

## **Rector's Ramblings – March 2026 (A Season of Perseverance and Grace)**

As the last traces of frost (hopefully!) begin to yield to the first green shoots of March, I find myself reflecting on the remarkable display of human spirit we witnessed during the Winter Olympics in Milan and Cortina last month.

There is something profoundly moving about watching athletes navigate the literal and metaphorical "slippery slopes" of life. Whether it was the precision of the skaters or the sheer courage of those hurtling down the Alpine runs, we were reminded that greatness is rarely achieved in a straight line. It is forged through discipline, often in the cold and the dark, and through the resilience to pick oneself up after a fall.

In many ways, the Olympic journey mirrors our own walk through Lent. We are currently in that "middle distance" of the season - a time that can feel a bit like a long-distance cross-country ski trek. The initial enthusiasm of Ash Wednesday may have cooled, and the celebration of Easter still feels a long way off. Yet it is precisely in this quiet, steady perseverance that our faith finds its depth.

This month, our Lenten journey brings us to a joyful "halfway house": Mothering Sunday on 15th March.

Historically, this was the day when domestic servants were given leave to return to their "mother church" and visit their families. Today, it remains a vital moment to pause and say thank you. We celebrate not just our own mothers, but all those who have "mothered" us - the grandmothers, aunts, teachers, and neighbours who have offered us a sanctuary of care.

In a world that often feels as competitive as an Olympic arena, the unconditional love of a mother-figure provides the ultimate "safe harbour."

Looking further ahead, the month draws to a close with the dramatic shift of Palm Sunday on 29th March. *(And if any readers have a donkey or two available for a procession around the church – please do get in touch!)*

We move from the warmth of family appreciation to the stirring scenes of the Triumphal Entry. As we hold our palm crosses, we recall the crowds in Jerusalem who cheered for Jesus, only to fall silent or turn away just days later. It is a sobering reminder of how quickly "gold medal" acclaim can vanish.

Palm Sunday marks the start of **Holy Week**, the most sacred time in our calendar. I invite you all to walk this path with us. From the shadows of the cross to the light of the empty tomb, it is a journey that promises something far more enduring than any earthly podium: the gift of new life.

May this March be for you a month of steady hope and renewed strength.

With every blessing,

Mark

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(Rector)