

Local Memorial of St Margaret of Antioch – Monday 20th July 2026:

'The Reproaches' sung during the veneration of the cross in the Good Friday liturgy remind us that it was our sins that helped crucify Christ and now seeing the means of our redemption before our eyes, we are overwhelmed by such great love that we are moved to kiss the wood of the cross, on which hung the salvation of the world. In *'The Reproaches'*, we are admonished for the ingratitude and infidelity we show to the Lord, such as when we fail to come to the Sunday Eucharist and spend our time in the temples of commerce instead; above all when, instead of announcing the gospel to the poor, we engage in activities which continue their oppression. In Confession, we come before God, trusting in his mercy, pleading our cause, anticipating our just sentence, accepting a penance to begin the process of making up for our infidelities.

Tuesday in 16th Week in Ordinary Time – 21st July 2026:

As the diocese travels to Lourdes at the end of the week, we will miss not having a bishop to lead us who, as our apostle, did a good job uniting the many different parish and school groups together as one in praise of Christ. Having a bishop is important for the local Church, for he is the High Priest of the diocese who sets the spiritual direction of the people now and into the future, one that is seen as a change of era. Our former bishop wanted us to celebrate the Liturgy in such a way that it was an encounter with the wonder of heaven. The Church invites all people into the faithful remnant of God's people. Having witnessed the works of the Lord, we come to be pardoned of our sins, and to be nourished in Word and Sacrament, sustained for our shared pilgrimage home to heaven. In the Church, we assist one another (our brothers and sisters in the Lord) ensuring that no one is left behind, for we do not journey alone but as a family.

The Feast of St Mary Magdalene, Apostle to the Apostles – Wed. 22nd July 2026:

St. Mary Magdalene is known as the *'Apostle to the Apostles'*. Being the *'prima testis'* (the *'first witness'*) to the resurrection, she is the first person to announce the good news to those who were closest to Jesus throughout his pastoral ministry, and she herself had followed Christ, ministering to his needs. Like St. Mary Magdalene we are to be apostles, to our family and friends as we go and proclaim that Jesus is risen and invites us into relationship with him. St. Mary of Magdala is an apostle of hope for the world. Jesus' ministry did not end in failure with his death but in the triumph of his resurrection which now orientates us all to the Father and the promise of eternal life.

Feast of St Bridget of Sweden, Patron of Europe – Thurs. 23rd July 2026:

Bridget of Sweden, founder of the Bridgettines was known for her works of charity. She devoted herself to a life of prayer and the care of the poor and sick. Tradition tells us that she was blessed with several visions, including a vision where she asked Jesus how many blows he suffered during his passion. He said to her if she wanted to honour the passion, she would need to pray 15 Our Father's and 15 Hail Mary's every day for one year. That's 10, 950 prayers! We're probably not supposed to conclude that is the number of strikes that Jesus suffered – even though we know the Romans were considerably brutal – but that we simply cannot comprehend what he suffered for us.

Friday in 16th Week in Ordinary Time – 24th July 2026:

As the A&B pilgrims arrive in Lourdes, they will discover the first healing on offer is in the sacrament of Reconciliation. God is ready to receive these pilgrims and offers his grace to those who come before him seeking forgiveness. Pilgrims discover in Lourdes, an entirely new situation is being created for and in them. Our Lady, as the Arc of the New and Eternal Covenant has returned to the sanctuary in heaven and is, therefore, well placed to hear our petitions and amplify them in the presence of her Son, Jesus Christ, Our Lord. In Lourdes, the veil between heaven and earth is incredibly thin and we are given a glimpse of the Kingdom of Heaven, where the vulnerable are given pride of place, an image of how God always intended the world to be. As Our Lady will show the pilgrims: *God 'has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm; He has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.'*

The Feast of St James, Apostle – Saturday 25th July 2026:

Today, we commemorate '*St James the Great*' to distinguish him from '*James the Less*', possibly because he was taller! James the Great was the son of Zebedee and brother of St John, whereas James the Less was The Lord's cousin; both associated with the Christian community in Jerusalem, being martyred there. St James the Greater is beheaded by King Agrippa in that city in AD44. James' followers took his body to Santiago da Compostela where his remains are venerated, after the '*Camino*'. His emblem is the scallop shell, a symbol of pilgrimage and used to baptise, the start of all our pilgrimages, that take us home to The Father's house.