

**PRESBYTERY**  
37 Frindsbury Road,  
Strood, ME2 4JA  
01634717582  
**07960 322259**

(Mobile number for urgent pastoral needs,  
including Anointing of the Sick and Holy  
Communion)

**PARISH PRIEST**

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[mebratedesalegn@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:mebratedesalegn@rcaos.org.uk)

**SYRO-MALABAR CHAPLAIN**

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07958 677299

**PARISH SISTER**

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01474 569565

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**PARISH WEBSITE**

[www.englishmartyrsrccstrood.org](http://www.englishmartyrsrccstrood.org)

**DONATIONS**

Nat West Bank  
Sort code: 60-21-02  
Account number: 55082904  
Account Name: RCAS Strood

*This parish is part of the RCAOS registered*

**ENGLISH MARTYRS  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Headmistress Ms Catherine Thacker  
Frindsbury Road, Strood  
ME2 4JA  
01634 718964

*A member of Kent Catholic Schools Partnership*

**LAST WEEK  
ATTENDANCE  
414**

**WEEKLY COLLECTION**  
GIFT AID £311.10  
NON-GIFT AID £563.91

**TOTAL £875.01**  
**CLERGY RETIRED FUND SECOND  
COLLECTION**  
**£468.09**



# ENGLISH MARTYRS' STROOD



**FEBRUARY**  
The Holy Family

## ✠ HOLY MASS FOR THE WEEK 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2026

Missal: Prayers and readings PG. 122

**SUNDAY 22<sup>ND</sup>**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

8.30am Said mass

*Florette Lewis RIP*

10.30am Sung mass

*Adriana Krupka Birthday intentions*

**MONDAY 23<sup>RD</sup>**

**SAINT POLYCARP**

No public mass today

**TUESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup>**

**FERIA**

9.30am Holy Mass

*Lily Farrell RIP*

**WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup>**

**SAINT ETHELBERT**

9.30am Holy Mass

*Wellbeing of Susan Hunwick*

**THURSDAY 26<sup>TH</sup>**

**FERIA**

9.30am Holy Mass

10.00am-11am Adoration

*For the forgotten souls in the Purgatory*

**FRIDAY 27<sup>TH</sup>**

**FERIA**

9.30am Holy Mass

*(FRIDAY ABSTINENCE)*

10-12noon Adoration

*Celia Mc Evoy Birthday intentions*

6.30pm Holy Mass

*For the whole parish community, with a special invitation to young people and their families*

7.00pm Stations of the Cross

**SATURDAY 28<sup>TH</sup>**

**FERIA**

6.30pm Vigil Mass

*People of the Parish*

**SUNDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> MARCH**

**SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**

8.30am Said mass

*Darren O'Brien Birthday intentions*

10.30am Sung mass

*For the wellbeing of the Parishioners*

**Confessions**

Fridays: 5.30 pm–6.30 pm, Saturdays: 10.15 am–10.45 am

First Friday of the Month: 10.00 am–12.00 noon

Thursdays: 10.00 am–11.00 am, Fridays: 10am–11am

Saturdays: 10.00 am–12.00 noon, First Friday of the Month: 10.00 am–12.00 noon

**Parish groups**

(held in the John Fisher Room unless otherwise stated)

**Monday**

Mothers Prayers (monthly) at 7pm

**Tuesday**

Legion of Mary at 7 pm

**Wednesday**

Coffee Club after morning mass

**Thursday**

Padre Pio Prayer Group first Thursday at 7 pm

**Friday**

Mother and toddler's group at 9am (term time) Parish Hall

**Saturday**

Youth Club – first Friday of the month at 6.30 pm (term time)

**Sunday**

Knights of St Columba, first Saturday of the month at 7 pm

Tea and Coffee every Sunday at 11.30 am in the Parish Hall

## Dust, but Destined for Glory

Last Wednesday, we received ashes and began our Lenten journey. When the ashes were placed on our heads, we heard one of two words: "Repent and believe in the Gospel" or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Nowadays, we often hear the first formula. It sounds more encouraging. But Lent also asks us not to forget the second: we are dust, and to dust we shall return. Our body is fragile. It is beautiful, but it is corruptible. It ages, it weakens, and one day it will return to the earth.

If we look at Christian tradition, especially in the Middle Ages, we see a strong awareness of human mortality. In the late medieval and early modern periods — particularly from the 14th to the 17th centuries — skulls were commonly used in Christian art, monastic spirituality, and sometimes even in preaching imagery. They were sometimes kept in monastic cells or studies as reminders of mortality. This practice was known as *memento mori* — "remember that you must die." It was not meant to frighten, but to awaken; not to terrify, but to call people to repentance and wisdom. Over time this imagery declined, not because it was suppressed by Church authority, but simply because pastoral styles and cultural expressions changed.

Yet the message has never disappeared. Ash Wednesday itself is a liturgical *memento mori*. The Church still proclaims: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Today we sometimes move to the other extreme. At funerals we focus mainly on celebrating life. We share stories and laugh at happy memories. We avoid saying "died" and prefer "passed away" or even "flown to heaven." It is good to console families and right to speak with hope. But we cannot run away from the truth: we are dust, and unto dust we shall return. One day we will meet the Lord — who is both just and full of mercy; not a cruel judge, but a merciful one; not someone who wishes to condemn, but one who desires to save.

