

The Memorial of St John Vianney, Priest – Monday 4th August 2025:

Although not an intellectual, the Vicar General was impressed by John's piety and allowed him to be ordained. Appointed the Parish Priest of Ars, near Lyon, he got lost on the way, saying to shepherd boy, '*If you show me the way to Ars, I will show you the way to heaven*', which remains the vocation of the priest! At Ars John found indifference and ignorance to the Catholic faith, a result of the French Revolution, with the people preferring dancing and drinking to the Sunday Mass. And yet, John had an amazing pastoral zeal, an extreme asceticism, imposing harsh penances on himself, spending 12 hours a day in the confessional. In him, they found a confessor who was direct, but gentle. All this brought many people back to the faith. John was greatly troubled by the devil, by parishioners who didn't like his preaching and was often sick. He ran away from Ars four times but each time he returned to fulfil his vocation.

Opt. Mem. The Dedication of the St Mary Major Basilica – Tues. 5th Aug:

A Basilica is a Church with Pontifical status. St Mary Major is one of the four Major Basilica's in Rome, built after the Council of Ephesus which declared Mary as '*Theotokos*' (the Mother of God). Previously, the feast was called, '*Our Lady of the Snows*' a reference to its foundation. A Roman patrician and his wife, who were without heirs, vowed to donate their possessions to the Virgin Mary. After praying for guidance, on 5th August, in the middle of summer, snow fell on the Esquiline Hill. That same night, the couple had a vision of Mary asking them to build a Basilica in her honour. The word Basilica means a '*royal chamber*' and Our Lady's womb was, for nine months, was a royal chamber in which was carried Christ the King. Our Lady is the Ark of the New & Eternal Covenant. Just as the old Ark carried around the Word of God in the Ten Commandments, Our Lady carried the Word of God made flesh.

The Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord – Wednesday 6th August 2025:

We experience two Transfigurations. The first was at our Baptism, when the old sinful creation was washed away and we became a new creation in Christ – we died with him and rose to the new life of grace. The second transfiguration will be experienced when Christ comes again, and raises our mortal remains from the grave. In the Resurrection we will be given new bodies, glorified like Christ's, capable of living in the new heavens and the new earth to come. But first we must transfigure our souls, by a worthy reception of the sacraments of grace, so that they pass-over into eternal life.

Thursday in 18th Week in Ordinary Time – 7th August 2025:

In Baptism, God strikes the rock of our soul, causing the Holy Spirit to well up like a fountain inside us, quenching our thirst for God. In life, we strike the rock of Christ, and from his body, the blood and water flows in the sacraments, giving us the grace that sustains our pilgrimage to the Promised Land. The Church too is a rock of refuge for us, built on the Apostles Peter and Paul, sustained by the teachings they received from the Lord. To the Church we look for guidance on matters of faith and morals, recalling that Jesus did not leave us a bible, but the Church as the sacrament of his abiding presence to the world. For 2,000 years, the Church has addressed various ideas concerning the way a Christian should live their lives – rejecting heresy after heresy – those teachings that impinge on our true human dignity of being made in the image and likeness of God, who calls us out of darkness into his wonderful light. As such, the teaching of the Church, have an intrinsic value that hold until Christ comes again.

The Memorial of St Dominic, Priest – Friday 8th August 2025:

St Dominic was moved by the sufferings the people experiencing famine, selling everything he owned to buy food for the poor. On two occasions Dominic attempted to sell himself into slavery, in order to obtain the freedom of others. Dominic joined the Benedictines, travelling to Denmark with his bishop to help find a bride for the Crown Prince Ferdinand; sadly, the princess they found died before the marriage could take place, leaving Dominic free to travel. The bishop wanted to go off and convert the unbelievers; but instead, the Pope sent him to Southern France to convert heretics back to the true faith. At this time the Albigensian heresy was flourishing which taught that all material things, including the body were evil. Dominic debated the heretics, but they couldn't defend themselves; they couldn't argue with the truth of Dominic's words.

The Feast of St Theresa Benedicta of the Cross – Saturday 9th August 2025:

Edith Stein the Jewish German philosopher who converted to Catholicism after appreciating the divine power that the cross imparts on those who bear it. After a period of discernment and continued academic study, she entered the Carmelite Order, taking the name '*Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*'. She retained all that was good and holy from her Jewish foundations but embraced Jesus as the Messiah. On 9th August 1942, Sr. Teresa was sent to Auschwitz and murdered in the gas chamber. Today, the Church recognises her as an outstanding daughter of Israel and of the Carmelite order.