



COWLEY ST JOHN  
CHRIST AT OUR HEART

# Love Unknown



*No eye has seen, nor ear heard,  
nor the human heart conceived,  
what God has prepared for those who love him.  
1 Corinthians 2.9*

# Lent Programme 2023

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# Introduction

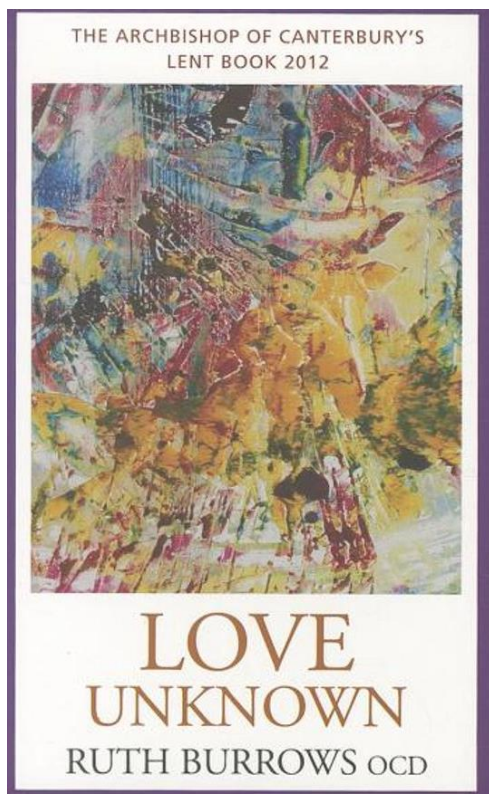
In 1942 the nineteen-year-old Ruth Burrows entered the Carmelite monastery to live a particular version of the religious life. Her journey led her to a deep contemplation of what it means to give your life to Christ. Many hundreds and years earlier St Paul penned his first letter to the Corinthians, a very personal letter which gives us an opportunity to glimpse the struggles of some of the first Christian communities in deciding what it means to follow Christ. This Lent we will be reading Ruth Burrows book *Love Unknown* and also reading together St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. Who knows what we will achieve this Lent and how far we will be truly able to enter the mystery of our salvation in Christ? My hope is that whatever studying we do or devotional reading we imbibe, we can make this lent a time when we reaffirm our willingness to give our lives to Christ, to recognise ourselves as given over to God. "Trust, humility, obedience, these are the great Christ-like virtues for which we must entreat and, in so far as we can, work" write Ruth Burrows towards the end of the book. May these virtues be at the heart of our journey to discover more fully how we can understand ourselves as "...the body of Christ and individually members of it" (1 Corinthians 12.27).

Typically, in Lent I over commit and then spend the first few weeks casting commitments 'overboard' so that I can float again! Decide what you think you are able to do this Lent - Maybe one or two things which last over the whole of Lent and one of two one-off events – and then stick to that. Alongside the things particularly advertised as part of our Lent programme there are a number of things which happen anyway and you are welcome to join, such as the Daily Office and the weekday Eucharists. One of the great joys of Lent is that it is a time of renewal; it is not a case of hoping we might feel a bit more connected or spiritually awake because the truth is God is waiting for us. As Rowan Williams says in the book's introduction "...the God of the Bible, and above all the God of Jesus, is not our rival or our examiner or our prosecutor but our lover". If we can touch something of that truth this Lent then the journey will have been worthwhile.

Yours in Christ,

Phil

## This Year's Lent Book



Love Unknown  
By Ruth Burrows

[Second hand copies are available to buy here.](#)

New copies can be bought from [Bloomsbury](#) or [Blackwells](#) or [Eden](#)

*There will be a group meeting to discuss the book on Thursday mornings (see details below). If you cannot make the group, we would still encourage you to read it so that we are sharing a book as a community – maybe even talk to others about it over coffee after church!*

# Lent Book Group

Join us to discuss this year's Lent book. We will meet after the 10.30am Thursday morning Eucharist.

