

Opt. mem: St Aidan & the Saints of Lindisfarne – Monday 31st August 2026:

St Aidan is a 5th century Irish Monk credited with restoring Christianity to Northumbria and is known as the '*Apostle to Northumbria*'. The young King Oswald of Northumbria wanted to bring Christianity back to his people, asking the Iona Community to send monks. Initially they sent him bishop Corman, but he alienated many by the harshness of his approach. Aidan was sent as his replacement and chose the island of Lindisfarne as the seat of his diocese. Aidan walked from village to village politely conversing with the people he saw and slowly convinced them of the '*good news*'. This is the early apostolic model of conversion. First, you offer '*the milk of gentle doctrine, to bring them by degrees, while nourishing them with the divine word, to the true understanding and practice of the more advanced precepts*'. Thus, his Monastery offered a centre of learning, a storehouse of scholarly knowledge training people in the faith.

Tuesday in 22nd Week in Ordinary Time – 1st September 2026:

Does our overly rational world believe in demons? We hope this remains part of a '*fantasy world*', and yet, if we believe in a Holy Spirit, we might reasonably conclude that there are other spirits out there, which are less than holy or good for us. The way we live may open us to potential physical or spiritual harm. Those who struggle with addiction, often say that when they are winning, they often feel the spectre of evil pressurising them. With the prevalence of smart phones cameras, we often see people acting in very aggressive ways, often against due reason. Such people have allowed hate and anger to swell to such a level that their behaviour certainly feels demonic and unnatural. In coming to Confession, we allow the Holy Spirit to restore our soul to the state of grace, making our soul once again a Temple fit for God to reside, a place where evil cannot enter. Fostering intimacy with God, will, in time bring us to our perfection, which is the fulness of life in God's presence. May the Holy Spirit continue to refresh us, re-invigorate us and make us fit for the Kingdom that is to come.

Wednesday in 22nd Week in Ordinary Time – 2nd September 2026:

In his pastoral ministry, Jesus shows his high regard for everyday family life. Please God, then, we will always pray for our family members who are sick or suffering in any way. This does not mean that they will be granted an instantaneous cure but the grace and strength to carry their cross with great fortitude. In the anointing of the sick, Jesus walks with us, helping us keep the faith, even though we might be tempted to give up.

Feast of St Gregory the Great, Pope & Doctor – Thurs. 3rd September 2026:

As an aristocrat, statesman and landowner he was born to lead, starting his career as '*prefect of the city of Rome*', but really, he just wanted to live in a monastery, but Pope Pelagius sent him as his '*nuncio*' to the Emperor in Constantinople. After Pelagius's death, Gregory was elected Bishop of Rome, finding himself at the centre of ecclesiastical, civic, economic, political and military chaos. He became a father to his people, a man with astonishing energy, competence and administrative skills. He secured food for his people, defended the city, managed flood relief, redeemed prisoners and fought the emperor's unjust and impossible taxes and levies. He reorganised the monasteries, criticised bishops for homilies that were full of platitudes but were silent on sin and excommunicated rogue clergy. Although history calls him '*The Great*' he himself said that he was simply a '*servant of the servants of God*', showing us that authority never abuses, but gently leads the people in truth and virtue.

Opt. Memorial of St Cuthbert, Bishop – Friday 4th September 2026:

Cuthbert is a saint of the early Northumbrian Church in the Celtic tradition, associated with the monasteries of Melrose and Lindisfarne. King Edwin of Northumbria had converted to Christianity in 627, converted by Paulinus of York, an Italian who had accompanied St Augustine in his mission to unite the Celtic and Roman traditions. Cuthbert was well known for his piety, diligence and obedience, spending much of his time among the people, travelling from village to village, preaching the gospel, ministering to their spiritual needs, and throughout these missionary journeys, many miracles are attested to him. He was elected Bishop of Hexham, but preferred a life of a hermit, and in the end the stresses of the appointment led to illness and his death within two years, and he was buried at Lindisfarne. When his coffin was opened after nearly three hundred years, his body was not corrupted, confirming his saintliness.

Opt. Mem of St Teresa of Calcutta (Mother Teresa) – Sat. 5th September 2026:

In life, Mother Teresa was an icon of God's tender mercy, radiating the light of God's love to so many through the works of mercy. Her life is a testimony to the dignity and privilege of humble service. She had chosen to be not just be '*the least*' but to be the servant of the least. As a real mother to the poor, she bent down to those suffering poverty and her greatness lay in her ability to give without counting the cost, to give until it hurts. Her life was a radical living and a bold proclamation of the Gospel.