

### **Monday in 13<sup>th</sup> Week in Ordinary Time – 29<sup>th</sup> June 2026:**

We are called to follow Christ, and it is a demanding life as we leave behind the securities of this world. And a disciple must follow Christ in season and out of season, not just choosing the bits of the gospel that we are comfortable with. As the saying goes, when the *'going gets tough, the tough get going'*, meaning (for us) that when the Church experiences persecution, it often flourishes and when the Church experiences comfort, it often stagnates. At our judgement, we must give an account of our lives, and it is the quality of our faith, hope and love that will be judged, so, we are advised to be about the corporal and spiritual works of mercy as expressions of our discipleship. Please God, in whatever way is appropriate for our state of life, we will make ourselves available to Christ in the situations that cross the path of our life.

### **Opt. Mem. The First Martyrs of Rome – Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2026:**

In 64AD, there was a fire that swept across the Rome. It is unclear who started the fire, but Emperor Nero blamed the Christians. It was possibly Nero himself who started the fire for his own ends; but regardless Christians were useful scapegoats. Nero was cruel and some even suggest that he is the beast marked with 666 as described in the Book of Revelation. Nero threw many Christians to the wild beasts in the arena; other he soaked in tar and used as living torches to light the way for his party guests.

### **The Feast of the Dedication of Arundel Cathedral – Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2026:**

The Church was first dedicated in 1873 as the parish Church for Arundel under the patronage of St Philip Neri and was designed and built under the auspices of the Howard Family, who as Dukes of Norfolk and Earls of Arundel are the most prominent English Catholic family. Henry the 15th Duke of Norfolk commissioned Joseph Hansom to design a new Catholic sanctuary as a suitable counterpart to Arundel Castle. Its size reflects a renewed enthusiasm following Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and the restored hierarchy in 1850. Travelling on the train or by car through West Sussex, the two buildings make a striking vista to the South Downs. When the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton was created in 1965, it made sense for the Arundel Church to become the place to house the Bishop's Cathedra, his seat, hence a Cathedral. In 1971, after the canonization of the 40 Martyrs of England and Wales, the Cathedral was re-dedicated to Our Lady and St Philip Howard, and now contains his shrine, his relics buried in the Cathedral. It is Grade 1 Listed and all parishes help maintain it.

### **Opt. Mem of St Oliver Plunket, Bishop & Martyr – Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2026:**

Oliver Plunket was the Catholic Archbishop of Armagh. He had lived through the Cromwellian era which had defeated the Catholic cause in Ireland. However, on the restoration of the monarchy he founded a period of Catholic revival in Ireland. When the Test Act of 1673 was enacted (a series of English penal laws or religious tests for public office), Plunket refused to sign it, seeing restrictions on Catholics being reimposed. The Dublin government usually left Catholics alone, but Titus Oates, an English clergyman concocted the fictitious '*Popish Plot*', an allegation that Catholics were planning to assassinate Charles II. Despite having a price on his head, Plunket refused to leave his flock and was arrested. Knowing it unlikely an Irish jury would convict; his trial was moved to London. Although the allegation was unproven an all-Protestant jury did not let that bother them, understanding the political expediency. The 1st Grand Jury found no evidence, but instead of releasing him convened a second which convicted him of high treason for promoting the Roman Faith.

### **The Feast of St Thomas, Apostle – Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2026:**

It seems unfair that we still call Thomas '*doubting*', for when he sees the risen Jesus, he makes a sublime profession of expression of faith in Christ, declaring, '*my Lord and my God.*' And it seems that Thomas went further than any other Apostle to spread the good news of Christ crucified and risen from the dead. When the Jesuits went East in 16<sup>th</sup> Century to bring the faith to India and the Far East, they found an existing Christian Community called '*Thomas Christians*' on the Malabar Coast who said that their community was founded by Thomas himself. As an Apostle, he is called to the ultimate expression of faith in Christ – Martyrdom! Tradition says, he was killed with a spear at '*Thomas Mount*' in Chennai on 3 July 72 AD; his body was interred in Mylapore.

### **Opt. Mem of Elizabeth of Portugal – Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2026:**

Elizabeth was a beautiful princess married to King Denis of Portugal, who treated her cruelly and his sins of impurity scandalised the people. He listened to false gossip about his wife's infidelity and accidentally condemned an innocent man but because of his holiness was spared by the Holy Spirit. The king sent the man who had spread the gossip to find out what the delay was, and the executioners mistook him for the condemned man and killed him! The King moved to repentance, reformed his life. After his death, Elizabeth lived for 11 more years, performing works of charity and penance.