Opt. Memorial of St Clement, Pope – Monday 23rd November 2026:

Clement is named in the *'Roman Canon'*, the principal *'Eucharistic Prayer'* of the Church of Rome, with whom we are in communion. We celebrate every Mass in communion with *'those whose memory we venerate'*, especially the ever-virgin Mother of God and the glorious apostles and martyrs. After the list of the Apostles comes the names of the first five Popes, *'Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sixtus and Cornelius'*. We believe that St Clement was the fourth Pope from about 90AD, only 60 years after Christ and 30 years after St Peter's death. The Emperor Trajan had Clement arrested, forcing him to work in the marble quarries. The prisoners lacked water and so, Clement prayed, enabling him to find a miraculous spring and this marvel converted many inmates. While in prison he told people about Christ and so, to silence him, they placed an anchor round his neck and threw him into the sea; hence, the anchor becomes his cross, a symbol which emblazons the uniform of St Clement's school in Ewell.

Memorial of St Andrew Dun Lac & Companions – Tuesday 24th November 2026:

Today's memorial venerates Andrew Dun Lac and his 117 companions: Andrew, after receiving a good Christian education from the missionaries, inspired him to teach the faith to others, *'paying forward'* the good formation he had received. This investment in his formation continued to pay dividends, as in him awakened a vocation to the sacred priesthood. Father Andrew was tireless in his preaching of the good news to the poor, even though this placed his life in jeopardy. Around 130-300,000 Christians were martyred in Vietnam during the 18th Century. Christians were branded on the face with the words *'sinister religion'* and Christian communities were obliterated.

Memorial of St Catherine of Alexandria – secondary patron of the parish community of St Joan of Arc, Farnham – Wednesday 25th November 2026:

Alexandria was a fine city, a place of learning and culture, with a huge library; and its lighthouse was one of the ancient wonders of the world. Catherine was a renowned scholar, and at aged 14 she received a vision of Mary and the child Jesus, leading to her conversion. When the Emperor persecuted Christians, she denounced him. Rather than execute her, he ordered 50 other scholars to debate her, but they were blown away by her eloquence, and many converted. This led to her execution, but the emperor offered her his hand in marriage to save her, but she refused, dedicated only to Christ. She was martyred on what is now called the '*Catherine Wheel'*.

Thursday in 34th & Last Week in Ordinary Time – 26th November 2026:

Revelation speaks of the fall of a great city called *'Babylon'*. Many commentators associated this as a prophecy for the fall of Rome (in AD410). Rome suffered from unbridled indulgence, both materially and sexually and we might say, that such dangers remain evident in our own culture; certainly, selfish behaviours of indulgence, greed, accumulation of wealth and the scourge of idol worship continues to be a temptation for God's people, meaning we lose sight of the noble virtues of service and sacrifice, which keep our hearts and minds fixed on heaven. We must, then, be on our guard against behaviours that lead to the self-destruction of our society and culture.

Friday in 34th & Last Week in Ordinary Time – 27th November 2026:

Throughout November, the Church has invited us to reflect on the *'General Judgement'* at the end of time. Following the Resurrection, Christ comes to judge us when he will meet out his final justice upon the world, a terrible day of justice for evil doers but one of unbridled joy and deliverance for the faithful! We do not need to be overly fearful of this judgement, providing we have been actively striving to usher in the kingdom in the here and now. Neither should we forget that the evil one tries to tempt us away from the goodness and truthfulness of our true Christian dignity. He wishes to seduce us out of the garden of the Resurrection and away from life eternal. Our perseverance in our prayer, formation and mission, when added to our faith in Christ, is a virtue worth praying for, as it helps us secure our place in the *'new heavens and the new earth'* to come, this expected and radical change in the cosmos when God restores all things in Christ and brings peace and harmony to all creation.

Saturday in 34th & Last Week in Ordinary Time – 28th November 2026:

The water of life is a symbol of the Holy Spirit welling up inside the baptised, providing us the sanctifying grace that leads to eternal life. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and comes to lead, guide and keep us in the truth of Christ so that we may produce fruit, fruit that will last. As Ordinary Time comes to end, we are on the brink of a new year and a step closer to salvation. We resist the temptation to celebrate Christmas early but instead ponder our readiness to meet Jesus Christ when he comes again or calls us from this life. Advent is a season to be vigilant, on our guard against anything that draws us away from the Kingdom. It involves a constant effort not to be swept away by the excess of this passing world and instead be ever prayerful.