

Monday in 5th Week of Lent (Passiontide) – 23rd March 2026:

In today's reading, the community elders have '*perverted their minds and had turned their eyes away from looking to heaven*'. It is shameful when our leaders act contrary to the common good, seeing people as '*objects of their desire*', not as '*subjects of freedom*'. Even Churches (*both Catholic and Church of England*) have not been immune from clerics who have abused the position of trust. At times, the Church has not dealt with historic allegations in a timely manner, seemingly taking a decision to protect the reputation of the institution, this cover-up a second offence upon the abused person who is treated with suspicion rather than believed. In our reading, Susanna is a symbol of the faithful and the elders a symbol those in power attempting to cover-up their wrongdoing. We can use Passiontide to pray those who have suffered abuse at the hands of the powerful and there is an independent charity called '*Safe Spaces*' which provides a confidential space for anyone who has been abused by someone in the Church, from any denomination of the Church in England and Wales.

Tuesday in 5th Week of Lent (Passiontide) – 24th March 2026:

The people of the Exodus are disappointed. They thought Moses was their redeemer and yet, he seems to be taking them the long way around. In the spiritual life, people often want to take a short cut to what they desire, and yet, our pilgrimage to heaven is a marathon not a sprint. It is a journey along the way of the cross, and yet, even so, there are many signs of the Lord's blessing in our life. There is redemptive value in our sufferings, we can use them for the atonement of sin, for ourselves and for another soul, especially the Holy Souls. On the cross, Jesus draws all people to himself and gathers back those who have been lost in humanity's fall from grace. May we offer Masses for the well-being of those on pilgrimage and for the eternal rest of those who have gone to their judgement, that they reach the Promised Land of Heaven.

The Annunciation of the Lord – Wednesday 25th March 2026:

When we say, '*Hail Mary*', we use the same greeting of the Angel Gabriel. We recognise that God takes his human nature from Mary Immaculate (*the one who is full of grace*) to reverse humanity's ancient fall from grace. Through the Incarnation, God places Himself amid a barren and despairing humanity, for he has never abandoned us to the domain of death and teaches us to look forward to salvation. And so, we celebrate that the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.

Thursday in 5th Week of Lent (Passiontide) – 26th March 2026:

In one of our Confirmation sessions, we watched a video from Bishop Robert Barron, the internet evangelisation from 'Word on Fire' Ministries. He said that he chose St Patrick as his confirmation name but that it was a cultural choice more than anything, an encouragement from his Irish parents living in Chicago. St Patrick as we know was a bishop and evangelist and so Bishop Robert Barron was suggesting that while he may have chosen the saint, did the saint also choose him? Without knowing it at the time – this Confirmation Saint Patrick was gently encouraging and guiding his own vocation to also become a priest, bishop and faithful evangelist of the gospel. Certainly, in the History of Salvation, when God calls someone and gives them an important mission, he changes their identity: Abram to Abraham, Simon to Peter, Saul to Paul.

Friday in 5th Week of Lent (Passiontide) – 27th March 2026:

Jeremiah's last confession is a dramatic lament, thinking he has failed, as he is experiencing significant pushback to his message, which will ultimately lead to his persecution. He begins to doubt himself and his special calling; and perhaps, we have all been here at one time or another. This is when we should confide in God, listen to His Word, get up and start again. When we feel overwhelmed, may the grace of Jesus' passion give us the strength to get up and keep going! But remember, we cannot do this on our own, we need to be a '*Simon of Cyrene*' to members of our community, ready and willing to lend a hand to someone who is struggling. In the end, Jeremiah did not give up his ministry but persevered in it to the end of his life. He admits his limitations, but he stays true to God: bearing out the truth of what the Lord said to St Paul: "*My power is made perfect in your weakness.*" Like Jeremiah, we believe that God never abandons us, and as Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI said to some Cardinals who visited him in retirement, that despite the struggles, '*the Lord wins in the end!*'

Saturday in 5th Week of Lent (Passiontide) – 28th March 2026:

As part of the Church in Arundel & Brighton, our unity is best expressed when the Church gathers around our Apostle the Bishop in the celebration of Holy Mass, such as at next week's Chrism Mass as part of the celebration of Maundy Thursday and the institution of the Priesthood. We will welcome Bishop Gerard Bradley, newly ordained auxiliary bishop in Southwark, who will no doubt encourage us to be fervent in our prayers that the Holy Father will soon appoint a new Shepherd and Apostle for us.