

### **Monday in 5<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time – 9<sup>th</sup> February 2026:**

Our community must look outward, for wherever Jesus went, he brought his healing touch to people in need. We too must take Jesus' compassion into the '*villages, cities and countryside*' so that many may receive the hope of eternal life and be helped to carry their cross. When Jesus entered Gennesaret the people instantly knew Him. When Jesus enters our souls, he transforms them, making them fit for the kingdom. By forgiving our sins, Jesus removes from us the worst afflictions from our lives. As Christians, then, we must be '*another Christ for the world*', going out into the world and becoming beacons of hope to people in need. This, then, includes an invitation to come to Mass, to take part in the Eucharist where people are granted tangible access to Christ and not just a '*fleeting touch of the hem of his garment*' because in Communion we receive the totality of his very self: his body, blood, soul and divinity.

### **The Memorial of St Scholastica, Virgin – Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2026:**

Scholastica is the twin sister of Saint Benedict. As twins they had affinity that allowed them to share similar interests and ideas. They gave themselves totally to God and their goal was to deepen their friendship with him through prayer. Although born of wealthy parents, they sacrificed their earthly advantage to better fulfil their vocation to the religious life in which they consecrated themselves to God, forming separate communities of male and female religious. In coming closer to Christ, they found that they were also closer to each other. In forming religious communities, they did not forsake their familial ties but found their identity as brothers and sisters in the Lord.

### **The Optional Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes – Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2026:**

Our Lady invites us to come to Lourdes, to a place where the sick and / or disabled are treated as VIPs, placed at the top of the priority list in God's domain. God comes to us to transform our weak humanity, making it fit for the Kingdom. Perhaps, we are sceptical about "*miraculous cures*", and so is the Church. In 168 years since Our Lady apparition, only 72 cures have been recognized and only approved when it is certain that the person was sick, the cure is immediate and total, (*and the clincher*), that the medical authorities have exhausted other explanations. There are also many '*healings*' (different to cures): spiritual peace, strength, and courage to manage a condition. Jesus did not promise us a life free from suffering, but, by his passion, he shows that all the pains we experience '*are nothing compared to the glory that is to be revealed*'.

#### **Thursday in 5<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026:**

When we cannot receive Holy Communion (for whatever reason), we can suitably make a ‘*spiritual communion*’, in these or similar words: “*My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive you sacramentally into my soul. Since I cannot receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you have already come and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you*”.

#### **Friday in 5<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026:**

After the baptism, the priest prays the “*Ephphatha! Be opened! Prayer*” We must open our ears to receive the words of eternal life and open our eyes to the eternal realities for which we are destined. Baptism is not the end of the sacramental journey but the beginning of it, a lifelong pilgrimage of hearing and responding to God’s Word by putting the Father’s Will into practice and singing his praise in the way we live our lives.

#### **The Feast of Saints Cyril & Methodius, bishop – Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2026:**

Cyril and Methodius are ‘*the apostles to the Slavic people*’. Moravia had rejected paganism, embracing Christianity, but they had no access to the sacred text in a language they could understand. Cyril & Methodius were successful, but it caused jealousy among existing clergy who had arrived before them. Some, especially the German bishops, rejected the idea of the local language, wanting to impose the Latin traditions. Their objections were largely political, concerned about the growing influence of the Slavonic culture within or near their territory. The Pope saw the political advantage of their mission and supported Cyril and Methodius, seeing a way to unite East and West. What began as a request guided by political concern produced two great Christian missionaries who transformed the culture into a land fit for the Gospel.

**& St Valentine:** Saint Valentine was removed from the universal calendar in 1969, as there was uncertainty about who we were celebrating! There may have been three of them: one bishop, one priest and a lay man. Our legends of St Valentine come from a 1st century priest who secretly married couples, so the husband could avoid going to war and another Valentine who refused to sacrifice to the pagan Gods and was jailed. The familiar story is that, through Valentine’s prayers the jailer’s daughter was healed of her blindness. On the day of his execution, he left her a note signed: ‘*your Valentine*’.