

The Feast (in England) of the English Martyrs – 4th May 2026:

A mix of Catholic lay and religious men and women executed between 1535 & 1679 for “treason” under various Parliamentary Acts impinging on their conscience. Firstly, in 1535 some Carthusian monks declined to accept Henry VIII’s ‘*Act of Supremacy*’, which established the English monarchs as head of the Church of England, replacing the Pope as the Supreme Head of the Church. In this Act, Henry abandoned Rome, asserting the ‘*Ecclesia Anglicana*’, marking the start of the English “Reformation”, a word used with caution, for the reason for this act was to secure a male heir, and Henry’s failed attempts to obtain an annulment of his marriage to Catherine of Aragon which he had previously obtained a dispensation for in the first place. Later, Elizabeth reaffirmed the ‘*Act of Supremacy*’, making it treasonable to say the queen should not hold the crown or to declare her a heretic. It became treasonable for any Jesuit or seminary priest to be in England, and a felony to aid them. This is statute under which most of the English Martyrs suffered, all but six dying a traitor’s death at Tyburn.

Tuesday in 5th Week of Easter – 5th May 2026:

In England & Wales, the Church designates ‘*Tuesday in 5th week of Easter*’ as a special day to pause and pray for the Survivors of Abuse. We hope that the joy of the Paschal Mysteries will help those suffering the trauma of physical, sexual, spiritual, or emotional abuse, in such a way that they can move forward - that journey from being a victim to becoming a survivor. May we be a supportive community, understanding why people are rightly angered and frustrated at the Church for not dealing with historic abuse. May Christ, who is our peace, grant us the compassion and truth to listen and hear people who have suffered abuse and be able to assure them that safeguarding is our priority and that the innocent and vulnerable may feel safe in the Church.

Wednesday in 5th Week of Easter – 6th May 2026:

Jesus asked his disciples to ‘*remain*’ in him, and yet, only one of the twelve and a few holy women remained with him as he crucified – perhaps they missed the reality of who he is. In the light of Easter, those who ‘*remain in Christ*’, now understand that we choose to endure with him, making everything in our life a prayer and an opportunity of an encounter with Him. It is a choice to always tell the truth, to carry our cross all the way to Calvary and into the Garden of the Resurrection. If we remain in Christ and in his word, we are destined to receive every blessing and share in the Lord’s glory.

Thursday & Friday in 5th Week of Easter – 7th & 8th May 2026:

Both Thursday and Friday speak of love as a central component of the Gospel of Christ. Our world is in a crisis when it comes to love. The word love is often a throwaway line – we use it to describe a whole range of objects and people. *'I love chocolate', 'I love this song', 'I love my new car', 'I love my mum', 'I love my spouse'* etc., but they, clearly, are not meant at the same level. What is clear, however, is that if I do not have love, then I am nothing! We speak of *'falling in love'*, but if this is just an emotional or biological response, then there will be a time when we might *'fall out of love'*. Love, it seems, can be fickle but St Paul says no, it is never selfish, irritable or resentful. Love never rejoices in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things and endures all things. Love finds its culmination in the cross, that even after the rejection of God's Word, the Father shows the depth of his love by sending his Son to be our Saviour and Redeemer. In the cross, God practices what he preaches – *'he loves his enemies'*, pouring out his blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Through the love of the cross, humanity no longer stands before God as a slave, but as a Son in the Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit, we are brought to our perfection. Indeed, the fruit of love is joy, peace and mercy and where these are lacking, there is an obstacle to any authentic relationship. Love, then, must be freely given, it must be totally given, and faithful, otherwise it is not love. It must also be fruitful, the offering of oneself for the salvation of the world and the spread of the gospel, for love is nothing less than our conversion to God's Will, always found in service and sacrifice as we say to another, *'this is my body given up for you'*.

Saturday in 5th Week of Easter – 9th May 2026:

The moral teachings of the Church are hard because they deal with the Truth and Christ's passion shows us that truth hurts. And Jesus tells us that it is a blessing if the world hates us for preaching the truth because it means they have connected us to him. All of Christ's teaching, handed on and presented by his Church, are meant to prepare our hearts for an intimate and eternal encounter with the Blessed Trinity. And so, if we find any of the Church's teaching difficult, it is incumbent on us to have formed our understanding by knowing our scriptures and catechism so that we can see that the Church's teaching on faith and morals help us keep our minds fixed on the things of heaven that endure, not on the things of this world that wither and fade away.