

The Solemnity of St Philip Howard – Monday 19th October 2026:

The veracity of an argument should always be able to stand up to debate. Philip heard Fathers Edmund Campion and Ralph Sherwin debate some Protestant theologians, who convinced him of the truth of the Catholic faith. Like many of his time, Philip had been baptised Catholic but had drifted, without conviction, over to the Protestant religion. His wife Ann had already come back to the Catholic Faith and was smuggling a priest into Arundel Castle to say Mass, and to receive Holy Communion. Inevitably his reconciliation with the Church became public knowledge and his letter to Cardinal Allen was intercepted by Sir Francis Walsingham, who sent a fake reply encouraging Philip to flee to France. Philip was arrested and spent 11 years in the Tower of London.

Tuesday in 29th Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 20th October 2026:

Christ is our peace. While on earth, our souls will always be restless until they find the eternal *‘refreshment, light and peace of heaven’*. This is the good news of salvation that we are charged with announcing to the world; that despite the hardship and uncertainty of the world, there is hope, that at death life is changed not ended and when the earthly *‘temple of our body turns to dust, a new and eternal dwelling is made ready for our souls’* in the peace of ‘heaven’. Our election in Christ separates us from the world but not from other people. They too have the great privilege of hearing the gospel but only if someone takes the trouble to announce it. This is the dignity of the Christian, who shares in the three-fold office of Christ, who is *‘priest, prophet and king’*.

Wednesday in 29th Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 21st October 2026:

St Paul was conscious of being an instrument specially chosen by God to reveal the mystery of God. In baptism, God has chosen us also to enter the mystery of the Trinity and share it with others, but what is mystery? It is a truth unfolding: the truth of who we are as God’s people, where we have come from and where we are headed. It is also a promise, a covenant that God has made with his people that he will not abandon us to the domain of death, but comes in mercy to the aid of all, so that those who seek might find him. The mystery or promise, then, does not need to be kept secret but it does need to be received with faith, an acceptance of a call to conversion and holiness. Those called to announce the gospel (i.e. every Christian) do not simply pass on their own personal opinions but the deposit of faith; we are faithful stewards of the mysteries of God, who promises us eternal life, not the errors of this passing world.

Opt. memorial of Pope St John Paul II – Thursday 22nd October 2026:

Today the alumni of St John's Seminary, Womersley gather for Holy Mass and Lunch at St George's Cathedral in Southwark for prayer and fraternity, and the odd glass of wine! Students will have their own memories of seminary life – good, bad and indifferent but all agree, that thanks to St John Paul II our formation in theology and philosophy benefitted greatly from his two great gifts to the Church: the revised Catechism of the Catholic Church and the New Code of Canon Law, both issued during his pontificate. From time to time, we all received instruction and formation that just seemed a little too good to be true and these two tomes enabled us to test the teaching we received to see if it was in fact in line with the deposit of faith or just wishful thinking.

Friday in 29th Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 23rd October 2026:

All people are called into the Church: the old and young, rich and poor, adult and child etc. There is an equality in Church membership but also a diversity of function: a motherly or fatherly role – apostles, prophets, preachers, teachers, administrators etc, and we must discern the charism of the Spirit granted us, live it out faithfully, without jealousy of another. The devil wishes to disrupt peace and harmony in the Church; he flourishes on discord, and by getting into the cracks leads many souls astray. Neither do we leave the weaker members of our community behind; the body is only as strong as its weakest member, and we look out for the innocent and vulnerable in society, doing what we can corporally and spiritually to help give glory to God.

Saturday in 29th Week in Ordinary Time (II) – 24th October 2026:

The diversity of graces or charisms given to individuals in the Church do not undermine Church unity, but when used properly enhance it. These different charisms include apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, parents and teachers to name a few. They cannot be demanded for they are gifts of Christ used for the building up of the Kingdom. These vocations and charisms flow from the throne of grace in heaven and the fruits of our activity flow back to him as an act of praise to His glory. All Christians have the obligation to preach Christ crucified and risen from the dead, the good news of salvation, the hope of eternal life. As Christians develop in faith and love, they become more firmly inserted into the body of Christ and make a greater contribution to its development. Animated and drawn together by the Holy Spirit we press onwards and upwards with confidence and joy, to take our place in our true home of heaven.