



Parish of St Wilfrid, Widnes

*Incorporating the churches of St Bede, St Michael,
St John Fisher and St Basil*



6th September 2026

Parish Office:

Monday to Friday: 9:30-16:30
(unless stated in newsletter)

Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Second Collection this week:
Catholic Education
Second Collection next week:
Home Mission

Parish Clergy: 0151 422 1772

Rev. Father Mark Moran (Parish Priest, Moderator).

Rev. Father Peter F. Ross (Parochial Vicar).

Rev. Deacon Paul Rooney.

Rev. Deacon Paul Whitehead.

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Psalm Response

"The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger and rich in mercy."

Gospel Acclamation Verse

"A new commandment I give to you, says the Lord,
that you love one another, just as I have loved you."

The Quiet Strength of Saying "Yes" Every Day

When we hear the word "fidelity," we often think of massive, historic commitments. We think of saints who stood firm in the face of great trials or monumental turning points in history. But if you ask anyone living a vowed religious life—our priests, deacons, nuns, sisters, and brothers—they will tell you that fidelity is actually built in the quiet, hidden moments of every single day.

This week I look forward to celebrating with two people who have responded generously to the Lord. Firstly with Sr. Bridget Folkard, SSMN, who celebrates 60 years of religious life as a Sister of St. Mary of Namur and then with Peter Ross Snr, (Fr. Peter's dad), who will be ordained to the diaconate on Friday evening.

In religious life, fidelity is the art of saying "yes" to God over and over again. It is a commitment renewed in the early morning prayers, in the routine tasks of community life, and in steady, quiet service to the vulnerable.

This week, let us pray for all religious men and women, especially those who have served our own parish. May their steady fidelity inspire each of us to live out our own daily callings with the same quiet, joyful constancy.

Fr. Mark

21st – 23rd May 2027 – Parish Pilgrimage - Northern Saints

Friday 21st

9.30am – Depart from outside St. Bede's Church to head north, stopping at Barnard Castle for lunch.

3pm – Arrive at St. Cuthbert's, Ushaw College where we shall stay for two nights B&B. We shall have a guided tour of the college and settle in our rooms.

6pm – We shall go to a local hostelry, The Board Inn, for a meal together and then return to the college for social time.

Saturday 22nd

8.30am – Breakfast

9.15am – Depart the college for Holy Island, Lindisfarne.

11.15am – Arrive at Holy Island for Holy Mass

12noon – Chance to explore and get some lunch.

2.30pm – Leave Holy Island

(Stopping en route at a supermarket so that we can all buy something for a shared table that evening)

5pm – Arrive back at Ushaw College.

6.30pm – Gather for shared table and social time together.

Sunday 23rd

8.30am – Breakfast

10am – Holy Mass in St. Cuthbert's Chapel

11am – Leave for a trip into Durham City and a chance to explore.

2pm – Leave Durham for home.

5.30pm – Arrive back to Widnes after a wonderful time together.

Costs: As yet, we do not have final costs, but the price will **only** include Bed and Breakfast. The meal in the Board Inn and your lunches on Saturday and Sunday are not included, also everyone will be encouraged to join in with the shared table. Single rooms are limited.

If you would like to register your interest with a **£50 deposit**, please pass your name and telephone number into the Parish Office for the attention of **SUSAN WARBURTON**, and we will gauge the interest in this pilgrimage.

Fr. Mark

Mass of Anointing and Prayers at the Shrine of St Peregrine

On **Saturday 19th September** at 12noon at Our Lady of the Assumption Church, L25 2RW there will be a Mass of anointing and prayers to St. Peregrine. St Peregrine is the patron saint of those with cancer and serious illnesses. All are welcome to pray for healing and comfort for themselves or loved ones who are ill or received difficult news. There will be coffee and cake to follow to raise money for MacMillan Cancer Support. All welcome!

Home Mission Sunday – 20th September

On Home Mission Sunday, previously known as Evangelii Gaudium, Catholics across England and Wales are invited to pray for the work of evangelisation and to support the Mission Directorate of the Bishops' Conference through the annual second collection.

The day is a reminder that we are all called to share the joy of the Gospel in our homes, workplaces, parishes and communities, witnessing to Christ in our everyday lives.

For resources, reflections and further information, visit: cbcew.org.uk/home-mission-sunday

Young Catholics in Widnes

Twenty-five of us enjoyed Benediction, BBQ, and Bingo last Sunday. Great to see so many of you. Next event: **Friday 9th October**, 18:00 at St. Basil's, 'A balanced view on Vatican II - a talk by Fr Mark Drew'. Social to follow. Find us on Instagram: [young_catholics_in_widnes](https://www.instagram.com/young_catholics_in_widnes). **Fr Peter**

Warrington and Widnes Deanery Mass – Holy Family, Cronton

You are invited to attend our Deanery Mass this coming **Friday, 18th September**, at 12noon at Holy Family Church in Cronton. This gathering provides a wonderful opportunity for our community to come together in prayer for the needs of the Church across this part of the Archdiocese.

