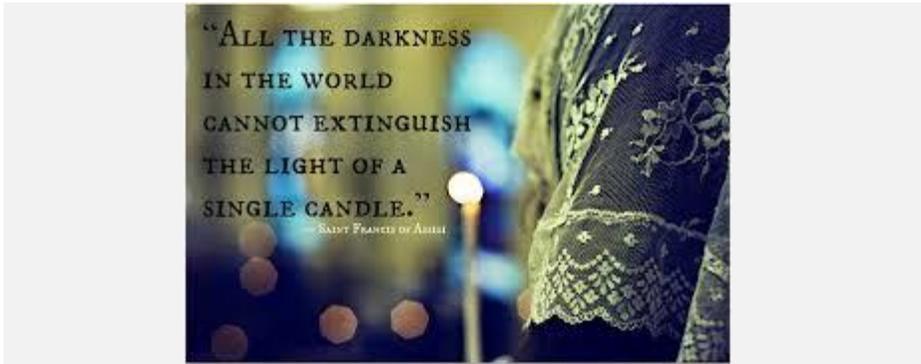


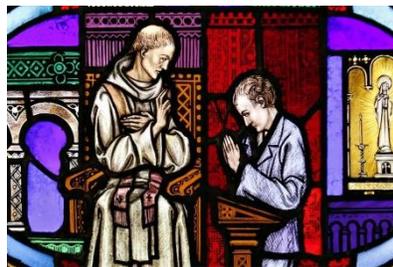


# Coloma Catholic Life.



## Sacrament of Reconciliation

Reconciliation is a sacrament which can be celebrated repeatedly throughout one's life. Catholics are encouraged to receive this sacrament frequently. The Church suggests regularly confessing our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, *at least once a year* during the Easter Season. It helps us to return to Jesus and strengthen our relationship with him.



It

## The Blessings in Frequent Confession

There are many blessings in frequent confession (cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church 1425-1498). Among such blessings are the following:

- It *restores divine life* to those who have lost it through mortal sin;
- It increases *grace* and one's capacity for grace and helps one to grow in Christian maturity;
- It brings order and peace into one's life by causing one to pause at regular intervals and ask oneself the all-important question: Where am I in my relationship with God?
- It improves *personal relations* with others by making one aware of attitudes and actions that cause pain to others;
- It motivates one to practice the basic *Christian virtues*: faith, hope, charity, humility, self-denial, repentance, detachment from the pagan ways of modern life.

## Pope Francis



### Prayer Intention for march:

#### Sacrament of Reconciliation.

'Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.'

Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xEBGF-CsKbU&list=PLTroqZcBkue16MMgz9LKRp-W1biit5sp&t=4s>

**Tweet:** 'Fraternity is more durable than fratricide, hope is more powerful than hatred, peace more powerful than war. This conviction can never be silenced by the blood spilled by those who pervert the name of God to pursue paths of destruction.'

### Liturgical Year

Week: 3rd Sunday in Lent.

Colour: Purple

How to go to confession – video links below as a reminder of the steps in going to confession.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCmumpsrwBE>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lb8pzzvnnL20&t=3s>

Celebrating this sacrament during the pandemic remains difficult. Many parishes operate an appointment only system, whilst others have times advertised in their parish newsletters, but may be doing things differently whilst observing Covid guidelines. Pope Francis addressed the difficulties posed by the restrictions by saying to do what the Catechism says: “Speak to God, he’s your Father, tell him the truth, tell him I did this or this or this. Ask his forgiveness with all your heart, with an act of contrition and promise him afterward I will go to confession but forgive me now.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4f2xYNOQ3c>

Whilst this is no substitute for personal confession, it provides reassurance for those who are still unable to get to see a priest to receive forgiveness and reconciliation in person.

### First Anniversary of The Late Archbishop Peter Smith



“Saturday 6th March 2021 marks the first anniversary of our beloved former Archbishop, Peter Smith, who died suddenly before the pandemic came into force last year.

As a clergyman who preferred a 'no fuss' approach, it may be that he would have welcomed the splendid simplicity of his funeral in St George's Cathedral, whilst as a nation we adhered to guidance to stay at home. However, there are many in Southwark who wish to give thanks for his life.

Although it is not possible to assign a date at this time, the Diocese hope to arrange a Mass later this year to celebrate his ministry, as well as an occasion to remember the lives of all Southwark clergy who have died in the past year. Please continue to pray for the peaceful repose of their souls.” (From the Diocesan Website)

The recording of the homily given by Archbishop John Wilson at the funeral of Archbishop Peter Smith is here: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8O\\_g9fPINU&t=13s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-8O_g9fPINU&t=13s)



One of the last formal occasions of Archbishop Peter was to celebrate outdoor Mass on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2019 to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Coloma’s foundation.

