READINGS

Reading I: Wisdom 6:12-16
Psalm: 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
Reading II: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18
Gospel: Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus told his disciples this parable: "The kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish and five were wise."
Matthew 25:1-2

The Parable of the Ten Virgins draws on culturally familiar language and practices from first-century Israel. Understanding the wedding customs of that time sheds light on its deeper meaning.

First, the bride and groom did not choose each other. The father of the groom selected a bride for his son and spoke to the bride's father to obtain his consent. If the bride's father agreed, the two fathers drew up a contract, which often included a financial contribution from the groom's family to the bride's - both to compensate for the loss of her presence in the household and to symbolize the value the groom placed on her.

Once an agreement was reached, the bride price was paid, and a betrothal ceremony took place. During this ceremony, the bride and groom were legally bound to each other, though they would not yet live together. From that point on, the bride belonged to the groom, and the union could only be dissolved through a formal divorce. After the betrothal, the groom returned to his father's house to prepare a place for his bride - often by building a new room onto the family home. This period of preparation could last up to a year. During that time, the bride remained in her father's house, readying herself and awaiting the groom's return.

When the groom had finished his preparations and received his father's consent, he and his friends would set out to retrieve the bride. This usually happened at night, and the exact timing was unknown to the bride and her attendants. As a result, they had to remain constantly watchful. When the groom drew near, a cry would go out - often accompanied by trumpet blasts or joyful shouts - announcing his arrival. The bride, accompanied by her virgin attendants, would rise to meet him with lamps lit. Together, they would process to the groom's house, where the door would be shut and the wedding feast would begin. The celebration itself could last several days.

It is against this backdrop that Jesus tells today's parable. The story takes place toward the end of the betrothal period, when the groom was expected to arrive at any moment. This period of watchful anticipation symbolizes our present age, when we are already bound to Christ through Baptism. The price for our mystical marriage was the death of the Son of Man, the Bridegroom Himself. Now we must remain vigilant, anticipating His arrival.

The bridegroom's arrival at midnight represents the unexpected moment of Christ's return at the end of time, at the hour of our death, and even His daily coming by grace. The cry in the dark symbolizes the call of accountability and divine judgment, when every soul will rise to meet the Lord. At that moment, it will become clear who among us was wise and who was foolish. The wise brought oil, symbolizing the necessary interior disposition of grace, charity, and perseverance. The foolish failed to prepare. And while all may have fallen asleep, only those who lived in readiness will enter the wedding feast. Once the door is locked, no one else may enter.

See yourself as one of the bridesmaids, dozing in the stillness of night, only to be startled awake by the sudden trumpet blast and the cry: "Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!" Are you ready, today, to meet the Lord? Or do you, like the foolish virgins, presume you still have plenty of time left to prepare? This parable calls us not only to be ready for death—which may come without warning - but also to be attentive to the many ways Jesus comes to us daily by grace. He knocks at the door of our hearts in moments of prayer, in opportunities to love, to repent, to forgive, and to surrender. Each of these is a visitation, a miniature midnight cry. Every graced invitation is one we must be ready for, with our lamps burning and our hearts open. To delay, to resist, or to put Jesus off is to risk being shut out - not only from the eternal wedding feast, but also from the joy of His presence here and now.

Reflect today on the oil in your own lamp. Is it full and ready to burn brightly at a moment's notice? Have you been attentive to the daily promptings of grace, or have you grown spiritually drowsy, distracted by worldly cares? Ask the Lord to awaken your soul, to keep you vigilant and eager for His coming, whether at the end of your life or in the quiet moments of each day. Remain watchful and be prepared to follow Him in every moment of every day.

My Lord and Bridegroom of the Church, You call us to vigilance, so that when You come to us - whether by grace throughout the day or at the end of our lives - we may be ready to follow You into the wedding feast of Divine Union. Free me, I pray, from all complacency and spiritual sloth. Grant me instead the virtues of attentiveness and diligence, that I may respond to every graced moment with love and fidelity. May each response draw me into deeper communion with You, now and forever. Jesus, I trust in You.

Parish of Blessed Hugh Faringdon & Buckland
Thirty Second Sunday - November 8th 2026

North Downs Pastoral Area

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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

Mass Setting: until Advent: Mass in honour of Pope Paul IX – with Irish Alleluia (36) – Then change to JANCO.

Children: 804 Isn't it good

Entrance: 153: Awake, awake: fling off the night

Psalm: 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

For you my soul is thirsting, O God my God

Offertory: 639: Take my hands

Communion: 699: Upon thy table, Lord

Recessional: 274: Give me joy in my heart

Sunday Mass is at 10am.
Exception - 8th November: 9.45am

The Mass is usually also streamed on Facebook here: https://facebook.com/blessedhughfaringdonchurch/

You can follow Fr. Claro's daily international Masses from his home on Facebook here: https://facebook.com/claro.conde/

His current schedule (subject to change) is: 6.30 am Regular Daily Masses Monday to Sunday.

Bible Study

We have a Bible Study, reflecting on the coming Sunday Mass Readings, with Fr Claro on Zoom on Mondays from 7.00pm. To join please use the link on the Parish website home page.

Thirty Second Sunday - November 8th 2026

YOUTUBE LINK for the Bible Study
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTbOptDfhnY



The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids is not addressed to those who have rejected Jesus. It is addressed to those who have already chosen to follow him. The question is no longer whether someone will become a disciple. The question is what kind of disciple they will be while they await their Lord's return.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY. We celebrate Mass early at 945am so we can join the Remembrance Sunday Service at the Market Square



On the weekend of 14th/15th November, we will hold our first **Second Collection for the Priests' Retirement Fund**. This is an opportunity to support the priests who have faithfully served our parishes and communities throughout their lives.