Parish Choir

If you have not sung before, or not sung for years, it does not matter. You will be most welcome to join us. Due to safeguarding guidance all members of the choir must be over 18. Our next practice is on Monday 14th September at 7pm in St Bede's church.

Widnes Catholic Children's Choir.

Calling all children in years 2-8 to join our exciting **FREE** musical opportunity in Widnes. The choir rehearses weekly on a **Monday, 4-5pm** at St John Fisher Parish Centre, Moorfield Road, Widnes. Come and make new friends, learn fantastic music and sing in some amazing places! To find out more visit <http://eepurl.com/i8AkqA> or scan the QR code on the poster at back of church.

Hear more about CAFOD's work!

Thanks to your generous support at moments like Harvest Family Fast Day, CAFOD works across the globe. We are hosting a visit from Michel, CAFOD's manager in Sierra Leone and Liberia. He will share his experiences of the kind of work your support makes possible – a great chance to hear more detail about the difference you can make!

When: Saturday 26th September, 2pm – 3:30pm (with refreshments from 1:45pm)

Where: Parish Hall at St John Fisher (Moorfield Rd, Widnes, WA8 3JA)

St. Vincent de Paul Address

This weekend, St. Wilfrid's Parish will warmly welcome Mr. Jim Lynch, the President of the SVP Society, as he speaks to congregations at all Masses. This visit offers a wonderful opportunity for parishioners to hear firsthand about the vital charity work being carried out in our name, made possible through our community's continued prayers and financial generosity. The St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) is an international Catholic volunteering organisation dedicated to tackling poverty and disadvantage by providing direct, practical assistance to those in need. In keeping with our parish's long-standing tradition of hospitality, we look forward to giving Mr. Lynch a very warm welcome as he shares how our collective support is transforming lives.

Are you an RCIA 'Graduate'?

If you are one of our wonderful RCIA Alumni from last year, or from previous years, we would love to invite you to a Reunion Social at **7pm on 29th September** in the Parish Guild Hall.

Grab a drink and a piece of cake and let's get together to talk about the future and how we can accompany each other, and our fellow parishioners, to keep growing in faith as we continue to make St Wilfrid's a wonderful place to be! If you would like to know more about RCIA which starts **16th September**, please leave your contact details at the Parish Office and Pauline Rolt will contact you.

St Wilfrid's RCIA Team

Jubilee Club

Please join us on **Thursday 17th September** at St John Fisher Hall, 1.30 till 3.30. All are welcome for an afternoon of entertainment with the talented, D'Ukes Ukelele band and bingo.

Parish Liturgy

Sunday	13th September	Twenty Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	
09.00	Holy Mass	St. Bede	Robert O'Shaughnessy
10.15	Holy Mass	St. Michael	Parishioners
11.30	Holy Mass	St. Bede	George Grace
15.00	Evening Prayer with the Apostolic Nuncio	Cathedral of Christ The King	
16.00	Holy Mass	St. Bede	Lil & Roy Nelson
Monday	14th September	Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross	
09.30	Service of the Word with Holy Communion	St. Basil	
Tuesday	15th September	Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows	
11.30	Exposition and Rosary		
12.00	Holy Mass	St. Bede	John Prendegast
Wednesday	16th September	Memorial of Ss. Cornelius & Cyprian	
09.30	Holy Mass	St. Bede	Frances & John Fearon
	<i>(please note change in time)</i>		
Thursday	17th September	Thursday Week 24 in Ordinary Time	
10.30	Funeral Service	St. Michael	Margaret Wall
14.00	St. Bede Junior School, Welcome Mass	St. Bede	Martin Hunt
Friday	18th September	Friday Week 24 in Ordinary Time	
12.00	Deanery Mass	Holy Family, Cronton	Tommy Durr June Pye
Saturday	19th September	Vigil of the Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	
10.00	Confessions	St. John Fisher	
16.30	Holy Mass	St. Basil	Frances Smith
18.00	Holy Mass	St. John Fisher	David Grey
Sunday	20th September	Twenty Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	
09.00	Holy Mass	St. Bede	Sheila Allen
10.15	Holy Mass	St. Michael	SVP
11.30	Holy Mass	St. Bede	Parishioners
16.00	Holy Mass	St. Bede	Robert Hatton

Sanctuary Lamp

The Sanctuary Lamp burns for 7 days for your intention

St. Bede:	Ray Johnson
St. Basil:	Thanksgiving
St. John Fisher:	George O'Grady
St. Michael:	Dolly Eaton

Rest in Peace

Marie Shropshire, Carolyn McMullin
Carol Clark, Brian James,
Sandra Kirkham (Lightfoot),
James Burgess & Peter Gibbs

May the Angels lead them into Paradise!

Parish of St. Wilfrid, Widnes

Introduction:

This is a report given to the parishioners of St Wilfrid's following the long periods of consultation concerning the future shape of the church buildings that will be needed in Widnes.