## Pathways to Christ's Passion

Father Victor Vella, Parish Priest at Holy Innocents' Church Orpington, has organised a series of webinars on the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, in order to prepare his parish for Holy Week. The opportunity to participate is now **open to anyone** who wishes to attend, especially Southwark parishioners, through the joy of modern technology.

The webinars will take place on three consecutive Wednesdays in March and be led by the renowned biblical scholar, Father Henry Wansbrough, a Benedictine monk from Ampleforth Abbey:

The Passion & Death of Jesus according to the Synoptic Gospels - Wednesday 10 March 2021 at 7.45 - 9.15 pm

The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus according to John - Wednesday 17 March 2021 at 7.45 - 9.15 pm

The Death and Resurrection of Jesus according to the writings of Paul - Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 7.45 - 9.15 pm

These free webinars offer an opportunity to increase personal insights into the historical context and theology expressed in the different accounts, with a view to understanding what the Resurrection means for the mission of the Church and for our spirituality. After each lecture there will be an opportunity for those attending to ask the speaker questions.

Father Henry Wansbrough has written over twenty books. He edited the New Jerusalem Bible (1985) and recently single-handedly the Revised New Jerusalem Bible (2019). He has lectured in Africa, Australia and North America. He was for twelve years Master of St Benet's Hall in Oxford also Chair of the Oxford University Faculty of Theology and more recently Professor of Biblical Studies at Liverpool Hope University. He has served on several Vatican Commissions, including the Pontifical Biblical Commission and the Anglican Roman Catholic international Commission.

## Lenten Resources

Resources for prayer and reflection during Lent can be found here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Secondary-and-youth-resources/Lent-resources-young-people>

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/len-2021/resources-for-len-2021>

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

### Pathways to Christ's Passion

Three webinars exploring the narratives of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus

Come, journey with us as we prepare for Holy Week with Father Henry Wansbrough, a Benedictine monk based at Ampleforth Abbey, who will lead us through the dramatic narratives of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus so that we may gain a deeper understanding of these powerful events.

The webinar trilogy offers an opportunity to increase personal insights into the historical context and theology expressed in these different accounts, with a view to understanding what the Resurrection means for the mission of the Church and for our spirituality.

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Register here:  
<https://hiwebinars-10and17and24mar.eventbrite.co.uk>

Sponsored by Holy Innocents Parish, Orpington

Archdiocese of Southwark



## Follow me: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus

The Archdiocese of Southwark is offering a retreat experience for the people and parishes during Lent 2021, beginning on

the first Sunday of Lent and ending in Holy week. Please use the link below:

<http://www.southwarkdsc.org.uk/followme>

## Invited 2021 – Diocese of Arundel & Brighton

Lenten retreat for those living in the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton.

“We will be exploring God’s *invitation* to enter into relationship with Him and what that means for our lives. It will be a wonderful journey of discovery that helps us to know more deeply who we are in the eyes of God and to live authentically as His beloved. There will be challenges - we may have to take a 'long hard look' at ourselves - but by the end of the programme we aim to be transformed and empowered to become Spirit filled disciples who rejoice in God’s goodness and want to build His Kingdom here on earth.”

<https://www.abdiocese.org.uk/news/invited-2021>



## Religious Festivals

### Mahashivratri (Great Shiva Night) – Hinduism, 11<sup>th</sup> March



Every night of the new moon is dedicated to Shiva, but this moonless night is particularly important since it is the night on which Shiva is said to perform the cosmic dance, the *Tandava Nritya*, the dance of primordial creation, preservation and destruction. Many Hindus and all devotees of Shiva fast throughout the festival. All-night prayers focus on Shiva and his shrines and statues, where milk, water and honey are regularly poured on his symbol, the *lingam*, which is decorated with flowers and garlands. The festival is observed for one day and one night

only.

Pujas conducted in Shaivite temples during the previous day also have significance. This is because the rituals are conducted strictly in accordance with the method prescribed in the *Shiva Purana*, a Hindu epic. According to this *Purana*, *pujas* should be conducted once in every three hours on Mahashivaratri. According to Hindu mythology Lord Shiva declared that the rituals performed by his devotees on the 14th day of the dark fortnight in the month of Phalgun please him the most. Therefore, year by year, the day is observed as Mahashivratri, and devotees observe the fast, sing songs and *bhajans* and offer prayers to the Almighty to seek his blessings.

