 5.30 pm <b>Saturdays</b> - 9am and 5pm (First Mass of Sunday), Feast Days 5.30pm <b>Days of Obligation</b> - see website</p> <p><b>Second Collection:</b> Lourdes Pilgrimage Fund (Gift Aid)</p>	<p><b>Inside this week's In Touch...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Prayers and Mass Readings, page 2</li><li>✓ Worth Parish Community Billboard, pages 2-5</li><li>✓ <b>New!</b> The Beatitudes and Who is Blessed? /Induction into the Guild of St Stephen, pages 2-3</li><li>✓ Parish Activities and Announcements, pages 5-6</li><li>✓ Other Activities and Announcements, pages 6-7</li><li>✓ <b>New!</b> What is the latest on the Assisted Dying Bill? Pages 7-8</li></ul>
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### **Mass Readings: (8 February – 15 February)**

**Sun 8 Feb 2026:** 1st Reading – Isaiah 58:7-10      2nd Reading – 1 Corinthians 2:1-5      Gospel – Matthew 5:13-16  
**Mon** – 1 Kings 8:1-7, 9-13; Mark 6:53-56      **Thu** – 1 Kings 11:4-13; Mark 7:24-30  
**Tue** – 1 Kings 8:22-23, 27-30; Mark 7:1-13      **Fri** – 1 Kings 11:29-32, 12:19; Mark 7:31-37  
**Wed** – 1 Kings 10:1-10; Mark 7:14-23      **Sat** – 1 Kings 12:26-32, 13:33-34; Mark 8:1-10  
**Sunday, 15 February:** 1<sup>st</sup> Reading – Sirach 15:15-20      2<sup>nd</sup> Reading – 1 Corinthians 2:6-10      Gospel – Matthew 5:17-37

### **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. Please also 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 Eddie Flanagan, Beatrice Green, Bruce Lagden, Anne Powys-Lybbe, Peggy Bonner, Peter Whelpton, Alison Rawlins, Tigs Nott (Wheeler), Eamon Michael Litten, Charles Peile and Marjorie Beck whose anniversaries are this week. ***Eternal rest grant unto them, oh Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.***

## Worth Parish Community Billboard

### **The Beatitudes and Who is Blessed? Abbott Mark's Homily last Sunday**

Today's readings present us with a really good question. Not the question, who is strong or who is successful, but rather who is blessed?

St. Paul gives us a lens through which to hear the answer in the beatitudes of Matthew's gospel. He reminds the Corinthians and us that not many of them are wise, powerful, or well-born. God didn't wait until they were impressive. God chose them just as they are. And still does.

Paul is not trying to embarrass the Corinthians or you and me. He's trying to free us all. To free us from the exhausting and impossible work of proving ourselves. To free us from the lie that God's love depends on our moral strength, or our education, our reputation, or our success.

It is due to God that you are in Christ Jesus, says St. Paul. Everything begins there. Everything returns there.

So, with that perspective in mind, we climb the hillside of the mountain of the beatitudes with Jesus. The beatitudes are not a list of spiritual achievements. They're not goals for the especially holy. They are a description of the kind of people God is already at work in and usually working without applause or even recognition.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, we read, not those who have mastered humility, but those who know their need. Those who've stopped pretending they can save themselves.

Blessed are the meek, not the weak, but those who've laid down the need to dominate in a world that prizes being loud, being noticed, where meekness can look like failure. But Paul says it's not.

Blessed are those who mourn. These are they who don't have everything neatly resolved. Those of us who feel the weight of loss, injustice, or regret, grief. Those who haven't numbed themselves. Those who've not rushed to easy answers. God comes close to them.

Again and again, the beatitudes name the people who might be overlooked, or pitied, or dismissed. And again and again, Jesus calls them blessed. Not someday, not after they improve, but now.

Paul's message makes clear why: because God's power does not depend on human strength. God's wisdom doesn't mirror human cleverness.

God is doing something altogether different. Now, this reality is both comforting and honestly, a bit unsettling. Comforting because it means we don't have to become someone else in order to be loved by God. Unsettling because it asks us to let go of the ways we usually measure ourselves and other people.

How do we apply this to ourselves here and now today? Well, first, honesty with ourselves. The beatitudes invite us to notice who and where we actually are. Not the version of ourselves we present on a good day, but the real one. Where do we feel poor in spirit? Where in all honesty are we tired or anxious? Or grieving or unsure? Those places in our lives are not obstacles to God; they are the very places where God is already at work.

Secondly, this gospel challenges our ideas of success. Many of us carry quiet assumptions about what a good Christian should look like—calm, confident, sorted. You know that kind of thing. But the beatitudes tell a different story. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, not those who think they have it already.

Blessed are the merciful, not those who go around keeping score.



Blessed are the peacemakers, not the ones who always win.

Then thirdly, the beatitudes reshape how we see one another. If God chooses what the world overlooks, then no one is insignificant or disposable. The Church especially, is not a gathering of the impressive, but of the chosen. And that includes, I'm afraid, the people who frustrate us, the people who struggle, the people who doubt. It includes you, and it includes me.

