

## READINGS

**Reading I: Isaiah 58:7-10**

**Psalm: 111(112):4-9**

**Reading II: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5**

**Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16**

Jesus said to his disciples: "You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."

[Matthew 5:13](#)

Sodium chloride, also known as salt, is one of the most commonly used substances in the world, used for seasoning, preserving, and purifying. Sodium chloride is a very stable compound and cannot lose its flavour unless there is a chemical reaction or dissolution. **Why, then, did Jesus suggest that salt could lose its taste?** One likely explanation is that the salt used in ancient Palestine could indeed lose its flavour due to impurities and the conditions in which it was stored.

The Dead Sea, located in modern-day southeast Israel, contains a massive deposit of salt and other minerals. According to biblical history, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt in this region. Because of the vast salt and mineral deposits, the area surrounding the Dead Sea is desolate.

Salt extracted from the Dead Sea was never pure sodium chloride. Gypsum and other minerals were also present, making the salt impure. If this salt were stored improperly or came into contact with water, the sodium chloride could dissolve and wash away, leaving behind the solid residue of minerals. These residual substances, like gypsum, had the appearance of salt but were tasteless and useless for flavouring, preserving, and purifying purposes. When this happened, the "salt" lost its taste. In light of this explanation, Jesus' teaching becomes especially clear.

The first notable feature of salt is its ability to add flavour to food. By calling His disciples the "salt of the earth," Jesus was instructing them to enhance the "flavour" of the world by bringing the truth of the Gospel and the joy of His message to others. A Christian life lived in fidelity to Christ would make the world a better and more virtuous place, just as salt enhances the

flavour of food.

Salt is also commonly used for preservation. Before the age of refrigerators and freezers, salt was mixed with food to prevent corruption, by drawing out moisture and hindering bacteria and other microorganisms. Though this practice is still used today, it was especially vital in ancient times. By being the "salt of the earth," Jesus was calling His disciples to preserve the world from moral decay. Through their witness and proclamation of the Gospel, they were to act as a preservative against sin and spiritual ruin. If they were to "lose their taste," they would become indistinguishable from the rest of the world and ineffective in their mission. Hence, Jesus was exhorting them - and us - to avoid becoming watered down and bland in our witness to the Gospel.

Lastly, salt held a significant role in Jewish religious practices, symbolizing purity and consecration. In sacrificial rituals, salt was used to consecrate offerings, as commanded in Leviticus: "You shall season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not let the salt of the covenant with your God be lacking from your grain offering. On every offering you shall offer salt" ([Leviticus 2:13](#)). By seasoning their offerings with salt, the Israelites preserved the sacrifices from decay, making them pure. This practice reflects the disciples' role in purifying the world through their example of holiness, their lives of self-sacrifice, and their participation in Christ's redemptive work. They were to live lives of integrity, leading others to God through the purity of their hearts and their unwavering commitment to His will.

Reflect today on this powerful metaphor of being the salt of the earth. The world desperately needs the enriching "flavour" of God's grace. Without Him, the world is left to corruption and decay. With God, we, and those we serve, are preserved as pure and holy offerings, adding to His glory and growing in holiness.

**Most pure and enriching Lord, You alone enrich and enhance our lives, preserve us from sin, and make us a pure offering to Your Father. Please use me to be an instrument of Your grace to the world, making me the "salt" that remains pure and effective, to bring Your saving truth to the ends of the earth. Jesus, I trust in You.**



## Parish of Blessed Hugh Faringdon & Buckland FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 8TH FEBRUARY 2026

### North Downs Pastoral Area

#### Diocese of Portsmouth

Parish Priest: Revd Claro Conde

email: [cconde@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:cconde@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

Telephone: 01367 358895

Website: [www.blessedhugh.org.uk](http://www.blessedhugh.org.uk)

1 Coxwell Road, Faringdon, SN7 7EB

Parish email:

### Parish of Blessed Hugh Faringdon & Buckland



### Ministries

**Bible Studies** - Dr. Neill Taylor & Paul Padley & Team  
**Family & Youth Catechesis (Confirmation)** - Mrs. Helena & Emmanuel Boakye & Team  
**Children Catechesis (Children's Liturgy & FHC)** - Mrs. Kathleen Thomas & Team  
**Evangelization Catechesis (Adult Evening Studies)** - Dr JP Crilly & Team  
**Administrator & Maintenance** - Andrew Chell  
**Office Secretary** - Nerisa Gomez  
**Finance** - Lorraine Brabin,  
**PPC & Youth & Children** - Kathleen Thomas,  
**Safeguarding** - Ann O'Reilly - [safeguarding.buck@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding.buck@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

**Mass Setting: Mass of Renewal**  
(No Gloria during LENT)

**Children: 802 - Cycle through verses**

**Entrance: 672 The Spirit lives to set us free**

**Psalm: 111(112):4-9**

*Those who fear the Lord are lights in the darkness; those who fear the Lord are light for the world.*

**Offertory: 122 All that I am**  
**Communion: 744 Yahweh, I know you are near**  
**Recessional: 263 Forth in the peace of Christ we go**

Sunday Mass is at 10am.

You can follow Fr. Claro's daily international Masses from his home on Facebook Live here:

<https://facebook.com/blessedhughfaringdonchurch/>

His current schedule (subject to change) is:  
 7 am Regular Daily Masses Monday to Sunday.  
 6 pm Masses on Wednesdays and Sundays.  
 On the first Wednesday of each month:  
 6 pm Mass in the church (Our Mother of Perpetual Help).