**Thursdays, 23<sup>rd</sup> February – 30<sup>th</sup> March, I I am, SMJ**  
(after the 10.30am Mass)

Session 1: The only Saviour & If you knew the gift of God  
(ch 1&2)

Session 2: The world knew him not & My Word is a fire  
(ch. 3&4)

Session 3: The Word became Flesh (ch.5)

Session 4: He lived among us (ch.6)

Session 5: We saw his glory (ch. 7)

Session 6: So tender, so compassionate (ch. 8)

# **Bible Study Group**

1 Corinthians

**Tuesdays (Mass at 5.45pm) Bible Study at 6.15-7pm, every week 28<sup>th</sup> February – 28<sup>th</sup> March (except 7<sup>th</sup> March)**

We are starting a new group to spend time reading and studying scripture together and thinking about how it connections to our lives. We will be reading the First Letter to the Corinthians. During Lent we will meet weekly (with one exception!) and we hope to continue meeting in Eastertide.

The group will meet in the North Chapel at SMJ after a Eucharist – you are welcome to come to both the group and worship or join us for the bible study afterwards.

## **Camino**

The Camino course continues during Lent and all are welcome to join for the season, or just for one off sessions. They are in St Mary and St John, 7-8.15pm.

8 Mar: What is Praying?

22 Mar: What's the point of Church? The Eucharist and Community

(all on the Camino course are also invited to join us for Ash Wednesday - 22<sup>nd</sup> Feb – and Tenebrae Services - 5<sup>th</sup> April)

# Lenten Pilgrimage

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> April

David Gimson is leading us on a pilgrimage between places of worship as we prepare for Holy Week. Starting from SMJ and stopping at St Alban's (you can meet us at either church), we'll then walk to Cowley St James, Iffley Church and Christ Church Cathedral. Bring along a picnic lunch! It will then be possible to walk or take the bus home.

10.30am leave from St Mary & St John

10.45am leave from St Alban's Church

## An Hour Out

If you would like to spend some time chatting with someone about your Christian life – Prayer, Discipleship, Bible or Church – it's up to you what you want to talk about. All those below are available to chat to, please be in touch with them directly. Fr Phil is also available to hear confessions.

Fr Phil – [vicarcsj@gmail.com](mailto:vicarcsj@gmail.com)

Revd Sabina - [sabina.alkire@gmail.com](mailto:sabina.alkire@gmail.com)

Revd Claire – [curatecsj@gmail.com](mailto:curatecsj@gmail.com)