The prophet Zephaniah in the first reading spoke of a people humble and lowly who seek refuge in the name of the Lord—that is the community God delights in. Not the perfect or powerful, but those who are faithful in their need.

At the end of the beatitudes, Jesus doesn't say "try harder". He simply describes the life that flows from trusting God rather than investing in ourselves.

Paul gives it one final turn, "if anyone boasts, let him boast in the Lord Jesus." Today, let us heed that invitation and hear that Good news.



### **Induction into the Guild of St Stephen**

Last Sunday, our parish was delighted to witness the induction of Anna, Elliot, Nick, Norbert and Zita into the Guild of St Stephen, marking an important step in their ministry as altar servers.

The Guild of St Stephen is an Archconfraternity of the Catholic Church, established around 1901 at Westminster Cathedral and recognised by the Holy See. It is the only altar serving organisation in the world formally recognised by Rome, linking parishes and schools across the globe in a shared commitment to reverent service at the altar.

The Guild has three central aims: to encourage the highest standards of liturgical serving, to deepen servers' understanding so they may serve with greater reverence and prayerfulness, and to unite altar servers for mutual support and encouragement.

Members of the Guild wear a special medal when serving at Mass. Its symbols point to Christ and faithful service: the Greek letters XP (Christ), the crown of victory, and the palm branches of martyrdom. The medal bears the Guild's motto, *Cui servire regnare est* — "To serve Christ is to reign."

We congratulate our new Guild members and keep them in our prayers as they continue to serve at the altar.

### **Worth Abbey Pilgrims Dates for Your Diary - Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> 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:

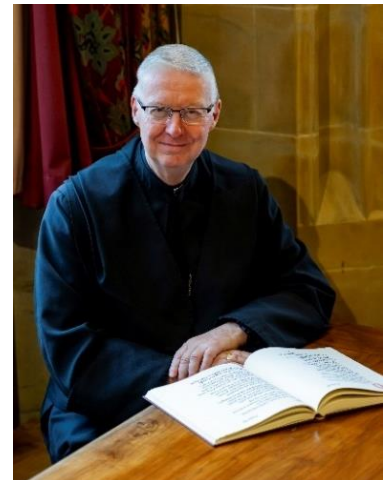
10:30 am – Coffee and registration

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](mailto: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 podcasts?  
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](mailto: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 from Friends of the Holy Land**

Dear Our Lady Help of Christians Parish

Thanks to you, an exceptional £163,369.45 has been raised in support of Christians in the Holy Land.

Today, many families continue to face immense challenges - economic hardship, uncertainty and the long-lasting effects of conflict. Your generosity is making a real and lasting difference, helping to provide food, medical care, trauma support, education, and practical assistance to those who are striving to remain in the land where our faith was born.



Your support offers more than essential aid. It brings comfort, dignity and hope to families who need to know they are not forgotten and that they are held in the prayers and hearts of the wider Christian community.

Thank you for standing with the people of the Holy Land and for your continued commitment.

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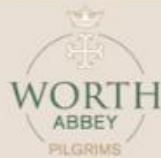
Thank you for standing with the people of the Holy Land and for your continued commitment.

We will continue to keep you updated on the situation in the Holy Land.  
Look out for our upcoming Lent prayer campaign. I am praying that you will join us this Lent as we remember our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land.

With gratitude and blessings,

**Brendan Metcalfe**  
CEO,  
*Friends of the Holy Land*





## 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/](http://www.worthabbey.net/latest-news/)



Scan the QR code to join our mailing list.

## Parish Activities and Announcements

### DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES...

**This Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March** – Brunch in Compass House at 11am.

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March** – Family Faith Formation after Mass

**Wednesday, 18<sup>th</sup> Feb** - Ash Wednesday, Mass at 5.30pm (no evening mass)

**Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March** – Family Stations of the Cross at 10:30am

**Holy Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March** – Service of Reconciliation at 7:30pm

**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](mailto:jenny_chapman@sky.com). All are welcome!

**Christian Meditation** - Unity Room, 7-8pm, 4<sup>th</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Abbey Parish - Summary of collection for January 2026	
<b>Offertory General</b>	<b>Standing Orders</b>
<b>£1,166</b>	<b>£6,048</b>



**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](mailto: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 get in touch with the office.*



**Other Activities and Announcements**

**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>)



### CAFOD - Sign up for daily Lent emails

CAFOD daily Lent emails of prayer and reflection will offer an opportunity to pause, reflect, pray and take action as we prepare for Easter. Join us as we journey through Lent with our global family. Our Lent calendar emails offer daily prayers and reflections through your Lenten journey, alongside information about ways in which you and the wider CAFOD family can support our ongoing activities.

The daily emails start on Ash Wednesday and end on Easter Day. This email subscription also auto-renews for succeeding Lent seasons, but you can unsubscribe at any time.

