

Parish of St Wilfrid, Widnes

Incorporating the churches of St Bede, St Michael,
St John Fisher and St Basil



22nd March 2026

Fifth Sunday of Lent (Year A)

Parish Clergy: 0151 422 1772

Rev Fr Mark Moran (PP, Moderator)

Rev Fr Peter Ross

Rev Deacon Paul Rooney

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Psalm Response

"With the LORD there is mercy in him is plentiful redemption"

Gospel Acclamation Verse

"I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord. Everyone who believes in me shall never die."

"Jesus hid himself" (John 8:58) – Passiontide and the Veiling of Images

Ever wondered why we veil crucifixes, statues, and images in our churches from the Fifth Sunday of Lent? The best explanation I could find relates to the quote in the title of this reflection, *"Jesus hid himself"*. Before the current Order of Mass (1970) was unveiled, these words were proclaimed in the Gospel Reading on Passion Sunday (Fifth Sunday of Lent). In John's Gospel, upon being threatened with death by stoning, we are told, *"Jesus hid himself and went out of the Temple"*. Apparently, this text inspired the practice. The practical effect of us 'hiding Jesus' in Church is a sense of longing and an opportunity to focus our devotion in these last weeks of Lent. Yet again, the liturgy appeals to our humanity and gives us a different perspective. Likewise, just as Jesus, the master, is hidden, so his servants (the Saints and Angels) are also hidden, adding to the sense of longing.

The practice of veiling dropped off a little after Vatican II; however, it has largely returned and is mandated in the Archdiocesan Ordo. In Widnes, we use simple, modest purple veils, whereas in many places, veiling is taken to a whole other level. For instance, in parts of Germany, they veil off the entire sanctuary with a *"fastentuch"* or *"hungercloth"* in honour of Passiontide. Maybe we will do this next year (or the year after lol)!-All of this serves to increase our devotion. The events of Holy Week are now looming. As our churches become plainer, may we too strive for ever greater simplicity, so that by fasting, prayer, almsgiving, and the confession of our sins, we may grow in grace and greet the Risen Christ once again when he comes out of the tomb and into view.

Fr. Peter

Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord is a major feast in the Christian liturgical calendar, celebrated on 25th March. It commemorates the moment when the angel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary to announce that she would conceive and give birth to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We shall celebrate this holy day by celebrating Holy Mass together at **7pm** at **St. Michael's Church**. All are welcome!

Chrism Mass – Wednesday 1 April 2026 at 7.30pm

If you would like to attend, please submit your name along with £10 per person to the Parish Office. A coach will depart from St Bede's Church at 6:30pm, take us to the Cathedral for the Mass, and bring everyone safely home afterwards. All are warmly invited to join us for this special celebration. **Altar Servers** – you must let the Parish Office know if you wish to robe and serve at this Mass.

Two Cathedrals March

On **Sunday 24th May 2026 at 3pm** there will be the Annual March between our two Cathedrals in Liverpool. If you would like to walk with our Archbishop and other people of faith on the Feast of Pentecost, please assemble at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King and walk in faith!

Grand Easter Raffle & Date for your Diary

Once again, we will be holding our Easter Raffle. As always, the prizes are wonderful and plentiful, and we are very grateful to everyone who donates. Raffle tickets are available at the back of all the churches and in the Parish Office, so please take a few books and help by selling as many as you can. All proceeds will go towards parish funds.

The raffle will be drawn at the **Easter Dance on Friday 17th April** at St Basil's Parish Centre. Tickets for the dance will be on sale on Palm Sunday weekend, so please make a note in your diary and join us for what promises to be a wonderful night together.

Opportunities for Confession

Tuesday 24th March at 11am at St. Bede

Friday 27th March at 11.15am – St. John Fisher

Tuesday 31st March at 7pm – Reconciliation Service at St. Bede

You can also ask Fr. Peter or Fr. Mark to hear your confession after any Mass, providing they are not dashing to another Mass or appointment!

Warrington and Widnes Deanery Mass

On **Friday 27th March** we welcome the clergy and people of the Warrington and Widnes Deanery for Mass at 12noon at St. John Fisher Church. Please make a special effort to come and pray with our deanery for the needs of the people in this corner of the Archdiocese. The clergy will then have their meeting in the Parish Hall.

18-35 Group

Last week was jam packed for our 18-35 group in terms of opportunities. Monday night saw members lead the Stations of the Cross at St. Basil. They did brilliantly. On Friday, they took part in a Lenten Retreat led by Fr. Derek Lloyd (Parish Priest of Thornton and Little Crosby). Many thanks to Fr. Derek for his time, insight and humour! It's incredible to think that the group is now one year old. We have done so much in that year, thanks be to God. Please continue to pray for this group. We are the 'now' and the 'future' of the Church.

Fr. Peter.