COP31: A Call to Care for Our Common Home.
Andrea Hoyland brings us the latest CAFOD update as we approach COP31 on Tuesday 10th November.

November
21st November **Feast of the Presentation of Mary,** 3pm Mass at St George Buckland
PPC & Finance Meetings, see in the parish website. Please read the minutes. If you have ideas or issues to present, please inform me or any member of the PPC.
MONDAY BIBLE ZOOM time 7pm
YOUTH MEETING every other Friday, contact Helena Boakye 07455 993296

STATUE OF OUR LADY of FATIMA would like to visit home. We bring her to your home where you pray the Holy Rosary. She can stay for a week or so, then we will take her to another family. Any family interested in hosting the statue pls contact Fr. Claro.

DECEMBER
24th December Thursday 6pm VIGIL MASS (Blessed Hugh Faringdon RC Church at Faringdon SN7 7JE)

25th December Friday Christmas Day,

9am CHRISTMAS DAY MASS (Blessed Hugh Faringdon RC Church Marlborough St, Faringdon SN7 7JE)

11am CHRISTMAS DAY MASS St George (corner St. George & Buckland Road, Buckland, SN7 8QW)

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Evening talk - The Annunciation in Art- 20th November

There are few scenes in the Bible that have been painted more often than the Annunciation.
What is it about the image of an angel visiting a young woman that attracts so widely?
Why would a secular culture find comfort or interest in that depiction?
How is it that there is such visual variety in the interpretation of that event?
How is it that the Annunciation is associated with Christmas rather than 25th March each year?
Across at least eight centuries, The Annunciation has revealed how each era has imagined holiness, Mary's consent, and the presence of divine grace in the world.
Join us on Friday 20th November in the hall to find out the answers to these questions. Our speaker is the very knowledgeable Dr Peter Foot.
Peter is a former university teacher whose retirement from professional military education has given the opportunity to explore Art and the Christian faith - a favourite subject at school. He has given many illustrated talks on the subject. He is currently Lay Chair of the Vale of White Horse Deanery Synod.

Holy Rosary
Pray the Rosary with us! 3 p.m. in the church, every Saturday.

Encyclical Club -discussing "Dilexit Nos"
Dilexit Nos was Pope Francis' last encyclical, and dealt with divine love and the Sacred Heart of Jesus. We will be meeting after Mass on Sunday 15th November to start discussing this encyclical. You can access the encyclical here:
https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/20241024-enciclica-dilexit-nos.html

PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE E-NEWS
https://mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/issue553

Dates for your Diary

- 15th November- Encyclical Club- Dilexit Nos. After Mass in the hall.
- 15th November- filming of Mass
- 20th November- evening talk in the hall (7.45 p.m.) "The Annunciation in Art"
- 22nd November- Feast of Christ the King. Shared lunch after Mass.
- 5th December- CAFOD charity cake sale in the hall. 10.30-13.30
- 11th December- ACN charity quiz in the hall. 7.45 p.m.

Shared lunch after Mass - 22nd November Feast of Christ the King

The 22nd November is the Feast of Christ the King and, as is traditional in this parish, we are having a shared lunch after Mass in the hall.
Please bring along food to share, and please feel free to invite along friends and family, especially those who attend other churches.
As always, we need some volunteers to help set up the hall before Mass and to help tidy up afterwards. Please let JP Crilly know if you can help in either capacity.

Filming of Mass and coffee after Mass- 15th November

There will be a new pastoral area website, and on this website there will be videos providing a snapshot of each parish, including what Mass looks like at each particular church.
To this end Mass on 15th November will be filmed, as will the refreshments in the hall afterwards. If you would rather not be caught on camera, please avoid sitting in the front few rows, and please let the videoing team know before the start of Mass.
Conversely, if you DON'T MIND being filmed, PLEASE DO sit in the front few rows, so the church looks as full as it usually is!

RCIA Course
Our introductory course to Christianity in general, and Catholicism in particular, using the Catechism of St Thomas Aquinas (one of the greatest theologians and philosophers), began on14th October.
While the course is ideal for those who are not Catholic and wish to learn more about the Church, or those preparing for baptism as an adult, **it is also very informative for all Catholics too.**
Please consider sharing it with anyone you think might be interested. You can find more details here:
https://blessedhugh.org.uk/docs/RCIA26-27.pdf

Car Parking
A reminder that on Sundays, please leave the church car park for Fr Claro, and for elderly and infirm parishioners, to minimise the distance they have to walk. If you are able to walk from the Southampton Street car park, please park there (it is free on Sunday) and leave the limited spaces in the church car park for those who need them.

ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS
There are changes in the requirements of DBS checks. Please contact Ann O'Reily to check if your VOLUNTARY ministry needs DBS checks and Safeguarding Training. EMAIL Parish of Blessed Hugh Faringdon - Safeguarding
safeguarding.buck@portsmouthdiocese.org

5th December- Charity cake sale in aid of CAFOD

On 5th December we will have our usual Advent charity cake sale in aid of CAFOD. It will be in the church hall between 10.30 a.m. and 1 p.m. Volunteers required to set up (from 10.00 a.m.) and man the stall and clear up afterwards. Donations of homemade cakes, biscuits, pies, bread and preserves as usual very much required.
If you can help in either capacity, please let JP Crilly know.

HELEN PAKEMAN - SERVICE OF CELEBRATION

The Service celebrating the life of Helen Pakeman will take place on Saturday 21st November - 12pm - in All saints. ALL WELCOME.

Book of Remembrance
The online Book of Remembrance is open on the parish website. Please click the link on the page to add the names of your deceased family and friends.
blessedhugh.org.uk/book-of-remembrance