

The Abbey Parish Messenger

11th January, 2026 Feast of the Baptism of the Lord Year A H & S p.65 CTS p. 129
 18th January, 2026 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A H & S p.81 CTS p. 695

Full details of times of Services are posted in the Abbey and the other churches in the parish.

Confessions: Blessed Sacrament Chapel: Saturdays 11 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Facebook page: search for Buckfast Abbey Parish

Liturgical Calendar:

Monday	St. Benet Biscop
Tuesday	St. Hilary
Wednesday	Feria
Thursday	Ss. Maurus & Placid
Friday	Feria
Saturday	St. Antony of Egypt
Monday 19 th	St. Wulstan
Tuesday	St. Sebastian
Wednesday	St. Agnes
Thursday	Feria
Friday	Feria
Saturday	St. Francis de Sales

Unfortunately, there will not be the usual 1015 Wednesday Mass in Ashburton on 14th January.

"Oremus pro invicem"

Please pray for those who are sick:

Kathy Smith	Keith Halle
Brigid Woodhead	Pauline Roberts

If you or someone you know would like to be included here, please contact Fr. Francis

As we go to press, we learn of the passing of Mr. Tony O'Hanlon, who, for many years, supported the 9 a.m. Sunday Mass in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel with his wife, Madeline. May he rest in peace.

Details of funeral arrangements will be published in due course.

Dilexi Te – The Burning Heart of the Church's Mission

A day of reflection with Bishop Nicholas Hudson
 21 February 2026, 11am-4pm, Buckfast Abbey Conference Centre

Join Caritas and CAFOD this Lent for a diocesan day to reflect on Pope Leo XIV's powerful Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi Te*, which calls us to return to the Gospel and reminds us that love of the poorest of our sisters and brothers is part of the "burning heart of the Church's mission".

Hear from our inspirational Speakers. To register, email: caritas@prcdtr.org.uk

Please pray for those whose anniversary occurs at this time:

Laura Strickland; Baroness von Hugel; Lucy Floyd; Ernest Tristram; Henry Coventry; Ena Hurtley; Cornelius McManus; Laurence Sims; Henry Colcutt; John Woodward; Julia Mayze; Katie Bragg; Bessie Boyce; Elizabeth Chudleigh; Alice Medd; Violet Winstanley; Peter Gompertz; Gladys Stuart; Br. Gerard Graham; James Hearn; Ben Wilkins; Dame Christine Lowings OSB; Mary Godden; Alban Ayley; Cynthia Robinson; Anne Rowe; Henry Voisey; Francis Hodgson; William Ulyat; Dorothy Lucas; Antony Le Feure; Jane Berry; Ethel Clarke; Patrick Concannon; Dom Fergus Dougherty; Robert Lloyd; John Seymour-Couchen; Dom Savinien Louismet; Winifrede Sproston; Aloysius Sproston; Mary de Trafford; Wanda McNally; Thomasine Martin; Anthony Kenley; Dom Gregory Burke; Christopher Laing; David Ward; Emma Cummins; Kathleen Pilkington; Alice Alison; William Cardinal Godfrey; Charles Carroll; Mary Upham; Rev. Roland Walker; Bernard Miliffe; Marian Harvey; Laura Winstanley; William Denman; Stanley Palmer; Kathleen Brocklebank; Dom Augustine Taylor; Michael Wadey; Mary Ash; Phyllis McCabe;

May they rest in peace

Last weekend's collections

	Gift Aided	Standing orders	Digital Reader
Abbey 9 a.m.	£37.00	£5.00	£8.08
Abbey 11 a.m.	£255.86	£30.00	£38.85
Buckfastleigh Sat 5 p.m.	£24.40	£17.00	
Ashburton 10:30am	£11.81	£50.00	£6.92
South Brent 9 a.m.	£26.30	£10.00	£5.77
Added value through gift aid		£28.00	£14.90
			£45.75

Marriage Matters

Reflections on the Sunday readings:

Baptism of the Lord: You are my chosen one

Today, Isaiah and Matthew talk of Jesus being 'the Chosen One' and 'the Beloved'. So often, we are aware of the times when our partner annoys us. We need to develop a sensitivity so that, when we are tempted to be critical, we remember that this is my 'chosen one' and look for ways to affirm our partner, our 'beloved'.

2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time: We need 'power from on high'

Were Jesus' fears eased when he heard the Father was 'well pleased'? He was empowered by the Holy Spirit to begin his mission: to bring to the world the Good News of God's compassion, mercy and forgiveness for our sins. By daily dialogue about concerns and issues and by seeking 'help from on high', we can overcome our fears.

As the number of people joining the Catholic Church in England and Wales continues to rise, the Archdiocese of Southwark has launched a landmark apologetics project to provide evidence-based answers to the burning questions of both new and practicing Catholics. The project, named "Ambassadors for Christ", is designed to equip the faithful with a deeper understanding of their faith. It aims to not only help people find answers to their burning questions, but also to provide a reliable resource that can be relied upon when teaching about the Catholic faith. There will be 52 videos, with one posted every Monday on YouTube in 2026.

For more information, and a link to access the videos, go to <https://rcaos.org.uk/ambassadorsforchrist>

A time of monastic saints.