### Bible Study

We have a Bible Study, reflecting on the coming Sunday Mass Readings, with Fr Claro on Zoom on Mondays from 8 – 9 pm. To join please use the link on the Parish website home page.

## FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 8TH FEBRUARY 2026

### DATES

18th February ASH WEDNESDAY

Friday 27th February- CAFOD Lenten Family Fast Day

29th March PALM SUNDAY

3rd APRIL GOOD FRIDAY

5th APRIL EASTER SUNDAY

**OPEN KITCHEN** 6th March, 10th April. All meals held at Blessed Hugh Catholic Church Hall from 12-2pm (lunch served at 12:30pm) Home cooked two course meal. Pay what you can.

**RCIA Candidates:** Darren Hall, Jamie Gans, Stewart Harwood-Hope, Mary Kasongo, Martha Kaweche State, Nicola Bullivant. RCIA Meetings Every Wednesdays at 7.30pm starting with Evening Prayers

**FHC (First Holy Communion) Candidates for 2026,** on CORPUS CHRISTI SUNDAY on 7th of June, please email [cconde@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:cconde@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

**CONFIRMATION 2026:** June 6th, Friday at 7.30pm at English Martyrs DIDCOT. Confirmation Candidates 2026, please email me [cconde@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:cconde@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

**PPC & Finance Meetings,** see on the parish website

### PPC & Finance Meetings

Current finance statement. ACCOUNT CDP Buckland Balance 12 January 2026 - £34,001, 17 November 2025 - £34,497.

Bristol Fire have completed their inspection and service of the alarms and emergency light equipment.

### Parish questionnaire

Thank you to everyone who has completed the survey so far. We have had 22 responses. The questionnaire will remain open until the end of the month. Please do complete the survey, whether you have strong opinions or not, we want to hear from all of you. You can find the survey on the parish website here:

<https://blessedhugh.org.uk/questionnaire/> or you can follow this QR code:



### CAFOD Lenten appeal: The Big Lent Walk 2026 and Lent Family Fast Day 2026

This Lent CAFOD is focused on providing some of the world's most vulnerable people with the basics of life: food and water. Read on to see how you can help.

You could sign up for CAFOD's Big Lent Walk- 5 km every day for the 40 days of Lent. Ask people to sponsor you and raise money to help provide clean drinking water around the world. You can read more here: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/>  
Friday 27th February is CAFOD's Lent Family Fast Day. The idea is very simple: fast on that Friday (surely you should be fasting on every Friday in Lent?), and donate the money saved to CAFOD to help them provide sustainable food sources to those in countries challenged by climate change. For example, in Bangladesh and South Sudan, where flooding is a growing problem, they are providing floating gardens. In Zimbabwe, where drought threatened everything, they work with families and local experts to build eco-gardens, using drought-resistant crops and a solar-powered water pumps. Those pumps, funded by Fast Day donations like yours, turn dry ground into fertile land. You can read more here: <https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/family-fast-day>

### Formation corner

**Are you interested in becoming a catechist for the children's liturgy?** If so, speak to Kathleen Thomas.

**Are you interested in becoming a catechist for the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)?** If so, speak to Peter Starr, Paul Padley or Wilibroad Chashi.

If you are keen for either role, but are worried that you don't know enough, or want guidance on how to do it, do not worry, not only do we provide guidance within the parish, but there are upcoming training days within the pastoral area too.

### RCIA and Catholic Forum

A reminder that the RCIA group meets every Wednesday at 7.30 p.m. in the church. All are welcome!

The RCIA group are following the Aquinas Catechism. St Thomas Aquinas was a Dominican. If you would like to hear the thoughts of some current day Dominicans as you do the washing up, fold the laundry or do your commute, then please consider these two podcasts:

From the Irish Dominicans:

[https://dominicans.ie/video\\_categories/podcasts/](https://dominicans.ie/video_categories/podcasts/)

From the American Dominicans:

<https://godspaining.org/>

### Cambrian Learning Trust

Cambrian Learning Trust currently have a number of vacancies for governors in our schools. Volunteering as a school governor has so many benefits. In volunteering your time, you are making a positive contribution to the success of the school you serve, creating real impact on the lives of its pupils, staff and the local community.

If you are interested in becoming a governor, please visit [www.cambrianlearningtrust.org/becomegovernor](http://www.cambrianlearningtrust.org/becomegovernor) or email [queries@cambrianlt.org](mailto:queries@cambrianlt.org)

### Formation corner-training for children's liturgists (current and aspiring)

On Saturday 14th February there will be training for children liturgists by the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph from Sway in Hampshire at St John Vianney church in Wantage. The training will begin after morning Mass (Mass at 10.00, training at 10.30) and last until lunchtime. Please let Kathleen Thomas know if you are interested.

### Evening talks-2026

Friday 27<sup>th</sup> February- evening talk

**"Why Catholics are feminists and feminists should be Catholic"**

Blessed Hugh Faringdon Evening Talks

## Why Catholics are feminists and feminists should be Catholics

FRIDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2026, 7.45PM  
FREE ENTRY - BABIES WELCOME



St Catherine of Alexandria  
Caravaggio

About our speaker: Suzanne Topham is an atheist-to-Catholic convert (via the Church of England) who grew up in the musci belt of North London and now homeschools her four children in East Hendred.

Fish and chips! Join us prior to the talk, at 7pm, for a fish supper. £15 pp. Please email [pblfbucklandandfaringdon@gmail.com](mailto:pblfbucklandandfaringdon@gmail.com) by 23rd February to book.

Parish Hall  
Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic Church  
Marlborough Street  
Faringdon SN7 7JE