

Monday in 22nd Week of Ordinary Time (I) – 1st September 2025:

Christians are hesitant in speaking about death, saying that a person has '*fallen asleep*'. This is not just a euphemism because it reminds us that death is not the end of the person. We pray for a happy death, free from undue suffering, but above all free of mortal sin, so that when my soul is judged, it is assured of heaven, even if I need purgatory. A funeral celebrated with faith and hope can be joyful, but we must be careful not to '*pseudo-canonise*' our loved ones in a Eulogy because we are there to pray for the repose of their soul. It is an act of mercy to pray for the deceased's eternal rest. If we have prayed for the Holy Souls, they will thank us for our help through purgatory and they will intercede for us on reaching heaven. But this is not our final goal as we await the return of our bodies in the Resurrection, when Christ will raise them to be like his in glory, as we live in new heavens and the new earth to come.

Tuesday in 22nd Week in Ordinary Time(I) – 2nd September 2025:

The '*Day of the Lord*' is when God definitively and decisively intervenes in our world. This '*Day*' has happened and is yet to come. It happened at the Incarnation and on the Cross but comes for us when we are called from this present life, and it comes definitively when Christ arrives '*to judge the living and the dead*'. This '*Day*' is one of fear for evil doers but one of glory for the righteous. Each day, we give thanks for another chance to put God's will into practice and for another opportunity to make an act of contrition. Advent's message is that we should be ready for the Lord's coming, not putting off tomorrow that which we might fruitfully do today. In doing so, we are ready to stand before God and give an account of our life. In baptism, we were given the mark of Christ, and at our personal judgement, we should have become so Christ-like that all God the Father sees staring back at him is an image of his beloved Son!

The Feast of St Gregory the Great, Pope – Wednesday 3rd September 2025:

Being '*prefect of the city of Rome*', Gregory was a gifted administrator, and yet, he wanted to enter monastic life. Pope Pelagius, however, needed his help with the many civic problems he faced, calling him to serve as Deacon and Apostolic Nuncio to Constantinople. Returning to Rome he was appointed the Pope's private secretary, but when Pelagius died of plague, the clergy, people and senate acclaimed Gregory as his successor, but he tried to resist. Eventually he agreed and was a good pastor, always close to his people. He was a gifted preacher, faithful to the Church's teachings.

Opt. memorial of St Cuthbert, bishop – Thursday 4th September 2025:

Cuthbert is a Northumbrian Saint of the early Celtic Church. King Edwin of Northumbria had converted to Christianity in 627 by Paulinus of York (*part of the mission of St Augustine – sent by St Gregory the Great*). Many other converts came from the Celtic Irish mission who established a monastery at Lindisfarne where Cuthbert was to spend much of his life. Cuthbert was known for his piety, diligence and obedience, spending much time among the people, ministering to their spiritual needs, carrying out missionary journeys, preaching, and performing miracles.

Opt. mem. of St Mother Teresa of Kolkata (Calcutta) – Friday 5th September 2025:

Ahead of her canonisation in 2016, Fr. Brian Kolodiejchuk, the Postulator for the Cause of her Canonization said: *‘even in her lifetime, Mother Teresa was an icon of God’s tender mercy, radiating the light of God’s love to so many through the works of mercy, both material and spiritual’... With her canonization, the Church presents her as a model and intercessor of those who, like her, ‘long to light the fire of love and peace throughout the world.’* By her example and her intercession, she inspires us to give our hearts to love and our hands to service, especially of the poor. At her Beatification in 2003, Pope Saint John Paul II said she was an *‘Icon of the Good Samaritan’*, her life a testimony to the dignity and privilege of humble service. She was a mother to the poor, bending down to those suffering poverty and her saintliness lay in her ability to give without counting the cost, to give until it hurts, a radical proclamation of the gospel.

Saturday in 22nd Week in Ordinary Time (I) – 6th September 2025:

On the Sabbath – the day of rest from work - when David and his followers, having been chased and harassed by King Saul, entered the house of God (the Temple) in search of something to sustain and refresh them. The only food available was the *‘Bread of Presence’*, which was placed on the altar in the sanctuary of the Temple as a perpetual offering from the twelve tribes of Israel. When it was refreshed, it was eaten only by the Temple priests but even they realised that it was an act of mercy to feed the hungry. Now, in the New Covenant, the *‘Bread of Presence’* is the Eucharist, the Reality of God among us, *‘the body, blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ’*. And as Holy Baptism makes us *‘priests, prophets and kings’*; when properly disposed, we too may eat of the real *‘bread of the presence’*; not a symbol but the reality of Christ, who holds nothing back of himself but feeds and sustains us on our pilgrimage home.