St. Benet Biscop (c. 628 – 690) was an Angli-Saxon abbot and founder of Monkwearmouth-Jarrow Priory, near present-day Sunderland. He twice made pilgrimage to Rome. On his way back from his second visit, he stopped for two years at the Benedictine monastery on the island of Lérins off the coast of Provence. There he took monastic vows. Returning to Rome, Pope Vitalian asked him to accompany Archbishop Theodore of Tarsus to his diocese of Canterbury, where he was appointed Abbot of the monastery there.

All the while assembling an important library, Benet returned to the North-East after two years and built the monastery mentioned above, bringing masons from Gaul to construct a stone church, rare at the time. Travelling to Rome a fifth and final time, he brought to Jarrow more books, saintly relics and glaziers to provide glass windows for his Abbey church. One of his monks was the now more famous Bede the Venerable. St. Benet Biscop is the secondary patron of the English Benedictine Congregation to this day.

Saints Maurus and Placid (c. 510 AD) were the first disciples of St. Benedict himself. Benedict's famous monastery at Monte Cassino is said to be built on a piece of land given to him by Placid's father, and Placid accompanied Benedict when he moved there.

Saint Antony of Egypt. (AD 251 to 356) Saint Anthony was born around 251 AD in Koma, near Al-Minyā, Egypt, to wealthy Christian parents. After the death of his parents, he was inspired by the Gospel to sell his possessions and give to the poor, which marked the beginning of his ascetic journey. At the age of 20, Anthony began to practice an ascetic lifestyle, retreating into the desert for solitude and prayer. He spent 15 years in absolute solitude, during which he faced numerous temptations and spiritual battles against the devil, which became legendary and were later depicted in art and literature.



His experiences in the wilderness established him as a prominent figure among the Desert Fathers. Anthony's life and teachings significantly influenced the development of monasticism. He organized a community of hermits and established guidelines for monastic living, which were later compiled in the "Life of Anthony" by Athanasius of Alexandria. This biography helped spread the concept of monasticism throughout the Christian world, particularly in Western Europe.

St. Antony is often depicted with a pig because of legends associated with him. One relates that a sow left a sick piglet at his feet and St. Anthony healed it with the Sign of the Cross. From then on, the piglet became his faithful companion. Another legend tells of St. Antony descending to Hell to confront Satan and save souls, distracting demons with his piglet, which had a bell around its neck. This porkly association is why the building housing the Abbey offices is called St. Antony's: the original use of part of it was as a pigsty.

Saint Wulstan (c. 1008 – 1095) was an Benedictine monk who served as Bishop of Worcester from 1062 to 1095, the only Anglo-Saxon bishop to retain his diocese after the Norman Conquest. A social reformer, Wulstan struggled to alleviate the suffering of the poor. He was a strong opponent of the slave trade and was mainly responsible for ending the trade from Bristol. He died on 20th January 1095 after a long illness, whilst washing the feet of parishioners, as was his custom.

Writing a book on the letters of Abbot Anscar Vonier was a fascinating experience, but it presented me with a number of challenges. Firstly, having gathered together over 250 letters, written in French to his sister in Paris and to an Abbess in Southern France, I had to decipher a handwriting which was, to put it generously, distinctive. I then needed to start the actual work of translation, seeking to remember lessons learnt from a French degree which I began in the previous millennium! Another huge challenge was to ensure, as far as humanly possible, that the words I was producing captured the voice of Anscar Vonier and not of Steve Roach. To do this both consistently and authentically was a constant concern. But perhaps the hardest task of all was one presented by the publisher, long after the final text had been completed, and once the final proofs had been approved: could I write a summary for the back cover, a 'blurb', of around 200 words? Sounds simple! But to sum up over 110,000 words in just a few short paragraphs was perhaps the biggest challenge of all!

ECHO OF A LOVED VOICE



The Letters of
Abbot Anscar Vonier

Translated and Edited by Steve Roach

The book itself is now available in the Abbey shop, but you can read below the 176-word summary from the back cover, the result of much head-scratching and soul-searching! 'Echo of a Loved Voice offers a captivating glimpse into the life of Anscar Vonier — Abbot of Buckfast Abbey from 1906 to 1938 — in letters translated from the original French and brought together as one collection for the first time. These deeply personal writings follow his journey from boyhood in Germany, through his early years at Buckfast, to the traumatic shipwreck off the coast of Spain that would shape his life and faith.

From that defining moment, the letters reveal a man of extraordinary resilience and vision: rebuilding Buckfast Abbey from its ruins, guiding his community through the First World War, while rising to prominence as an acclaimed preacher and author of enduring theological works.

Each chapter begins with an introductory note that sets the scene, while striking photographs of Abbot Anscar and his world bring the story vividly to life. Drawing on extracts from the Buckfast Annals and his own writings, together with personal recollections from a lifelong friend, this book offers a powerful reflection on faith and a moving portrait of a remarkable man.'

"A joyful heart is good medicine" (Proverbs 17:22)

A woman went to her psychiatrist and said, "Doctor, I want to talk to you about my husband. He thinks he's a refrigerator."

"That's not so bad," said the doctor. "It's a rather harmless complex."

"Well, maybe," replied the lady. "But he sleeps with his mouth open and the light keeps me awake."

Parish Priest: Fr.
Francis Straw;
01364 645526;
[parish@buckfast](mailto:parish@buckfast.org.uk)
[.org.uk](http://buckfast.org.uk)