To this end jujube fruits, stalks of Bilwa leaves, coconuts, flowers and garlands are offered to the Shiva *lingam* by the devotees at the shrine. At home, they may perform the Mahashivratri *Puja* by taking a holy bath (in warm water) early in the morning, wearing new clothes and then smearing *bhasm* (holy ash) on their forehead.

Mahashivaratri is especially important for women, both married and unmarried, who perform Shiva *puja* and observe the fast with great devotion and sincerity. This is predominantly done to appease Shiva along with his consort, the goddess Parvati, who is often called *Ma Gauri*. It is believed that *Ma Gauri* bestows marital bliss on women yet to be married and blesses the married with a healthy and blissful married life. Young girls

observe the fast and worship Shiva so that he may bless them with good husbands. They sing devotional songs in praise of the lord, and holy texts are chanted throughout the night. The festival also celebrates the wedding of Shiva and Sati, the divine mother.

It is believed that devotion to Shiva on Mahashivaratri will free devotees from their past sins and those who pledge themselves to him on this occasion will be liberated from the cycle of birth and death and so attain *moksha* or salvation. The devotees of Shiva therefore flock to the temples on this day to offer their prayers.

## **The Prophet's Night Journey and Ascent/Lailat (Laylat) Ul Isra Wa-L-Miraj – Islam, 11<sup>th</sup>**

### **March**

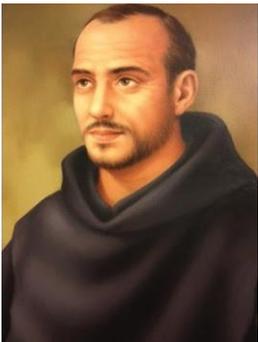
This festival celebrates the journey of the Prophet Muhammad, in the tenth year of his prophethood, from Makkah to Jerusalem, and through the heavens to the presence of God, all in one night. On this night Muslims believe the Prophet received the command that they should pray five times each day. The rock in Jerusalem from which the Prophet ascended is now contained in the Dome of the Rock. Muslims mark this night by reading the *Qur'an* and saying additional prayers.



The following day is accordingly a day for recuperation rather than one for physical activity.

### **Saints of the Week**

#### **St John of God, Religious – 8th March**



At eight years old, John heard a visiting priest speak of adventures that were waiting in the age of 1503 with new worlds being opened up. That very night he ran away from home to travel with the priest and never saw his parents again. They begged their way from village to village until John fell sick. The man who nursed him back to health, the manager of a large estate, adopted John. John worked as a shepherd in the mountains until he was 27. Feeling pressure to marry the manager's daughter, whom he loved as a sister, John took off to join the Spanish army in the war against France. As a soldier, he was hardly a model of holiness, taking part in the gambling, drinking, and pillaging that his comrades enjoyed. One day, he was thrown from a stolen horse near French lines.

Frightened that he would be captured or killed, he reviewed his life and vowed impulsively to make a change.

When he returned he kept his spur of the moment vow, made a confession, and immediately changed his life. His comrades didn't mind so much that John was repenting but hated that he wanted them to give up their pleasures too. So they used his impulsive nature to trick him into leaving his post on the pretext of helping someone in need. He was rescued from hanging at the last minute and thrown out of the army after being beaten and stripped. He begged his way back to his foster-home where he worked as a shepherd until he heard of a new war with Moslems invading Europe. Off he went but after the war was over, he decided to try to find his real parents. To his grief he discovered both had died in his absence.

As a shepherd he had plenty of time to contemplate what God might want of his life. When he decided at 38 that he should go to Africa to ransom Christian captives, he quit immediately and set off for the port of

Gibraltar. He was on the dock waiting for his ship when he saw a family obviously upset and grieving. When he discovered they were a noble family being exiled to Africa after political intrigues, he abandoned his original plan and volunteered to be their servant. The family fell sick when they reached their exile and John kept them alive not only by nursing them but by earning money to feed them. His job building fortifications was grueling, inhuman work and the workers were beaten and mistreated by people who called themselves Catholics. Seeing Christians act this way so disturbed John that it shook his faith. A priest advised him not to blame the Church for their actions and to leave for Spain at once. John did go back home -- but only after he learned that his newly adopted family had received pardons.

In Spain he spent his days unloading ship cargoes and his nights visiting churches and reading spiritual books. Reading gave him so much pleasure that he decided that he should share this joy with others. He quit his job and became a book peddler, traveling from town to town selling religious books and holy cards. A vision at age 41 brought him to Granada where he sold books from a little shop. (For this reason he is patron saint of booksellers and printers.)

