Opt. Memorial of St Edmund of Abingdon – Monday 16th November 2026:

Patron of the Portsmouth Diocese, Edmund of Abingdon was a distinguished scholar. At the University of Paris, he was one of the first to teach Aristotelian Philosophy, often seen as a foundational pillar of Catholic philosophy. While we would not accept everything Aristotle taught, we see particular harmony in regards the complementarity of faith and reason as two sources of truth. Aristotelian thought, therefore, is foundational to our understanding of metaphysics and the sacraments, to natural theology and to ethics and natural law. Being an intellectual heavy weight, Edmund soon rose to become a canon of Salisbury Cathedral before being elevated to the See of Canterbury, where he clashed with King Henry III. He defended the Church's rights and criticized the king's foreign policies. By threatening excommunication, Edmund forced the King to expel his French wife and allies, thus reasserting English laws, customs, and counsel. Henry then asked the pope to send a legate, Cardinal Otho, whose presence undermined Edmund's authority. Edmund excommunicated those who had not supported him. He left for Rome to appeal his case but died on the way.

Optional Memorial of St Hugh of Lincoln – Tuesday 17th November 2026:

Hugh was French, who became the first Carthusian monk to be canonized. The King appointed him prior of the Carthusian house at Witham, in Essex, a royal foundation. This royal patronage saw him elevated to the See of Lincoln where he defended the church's liberties, gaining him the respect of the English monarchy. When in France to promote peace between Kings John and Philip Augustus, Hugh revisited La Grande Chartreuse. Upon his return, he fell ill, died, and was buried in Lincoln Cathedral. He was known for his personal austerity and his kindness to the poor. He protected Jewish communities from persecution, a rare stance among medieval bishops.

Wednesday in 33rd Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 18th November 2026:

John gives us an image of heaven, of a throne at its centre, leaving us in no doubt as to God's majesty and power. The rainbow, as the first sign of the covenant, is again present showing that God wills the salvation of all people – there will be no blanket condemnation of humanity. The twenty-four thrones surrounding God's throne is a sign of completeness; both the twelve tribes of the old Israel and the twelve apostles of the New Israel, by which all nations are brought into the new and eternal covenant of God with his people. All are dressed in white because they have achieved salvation.

Thursday in 33rd Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 19th November 2026:

Following the *'account'* of humanity *'eating'* from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, we feel the gap between God and man. From that *'moment'*, we have longed for someone worthy enough to open the seal of divine wisdom so that we could be assured of how God will bring his final revelation to humanity. Only the risen Christ is worthy to open the seal and he is praised by the four-winged creatures (*the evangelists*), by the elders (*the apostles and twelve tribes of Israel*), by the whole host of angels and by all of creation (*although we are still a work in progress*). Christ, the Lamb of God, has perfectly demonstrated the depth of God's love for us; the obedience of this new Adam in accepting death, even death on a cross has cancelled out the disobedience of the old Adam. The opening of the scroll means we are in the end times (*the period between the Ascension and the Second Coming*). 'Revelation' shows us that Jesus as the Christ is worthy of our adoration; an action reserved only for God.

Friday in 33rd Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 20th November 2026:

Reading is powerful because it can convey more than just an idea but has the possibility of transforming the reader themselves. Reading can be solitary, peaceful, a moment to be alone with your own thoughts, but it can also provide collective wisdom and shared experience. It is also how God has chosen to communicate with his people. *'The word of God is something alive and active, cutting more finely than any double-edged sword'*. If it is merely excellent prose or poetry, it will taste as sweet as honey in our mouth, but will, in the end, turn sour in our stomach when it clashes against any lifestyle not compatible with the Gospel. The Gospel is not just a story that happened *'once upon a time'*, but the words of eternal life from the author of Christ our Lord.

The Presentation of the BVM in the Temple – Saturday 21st November 2026:

The bible says little about the life of Our Lady, yet, we know that Mary and Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple, so it would be inconceivable to believe that Mary's parents did not present her in the Temple in conformity to the laws and customs of the time. Children are a gift and in coming to the Temple, Mary is offered back to God so that she might be prepared for her destiny, so that, when the angel appears at the Annunciation, she is able to say yes to becoming the temple of the Lord, her womb becoming a sacred dwelling place for the Incarnation. Through Mary, the word becomes flesh and dwells amongst us, tabernacling himself amongst his people.