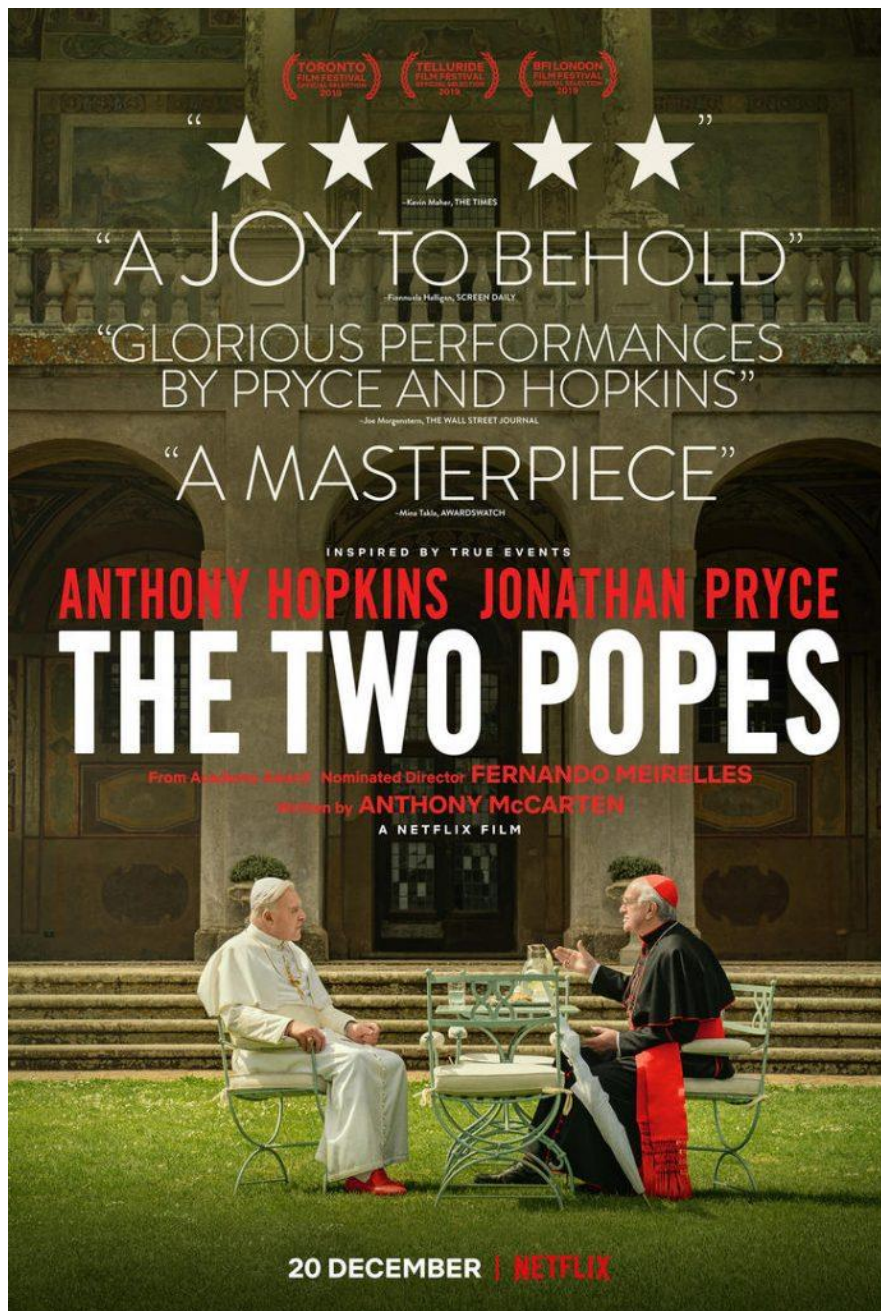
## Oxclean

Come and help with our annual interfaith litter pick to serve our local community. 9.30am-12noon Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> March (meet at SMJ, equipment will be provided). Followed by refreshments.

# Film Night: The Two Popes

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 7pm at the Vicarage

*At a key turning point for the Catholic Church, Pope Benedict XVI forms a surprising friendship with the future Pope Francis. Inspired by true events.*





# **Worship**

## **Daily Prayer**

Join us to pray for the parish and the world at Morning and Evening Prayer every weekday at St Mary & St John.

Monday-Friday: 8am for Silent Prayer, 8.15am Morning Prayer  
5.15pm Evening Prayer (except Tuesdays)

## **Weekday Eucharists**

Tuesday, 5.45pm at SMJ

Thursday, 10.30am at SMJ

Friday, 9.15am at St Albans

## **Ash Wednesday**

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February, 7pm, St Mary & St John

## **Stations of the Cross**

We will be doing several of the stations in the first half of the Thursday 10.30am Mass at SMJ.

## **Churchyard Seasonal Meditations**

17 March, 10.30am in St Mary and St John Churchyard for the Spring Equinox – bring a poem, song or just yourself.

# Lent Choral Evensongs



## Byrd Chorus

St Alban's Church  
26th Feb, 4pm

## Christ Church College Choir

St Mary & St John Church  
6th March, 6pm

## Holy Week Services

2-9<sup>th</sup> April

Palm Sunday	10am	Joint service starting at St Alban's Church with procession to St Mary and St John.
Monday	7pm	Eucharist with address at St Alban's
Tuesday	7pm	Eucharist with address at St Alban's
Wednesday	7pm	<b>Tenebrae at Bartlemas Chapel</b> <i>Service of shadows meditating on the passion of Christ, With chants from Taizé and Iona.</i>
Maundy Thursday	8pm	<b>Eucharist at St Mary and St John</b> <i>followed by vigil until midnight</i>
Good Friday	10.15am	<b>Ecumenical Walk of Witness</b>
	12-3pm	<b>Good Friday Reflections and Liturgies</b>
Holy Saturday	8pm	<b>Vigil Service and Eucharist, SMJ</b>

