



RAF ROMAN CATHOLIC ADVENT 25 UPDATE

Newsletter No. 11



Welcome to the latest update for the RAF Roman Catholic Community. We have now entered the season of Advent, the period before Christmas we use to prepare ourselves to celebrate the Lord's coming into the world as the incarnate God of love. Since our last newsletter we have a new pope, Pope Leo XIV, and have had several opportunities to celebrate together, as RAF Catholics, this Year of Jubilee. As the Holy Year draws to its end, let it not close with a full stop, but with a radiant exclamation of hope.

Read further about some of the events which have taken place this year and also what is planned for next year. All are very welcome to attend any of the events or initiatives, whatever your faith background.

I would like to highlight, especially, the annual RAF Masses; the opportunity to attend the International Military Pilgrimage in May; and an on-line faith formation opportunity starting in the new year. It would be great to have you join us.



Rev (Wg Cdr) Deacon Dave Skillen, RAF Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain (PRCC)

Advent Prayer Resources

There are many resources available on-line which can help us get the most out of our Advent season. CAFOD offers daily reflections and prayers as well as the opportunity to donate to their work amongst the poorest across the globe. To view CAFOD's Advent resources, including their on-line Advent calendar offering prayers, reflections, and practical actions visit <https://cafod.org.uk>

The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales has also provided Advent resources [LINK](#).



All welcome to join the Bishop of the Forces, the RAF Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain and the RAF Whole Force RC Community together in celebration.

**Sunday 26 April
1100**

at
St Michael & St George,
The Cathedral Church of
the Bishop of the Forces,
Queen's Avenue, Aldershot,
GU11 2BY

**Thursday 8 October
1400**

at
The Central Church of the
RAF,
St Clement Danes,
The Strand, London
WC2R 1DH

Both Masses followed by refreshments

For further information, or to indicate your attendance, please contact
Wg Cdr (Rtd) Jem Wynne
jeremy.wynne109@mod.gov.uk

Annual Masses for the RAF - 2026

We hold 2 Masses each year for the RAF RC Community. The first, held at the Military Cathedral in Aldershot, will take place on Sun 26 Apr at 1100. The second Mass will take place at the Central Church of the RAF, St Clement Danes, on Thu 8 Oct at 1400. Bishop Paul Mason, RC Bishop of the Forces, presides at both Masses.

These are great occasions and allow us to celebrate our common bonds of friendship. Open to all, it would be wonderful to see you there in 2026.



Bishopric of the Forces Retreats

The ever-popular retreat series, offered by the Bishopric of the Forces, continued in 2025. A retreat offers the chance to step into a place of prayer and reflection. There were 3 opportunities for retreat offered this year. Over 30 personnel from across Defence attended one of the retreats at Douai Abbey in June; at St Beuno's Retreat Centre in Oct; or at Ampleforth Abbey in Nov.

Feedback received from participants was very positive. Here are some examples from 3 participants: 'Honestly my most fulfilling FD opportunity in 8 yrs of service'. 'The retreat resets me for the year, rebuilds my MH resilience'. 'I really enjoyed attending the retreat and my expectations were exceeded'.

Plans are already underway for next years' retreat offering. Further information and a DIN should be released in the New Year.

On-line Faith Formation Course 2026

What do you believe?

'Journey in Faith'
Do you want to know more about the
Christian faith and its relevance
for life today?

SYCAMORE

Sycamore is an informal course about the Christian faith and explains the central beliefs and practices of Christianity. It gives you space to meet people and share ideas. Each session involves a short film and time for discussion. Ideal for those who are exploring the faith for the first time and for those who want to deepen the faith they already have. Sessions will be led by RAF Chaplains, Padres Ashley Mitchell and Dave Skillen.

Everyone is welcome
Come along and join us online
We will meet for 7 sessions on MSTeams
Mondays 8.00pm-9.15pm

26 Jan, 23 Feb, 23 Mar, 20 Apr, 18 May, 22 Jun and 13 Jul 2026

For further information, and to register your interest, please contact
Ashley.mitchell258@mod.gov.uk

Chrism Mass 2026

The annual Mass of Chrism will be celebrated at the military Cathedral of SS Michael & George at 1200 on Wed 18 March. Join with Bishop Paul and military chaplains as they renew their priestly vows. All very welcome to attend.

International Military Pilgrimage (IMP) to Lourdes 21 - 25 May 2026



2026 may be the year you consider attending the IMP along with the other 40,000 military personnel from across the world. Serving personnel may obtain details from their military chaplain or from the Pilgrimage Organiser, Fr Nick Gosnell: stmichael.stgeorge@live.co.uk.

And finally...

If you would like to know more about or take part in any of the events mentioned in this newsletter, or about Catholic life in the RAF, or should you wish to be added to our database and receive future updates, get in touch with Wg Cdr (Rtd) Deacon Jem Wynne, Pastoral Administrative Assistant to the RAF PRCC. Contact the RAF Principal Roman Catholic Chaplain, Padre Dave Skillen, to say hello, request prayers, or to know more about Catholic life in the RAF.

Wg Cdr (Rtd) Deacon Jem Wynne Jeremy.wynne109@mod.gov.uk

Rev(Wg Cdr) Dave Skillen David.skillen100@mod.gov.uk

Check out the Bishopric of the Forces [Website](#) for the latest news and information.