After hearing a sermon from the famous John of Avila on repentance, he was so overcome by the thought of his sins that the whole town thought the little bookseller had gone from simple eccentricity to madness. After the sermon John rushed back to his shop, tore up any secular books he had, gave away all his religious books and all his money. Clothes torn and weeping, he was the target of insults, jokes, and even stones and mud from the townspeople and their children.

Friends took the distraught John to the Royal Hospital where he was interned with the lunatics. John suffered the standard treatment of the time -- being tied down and daily whipping. John of Avila came to visit him there and told him his penance had gone on long enough -- forty days, the same amount as the Lord's suffering the desert -- and had John moved to a better part of the hospital.

John of God could never see suffering without trying to do something about it. And now that he was free to move, although still a patient, he immediately got up and began to help the other sick people around him. The hospital was glad to have his unpaid nursing help and were not happy to release him when one day he walked in to announce he was going to start his own hospital.

John may have been positive that God wanted him to start a hospital for the poor who got bad treatment, if any, from the other hospitals, but everyone else still thought of him as a madman. It didn't help that he decided to try to finance his plan by selling wood in the square. At night he took what little money he earned and brought food and comfort to the poor living in abandoned buildings and under bridges. Thus his first hospital was the streets of Granada.

Within an hour after seeing a sign in a window saying "House to let for lodging of the poor" he had rented the house in order to move his nursing indoors. Of course he rented it without money for furnishings, medicine, or help. After he begged money for beds, he went out in the streets again and carried his ill patients back on the same shoulders that had carried stones, wood, and books. Once there he cleaned them, dressed their wounds, and mended their clothes at night while he prayed. He used his old experience as a peddler to beg alms, crying

through the streets in his peddler's voice, "Do good to yourselves! For the love of God, Brothers, do good!" Instead of selling goods, he took anything given -- scraps of good, clothing, a coin here and there.

Throughout his life he was criticized by people who didn't like the fact that his impulsive love embraced anyone in need without asking for credentials or character witnesses. When he was able to move his hospital to an old Carmelite monastery, he opened a homeless shelter in the monastery hall. Immediately critics tried to close him down saying he was pampering troublemakers. His answer to this criticism always was that he knew of only one bad character in the hospital and that was himself. His urge to act immediately when he saw need got him into trouble more than a few times. Once, when he encountered a group of starving people, he rushed into a house, stole a pot of food and gave it to them. He was almost arrested for that charity! Another time, on finding a group of children in rags, he marched them into a clothing shop and bought them all new clothes. Since he had no money, he paid for it all on credit!

Yet his impulsive wish to help saved many people in one emergency. The alarm went out that the Royal Hospital was on fire. When he dropped everything to run there, he found that the crowd was just standing around watching the hospital -- and its patients -- go up in flames. He rushed into the blazing building and carried or led the patients out. When all the patients were rescued, he started throwing blankets, sheets, and mattresses out the windows -- how well he knew from his own hard work how important these things were. At that point a cannon was brought to destroy the burning part of the building in order to save the rest. John stopped them, ran up the roof, and separated the burning portion with an axe. He succeeded but fell through the burning roof. All thought they had lost their hero until John of God appeared miraculously out of smoke. (For this reason, John of God is patron saint of firefighters.)

John was ill himself when he heard that a flood was bringing precious driftwood near the town. He jumped out of bed to gather the wood from the raging river. Then when one of his companions fell into the river, John without thought for his illness or safety jumped in after him. He failed to save the boy and caught pneumonia. He died on March 8, his fifty-fifth birthday, of the same impulsive love that had guided his whole life.

### **St Frances of Rome, Religious – 9th March**



Frances was born in 1384 in Rome to a wealthy and aristocratic couple, Paolo Bussa and Iacobella dei Roffredeschi, in the up-and-coming district of Parione and christened in the nearby Church of St. Agnes on the famed Piazza Navona. When she was eleven years old, she wanted to be a nun, but, at about the age of twelve, her parents forced her to marry Lorenzo Ponziani, commander of the papal troops of Rome and member of an extremely wealthy family. Although the marriage had been arranged, it was a happy one, lasting for forty years, partly because Lorenzo admired his wife, and partly because he was frequently away at war.

With her sister-in-law Vannoza, Frances visited the poor and took care of the sick, inspiring other wealthy women of the city to do the same. Soon after her marriage, Frances fell seriously ill. Her husband called a man in who dabbled in magic, but Frances drove him away, and later recounted to Vannoza that St. Alexis had appeared to her and cured her.