In the First Reading of this First Sunday of Lent, Adam and Eve feel naked after their sin — a sign of lost trust. They forgot that God had breathed His life into them and that they were created in His image and likeness.

We too are dust — but dust filled with the breath of God.

Through baptism, we are reborn. Our bodies are mortal, yet we are born from an incorruptible seed. As Jesus says, a grain of wheat must fall into the earth and die in order to bear fruit.

We will return to dust, but we are called to rise with the Risen Lord. Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ.

In today's Gospel, just after His baptism — when His identity as the beloved Son was revealed — Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the desert. Immediately after grace came testing; immediately after affirmation came fasting and prayer. Even for Jesus, the desert was part of the journey.

We too are baptised. We, too are children of God. But baptism is not a magic guarantee that life will be easy. It is the beginning of a path — and that path includes desert seasons.

That is why Lent is our desert time: a time of prayer, fasting, and quiet sacrifice; a time to fast not only from food, but from worry instead of trust, from complaint instead of gratitude, from noise instead of silence; a time to return to the Lord. Jesus entered the desert trusting the Father. We enter Lent trusting the same Father.

We are dust — yes — but we are dust destined for glory. And if we walk faithfully with Christ through the desert, we will share in His resurrection.

May we trust in the Lord, who is both just and full of mercy.

## Masses this week

On next Saturday there will not be a morning mass and no adoration. The vigil mass will be at 6.30pm.

Every Friday there will be Stations of the Cross at 7pm.

## Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) Lourdes Pilgrimage

Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) have some vacancies for their Lourdes Pilgrimage during the May half-term. Pilgrims need to be serving or retired seafarers. If you are interested in joining Stella Maris on pilgrimage in May, which is fully funded, please contact Reverend Deacon John Fogarty on the following mobile telephone number, 07851019134"

## Tea and coffee

This Sunday we will have **Tea and Coffee** after the **10:30am Mass in the Parish Hall**, please do join us and get to know your brother and sister parishioners.

## Easter Music Preparation

We will start singing practices on **Tuesday 24 February 6-7pm** in the church to prepare music for the Holy Triduum. Please come along to learn a new Mass setting, new hymns for Easter and to refresh previously sung pieces.

Please bring any sheet music from previous years with you, copies for new singers will be provided. All are welcome. We are hoping to have at least one practice session outside of the Tuesday evening slot so that as many as possible can learn the new music.

## Pray the Romero Rosary at St George's Cathedral

Join Archbishop John Wilson and the Cathedral clergy in praying the rosary **every Friday at 5pm** throughout Lent. This is a beautiful opportunity to draw closer to the Lord Jesus in prayer. Archbishop John will personally lead the devotion at the National Shrine of St Oscar Romero at St George's Cathedral (SE1 6HR) on **Friday 27th March**. On all other Fridays during Lent, the Cathedral clergy will lead the rosary, followed by the Stations of the Cross at 6pm. Let the rosary connect you to the Lord Jesus this Lenten season. Find out more at: [rcaos.org.uk/romerorosary](http://rcaos.org.uk/romerorosary)

## Building a Better Marriage BABM

**A one-day event in different deaneries. 9am - 4.30pm.** It's a day where couples can **privately** explore their relationship more deeply and gain valuable insights into the communication and the call of the Church to be married. The one-day course is for married couples (whether married for one year, 60 years or anywhere in between). It seeks to help husbands and wives to make their marriages better and to improve their communication skills. **There is no group sharing and private information remains private to each couple. Booking is essential.**

March 7 Tonbridge Parish (Tunbridge Wells Deanery)

May 23 Wallington (Sutton Deanery)

June 13 Hythe (Dover Deanery)

June 27th Tooting (Wandsworth Deanery)

October 3 West Norwood (Lambeth Deanery)

Contact Carole on: [mflkent@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:mflkent@rcaos.org.uk)

## Stop assisted suicide - further action needed!

Please take 30 seconds to stop assisted suicide from being forced into law. Right To Life UK has made an EasyAction tool to email your MP asking them to oppose attempts to force assisted suicide into law by bypassing the House of Lords. **Please visit [www.righttolife.org.uk/ASCommons2026](http://www.righttolife.org.uk/ASCommons2026) to ask your MP to oppose forcing the assisted suicide Bill into law.**

**Our sick parishioners and friends:** Barbara Borthwick, John Paul Stoke, Betty Jones, Cathrin La Page, Lauren Allan, Tony Carroll, Sylvia Kemp, Billy Thomas, Marie Fassioms, Samantha Candeggi-D'Alonzo, Joe-Joe Dockrell, Carol Masey, Eileen Wells, Jenson Lambeth, Neo Taylor, Kathy Mogg, Anna Gawlik, Joanna Tidmarsh, Helen and Arthur Annal, Claire Baron, Rod Black, Michael New, Michael (Mick) Griffin, Adam Luck, Elliott King.

**Of your charity – please pray for those whose anniversaries occur at this time:** Frank Heyes, Cornelius Lenihan, Lily Carr, Teresa Piercy, Kathleen Moran, Elizabeth Farrell, Elsie Harbour, Giuseppe Dotto, Charles Gallagher, Honora Boomsma, John Murray, Olushola Akinlaja, Robert Simpson, Alex Royer, Saini Lal, Theresa Onwuachi, Bridget Smith, Elizabeth Williams.