## Children's Activities



The poster features a dark purple background with a stylized flame graphic in the center. The text is arranged in several sections: 'LENT 2023' in large white letters at the top left; 'YOUTH led SERVICE' in large white letters on the right, with 'led' in a smaller, cursive font; 'all welcome' in a white cursive font inside a dark purple rounded rectangle; 'ST ALBAN'S CHURCH' in large white letters on the bottom left; and the service details 'SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY 9.30AM' and a handwritten-style invitation 'The Young People of St Alban's Church invite you to their service. Followed by refreshments' on the bottom right.

**LENT**  
**2023**

**YOUTH**  
*led*  
**SERVICE**

*all welcome*

**ST ALBAN'S**  
**CHURCH**

**SUNDAY**  
**26 FEBRUARY**  
**9.30AM**

*The Young People  
of St Alban's  
Church invite you  
to their service.  
Followed by  
refreshments*

### Holy Week Resources

There is a great resource for children to explore the story of Holy Week which you can find here:

<https://network.crcna.org/topic/spiritual-formation/faith-nurture/gods-big-easter-story-holy-week-journey-families>

It provides brief devotions inviting people to **breathe**, **read**, **wonder**, and **pray** together. If you would like a printed copy contact [curatecsj@gmail.com](mailto:curatecsj@gmail.com)

# The Examen

A great way to pray is to look for God's presence in your life. More than 400 years ago St. Ignatius Loyola encouraged prayer-filled mindfulness by proposing what has been called the Daily Examen. The Examen is prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and to discern his direction for us.

**1. Become aware of God's presence.** Look back on the events of the day in the company of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding.

**2. Review the day with gratitude.** Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. What did you receive from others? What did you give them? Pay attention to small things.

**3. Pay attention to your emotions.** One of St. Ignatius's great insights was that we detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings? Note the moments where you feel short.

**4. Choose one feature of the day and pray from it.** Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling—positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Or it may be something that seems rather insignificant. Look at it. Pray about it.

Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart—whether intercession, praise, repentance, or gratitude.

**5. Look toward tomorrow.** Ask God to give you light for tomorrow's challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what's coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God's guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Our Father.

Adapted from <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/how-can-i-pray/>

**You can also listen the Examen here:**

<https://pray-as-you-go.org/article/examen-prayer>

# Prayers for the Day in Lent

○ God, make speed to save us.

**○ Lord, make haste to help us.**

Hear my prayer, ○ Lord, and give ear to my cry;  
**hold not your peace at my tears.**

## PRAISE

Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you;  
you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.  
Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;  
through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.  
Your warmth gives life to the dead,  
your touch makes sinners righteous.  
Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;  
in your love and tenderness remake us.  
In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness,  
for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.

*Anselm (1109)*

Jesus said, 'There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.'

*Luke 15.7*

## RESPONSE

*Silence, study, song, or words from Scripture, such as*  
Blessed are the merciful,  
**for they will receive mercy.**

## PRAYERS

*Prayers may include these concerns*

- ¶ *Those preparing for baptism and confirmation*
- ¶ *Those serving through leadership*
- ¶ *Those looking for forgiveness*
- ¶ *Those misled by the false gods of this present age*
- ¶ *All who are hungry*

Teach us, good Lord, to serve you as you deserve;

to give and not to count the cost;  
to fight and not to heed the wounds;  
to toil and not to seek for rest;  
to labour and not to seek for any reward,  
save that of knowing that we do your will. **Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

### **CONCLUSION**

May God bless us and show us compassion and mercy.  
**Amen.**