We are sharing this report in order to keep you up to date and to ensure that the process is as transparent as possible.

No decisions have been made. Having listened to our proposals and having weighed up all the factors affecting the Parish, the Deanery and the Archdiocese as a whole the Archbishop will consult his Trustees, the Council of Priests and then a possible way forward will be decided upon.

Background and Current Challenges

Formation of the Parish

In 2015, the Catholic community in Widnes came together in faith to form the new parish of St Wilfrid. There was some doubt and fear but also hope and expectation. At the time, it was understood that this was not the final solution, but an important stepping stone along the way. The arrangement of one parish operating from four churches was expected to meet the needs of the community for the foreseeable future. But this was never foreseen to be the final plan.

St Bede's and the Parish Survey

Before the renovation and restoration of St Bede's church, parishioners were surveyed to gather their views on whether St Bede's was likely to remain the church serving the community in 25 years' time. The survey received a strong response, with overwhelming agreement that this would be the case.

The Heating System at St Michael's

The issue of the heating system at St Michael's then arose. A request was made to repair the system, but the expenditure was not approved by the Archdiocesan Trustees.

This decision came as a shock. The Vision Group submitted a report arguing that the needs of the parish were best served by retaining four churches across the town, as had been agreed in 2015, and that the expenditure should therefore be approved. Although the Pastoral Organisation Sub-Committee supported this view, (with some notable exceptions) the request was again rejected by the Trustees. They acknowledged the sacrifices already made in Widnes but concluded that the expenditure was not in the best interests of the Archdiocese as a whole.

A Wider Archdiocesan Challenge

In the last 12 months the focus has shifted. The question was no longer simply about the heating system at St Michael's. A wider challenge had been set for every parish in the Archdiocese: how each community could be served sustainably in the future.

This challenge centred on three main areas:

- The Archdiocese is operating at a significant loss, meaning that major expenditure could not be approved. It also has too many buildings, including churches, which were becoming increasingly costly to maintain. This was one reason the request for a new heating system was rejected.
- The number of parishioners is decreasing. Many churches have smaller congregations and reduced income, making continued expenditure on buildings used only for a few hours each week increasingly difficult to justify.
- The number of active priests has fallen dramatically and is expected to continue declining unless there is a real and sustained increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life. As a result, priests will only be able to provide full and realistic pastoral support across a reduced number of church buildings.

Consultation and Parish Response

All parishes were asked to survey their parishioners on a range of issues so that the Archdiocese could build an overall picture of parish life. Our parish carried out this survey earlier this year and published the results in the newsletter.

Alongside this wider work, the unresolved issue of the heating system at St Michael's remained. The Vision Group arranged a series of consultations, including the formation of an Exploration Group, drawing on the expertise of a wide range of parishioners.

Following this consultation, the Vision Group concluded that the best way to serve the people of Widnes was to continue as a four-church community, as agreed in 2015. This recommendation, together with the supporting documentation, was submitted to the Archdiocese for consideration.

The Reality of the Decision

The response from the Archdiocese was clear. If the people of Widnes believed that St Michael's should continue to be supported, then the cost would need to be met by making sacrifices elsewhere. This was not only about the cost of repairing the heating system. It was about the cost of maintaining all the parish churches over the medium term, at a time of fewer priests, fewer parishioners, and rising costs.

The planning challenge was not about what might happen in twenty, ten, or even five years' time. The question being asked was how best to provide for the pastoral needs of the people of Widnes with one priest from today.

This may come as a shock to some people, but it is the same challenge now being posed to every parish across the Archdiocese.

Options Submitted to the Trustees

To ensure that everyone is aware of the difficult decisions ahead, the following options have been submitted to the Trustees at their request:

1. Two churches – St Bede and St Basil.

St Bede and St Basils to become the 2 churches for the parish of St Wilfrid's. To consult about the future of St John Fisher church, hall and presbytery when St. Bede's Restoration concludes in 2027. To consult about the future use of St Michael's.

2. Three churches: St Bede, St John Fisher and St Basil.

St. John Fisher site to be kept under review for future viability. To consult about the future use of St Michael's.

3. Two churches – St Bede and St Michael.

To consult about the future of St John Fisher church, hall and presbytery when St. Bede's Restoration concludes in 2027. To consult about the future of St. Basil's site.

The options are not given in isolation. They ask the Trustees to consider a number of unknowns (such as how much it would cost to maintain closed churches) together with costings for the ongoing repairs of churches taken from the Quinquennial Reports.

This is not ideal. It is, however, a stark reminder of the challenging times we face. Please pray that the Holy Spirit, as always, will guide decision makers in their endeavours both for Widnes, our Deanery of Widnes Cronton and Warrington and the wider Archdiocese.

The Vision Group – Fr. Mark, Fr. Peter, Pauline Rolt, Peter McCann, Susan Warburton, Denise Roberts, Dcn. Paul Rooney and Dcn. Paul Whitehead