CAFOD – Soup and Sharing Evening

Our Annual Soup and Sharing Evening will take place on **Tuesday 24th March** at **7:00pm** in the Parish Hall at St. John Fisher. This is always a wonderfully joyful evening and a special opportunity for us to come together as a community to pray, share a meal, and raise funds for CAFOD. If you have never been before, please consider coming along – you will really enjoy it, I promise! If you would like to attend, please leave your name and telephone number at the Parish Office, or call the office to add your name to the list. All are very warmly welcome.

Last Opportunity to buy a Lily

If you would like to buy a lily for Easter in memory of a loved one or for a specific intention, they must be handed into the Parish Office by **Friday 27th March**. This is so that the lists of benefactors can be compiled and displayed in time for Easter Sunday. Many thanks!

Parish Choir

Our next practice, preparing for the Easter Liturgies, will be on, **Monday 23rd March**, at **7pm** in **St. Bede's Church**. All welcome. However, sadly though, at this time, all members of the choir must be over 18 due to safeguarding guidance.

Tickets on Sale – Easter Dance

Next weekend, tickets for the Easter Dance will be on sale at all Masses. The Easter Dance will take place on **Friday 17th April at 7pm** at St. Basil's Parish Centre. Tickets are just £5 each and includes a delicious buffet and entertainment! Please bring an extra £5 to Mass next weekend as tickets always go quickly!

Easter Offerings

In the past, the Easter and Christmas offerings went to the priests of the parish, **this is no longer the case**. If you wish to give an Easter gift to either Fr. Peter or myself, they must be placed in an envelope with their names on it. Many thanks!

Fr. Mark

Help us to shape Youth Ministry

We want all young people to flourish and to know that they are cherished by God and are a vital part of the Church. So, as an archdiocese, we are committed to explore how we can best accompany young people. Your voice is crucial.

What will happen You will meet others and have your chance to share your experiences and ideas about how the Church might best respond to the needs of young people today. All feedback will be carefully listened to as part of a diocesan-wide process planning youth ministry for the years ahead.

Who's invited?

We want to hear from adults, young adults and 11–18-year-olds (Under 18s must be accompanied by an adult).

Come to ONE of our open meetings.

Monday 20th April 7- 9.30pm - St Joseph's Crow Orchard Rd, Wrightington, Wigan WN6 9PA

Tuesday 21st April 7 - 9.30pm - St Monica's Fernhill Road, Bootle, Merseyside, L20 9GA

The process is being facilitated by Danny Curtin, who worked in youth ministry and youth work in the Church for many years. For more information, contact Sarah McGeehan on s.mcgeehan@rcaol.org.uk or 07415099048

Parish Office

The Parish Office will close at 13.30 on **Tuesday 24th March**. Please make a note, thank you!

Parish Liturgy

Sunday	22nd March	Fifth Sunday of Lent	
09.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	Mary O'Brien
10.15	Holy Mass	St Michael	Michelle Spencer (Adams)
11.30	Holy Mass	St Bede	Margaret Rimmer
16.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	Parishioners
Monday	23rd March	Week 5 of Lent	
13.30	St. Basil School Mass	St Basil	Bridgit Bardot
Tuesday	24th March	Week 5 of Lent	
11.00	Stations of the Cross	St John Fisher, St John Fisher School (Y4, 5 &6)	
11.30	Confessions	St Bede	
11.30	Exposition & Rosary	St Bede	
12.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	Elizabeth Read
Wednesday	25th March	Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord	
19.00	Holy Mass	St Michael	Jean Wilson
Thursday	26th March	Week 5 of Lent	
10.00	Holy Mass	St Gerard's School	Joan Moran
Friday	27th March	Week 5 of Lent	
11.15	Confessions	St John Fisher	
12.00	Deanery Mass	St John Fisher	Patrick Doran / Margaret Fillingham
12.00	Stations of the Cross	St Michael	
13.00	Stations of the Cross	St Basil	
Saturday	28th March	Vigil Mass- Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord	
16.30	Holy Mass	St Basil	Parishioners
18.00	Holy Mass	St John Fisher	Marie Bonnon
Sunday	29th March	Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord	
09.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	John Paget
10.15	Holy Mass	St Michael	Celia O'Dowd
11.30	Holy Mass	St Bede	Special Intention
16.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	John Arrowsmith

Sanctuary Lamp

The Sanctuary lamp burns for 7 days for your intention.

St Bede:	Ronni Murray
St Basil:	Marie Lynch
St John Fisher:	Margaret & John Mc Dermott
St Michael:	Kevin & Peter Geraghty

Rest in Peace

Helen McCutchen-Kay, Mark Turk, John Percival, Doreen Taylor, Linda Dunne, Joan O'Brien, Joyce O'Connor & Thomas Jackson
May the Angels lead them into Paradise!