When her mother-in-law died, Frances became mistress of the household. During a time of flood and famine, she turned part of the family's country estate into a hospital and distributed food and clothing to the poor. According to one account, her father-in-law was so angry that he took away from her the keys to the supply rooms; but gave them back when he saw that the corn bin and wine barrel were replenished after Frances finished praying.

During the wars between the Pope in Rome and various anti-popes in the Western Schism of the Catholic Church, Lorenzo served the former. According to one story, their son Battista was to be delivered as a hostage to the commander of the Neapolitan troops. Obeying this order on the command of her spiritual director, Frances took her son to the Campidoglio. On the way, she stopped in the Church of the Aracoeli located there and entrusted her son's life to the Blessed Mother. When they arrived at the appointed site, the soldiers tried to put her son on a horse to transport him to captivity. However, the horse refused to move despite heavy whipping. The superstitious soldiers saw the hand of God in this and returned the boy to his mother.

During a period of forced exile, much of Lorenzo's property and possessions were destroyed. In the course of one occupation of Rome by Neapolitan forces in the early part of the century, he was wounded so severely that he never fully recovered. Frances nursed him throughout the rest of his life.

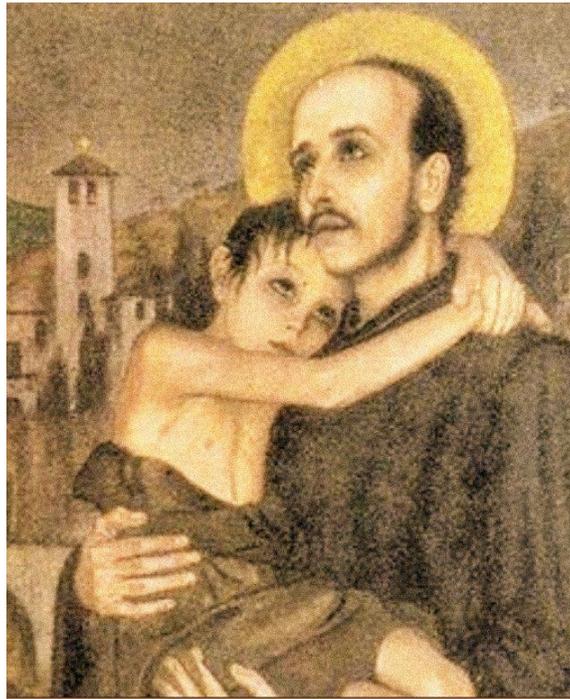
Frances experienced other sorrows during her marriage to Lorenzo. They lost two children to the plague. Chaos ruled the city in that period of neglect by the pope and the ongoing warfare between him and the various forces competing for power on the Italian peninsula devastated the city. The city of Rome was largely in ruins, and wolves were known to enter the streets. Frances again opened her home as a hospital and drove her wagon through the countryside to collect wood for fire and herbs for medicine. It is said she had the gift of healing, and over 60 cases were attested to during the canonization proceedings.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia, "With her husband's consent St. Frances practiced continence, and advanced in a life of contemplation. Her visions often assumed the form of drama enacted for her by heavenly personages. She had the gift of miracles and ecstasy, as well as the bodily vision of her guardian angel, had revelations concerning Purgatory and Hell, and foretold the ending of the Western Schism. She could read the secrets of consciences and detect plots of diabolical origin. She was remarkable for her humility and detachment, her obedience and patience".

On August 15, 1425, the feast of the Assumption of Mary, she founded the Olivetan Oblates of Mary, a confraternity of pious women, under the authority of the Olivetan monks of the Abbey of Santa Maria Nova in Rome, but neither cloistered nor bound by formal vows, so they could follow her pattern of combining a life of prayer with answering the needs of their society.

In March 1433 she founded a monastery at Tor de' Specchi, near the Campidoglio, in order to allow for a common life by those members of the confraternity who felt so called. This monastery remains the only house of the Institute. That July 4, they received the approval of Pope Eugene IV as a religious congregation of oblates with private religious vows. The community later became known simply as the Oblates of St. Frances of Rome.

Frances herself remained in her own home, nursing her husband for the last seven years of his life from wounds he had received in battle. When he died in 1436, she moved into the monastery and became the superior. She died in 1440 and was buried in Santa Maria Nova.



**Labour without stopping,  
do all the good works you can,  
while you still have the time.**

St John of God (1495-1550)