Please follow the following link to sign up - [Lent calendar with daily prayers and reflection](#)



## Lent 2026 Bible Studies

WEEKLY STUDIES ON THE LENTEN SUNDAY GOSPELS

**Starts Tues 17th February, 2026**

6 Tuesdays | 7pm-8:15pm (UK time)

17 Feb 24 Feb 3 Mar 10 Mar 17 Mar 24 Mar

**FREE**  
COURSE

**LIVE**  
STREAMED

Breaking open each Lenten Sunday Gospel  
before attending Sunday Mass.  
**The Holy Mass will come alive in a new way!**

Join Catholic speaker  
**Mauro Iannicelli** for  
live-streamed talks with  
engaging interaction



Register Today:

[comeandsee.org/lent26](https://comeandsee.org/lent26)

Or register  
using the  
QR code:



### Lent 2026 Bible Studies

You're warmly invited to join the **Lent 2026 Bible Studies**, a FREE, six-week journey presented **LIVE ONLINE** by Mauro Iannicelli of Come & See Catholic Formation Ministries.

We will lead you through an in-depth exploration of the six Lenten Sunday Gospels, preparing you to hear them proclaimed at Mass.

**INFO & REGISTRATION:** [comeandsee.org/lent26](https://comeandsee.org/lent26)

- Breaking open each Lenten Sunday Gospel
- 'Expository preaching' teaching method
- Life Application Questions
- **The Holy Mass will come alive in a new way!**

**STARTS:** Tues 17th February 2026 @ 7pm UK Time

#### 6 Tuesday Sessions:

Tues 17 Feb | Tues 24 Feb | Tues 03 Mar  
Tues 10 Mar | Tues 17 Mar | Tues 24 Mar

**TIME:** 7pm - 8:15pm UK time

We hope to see you online.

Many thanks & God bless,

Mauro & Janet Iannicelli  
**Come & See Catholic Formation Ministries**

## Social Action Activities for Parishioners

### What is the latest on the Assisted Dying Bill?

BBC News reports that a leading supporter of the assisted dying bill has acknowledged growing doubts about whether the legislation can become law this year. Lord Falconer said it is now "very, very difficult" to see how the bill could pass, adding that it has "absolutely no hope" of succeeding without a "fundamental change" in the House of Lords' approach.

The former justice secretary has warned that he may seek to use the Parliament Act to override opposition in the House of Lords if the bill is not passed before the King's Speech in May. This would be an unprecedented step for legislation of this kind. As a private member's bill, it must be approved by both the House of Commons and the House of Lords within a single parliamentary session, or it will fall. A session ends when Parliament is prorogued, and a new one begins with the King's Speech, which is expected in May.

Opponents of the bill, including the Catholic Church, have raised serious concerns about its safety, particularly for vulnerable people. They argue that the proposed law lacks sufficient safeguards and would require extensive amendment before it could responsibly be enacted.



According to the BBC, a government source has indicated that many ministers now believe the bill is unlikely to pass through the House of Lords. The source suggested that a Royal Commission could instead be established to examine the complex practical, ethical, and societal questions surrounding assisted dying.

Members of the House of Lords have tabled a large number of amendments to the bill, addressing issues including:

- Explicitly removing pregnant women from eligibility for an assisted death
- Restricting assisted deaths to cases where a person's suffering cannot be relieved by treatment.
- Strengthening how a person's capacity to request an assisted death is assessed, including background checks on close relatives.
- Raising the minimum age to 25
- Doubling the period of reflection between assessments

Unlike in the House of Commons, the House of Lords typically debates every amendment that is tabled. This has contributed to a slower and more detailed scrutiny process.

Former Downing Street adviser and opponent of the bill, Nikki Da Costa, has rejected claims that peers are seeking to delay the legislation for procedural reasons. She said they were "doing their best to patch the holes" in an "unsafe, deficient bill which has no electoral mandate".

The House of Lords has not yet held a vote on the bill as a whole, making it difficult to determine whether there is sufficient support for the proposed law among peers.

**Parish Reflection and Prayer:**

As Catholics, we believe that every human life is a gift from God, worthy of protection and care from conception to natural death. Assisted dying raise profound moral, medical, and spiritual questions, especially about how we accompany those who are sick, elderly, disabled, or nearing the end of life.

At the heart of this discussion is a shared responsibility to ensure that no one feels like a burden, abandoned, or without hope. The Church continues to call for greater investment in compassionate palliative care, meaningful human presence, and support for families and carers, so that suffering is met with dignity, love, and solidarity rather than despair.

We are invited to pray for wisdom for lawmakers, courage for those who speak for the vulnerable, and gentleness of heart in how we engage with one another on difficult and deeply personal issues.

*Loving God,  
You are the giver of life and the source of all compassion.  
We entrust to you all who are sick, suffering, or approaching the end of their earthly journey.  
Comfort them with your presence and surround them with love, care, and hope.  
Guide those entrusted with making laws and decisions,  
that they may act with wisdom, humility, and respect for the dignity of every human person.  
Strengthen all who care for the vulnerable,  
and help us to be a community that never turns away from those in need.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:parish@worth.org.uk) **Parish Website:** [www.worthabbeyparish.co.uk](http://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/](http://www.safespacesenglandandwales.org.uk/) **Email:** [safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk](mailto:safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk)

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