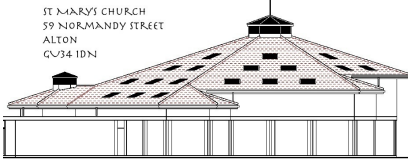


St Mary's Parish Newsletter



59, Normandy Street
Alton, Hants
GU34 1DN
Tel: 01420 82030

Parish Priest - Rev. Peter Hart
Parish Deacon—Rev Steve Joseph
Website: www.stmarysalton.co.uk
Email: stmarysalton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
Safeguarding Rep. Mrs. Anne Bothwell
What3words: masks.scans.dinosaur

TIMES OF MASSES & INTENTIONS

Sunday 28th January, 2024

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

(Year B) Week 4

Saturday	<i>Our Lady on Saturday</i>	
	5.30pm	Baby Jose, RIP
Sunday	<i>Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time</i>	
Medstead	9.00am	Amy & Leonard Gilbert, RIP
St Mary's	11.00am	Danny Higgins, RIP (F)
Monday	<i>Feria</i>	
	9.30am	In Thanksgiving
Tuesday	<i>Feria</i>	
	NO MASS	
Wednesday	<i>St John Bosco, Priest</i>	
	9.30am	Special Intention
Thursday	<i>Feria</i>	
	9.30am	Special Intention
Friday	<i>The Presentation of the Lord</i>	
	9.30am	Mary Monaghan, RIP (F)
Saturday	<i>Our Lady on Saturday</i>	
	9.30am	Special Intention
	5.30pm	The People of The Parish
Sunday	<i>Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time</i>	
Medstead	9.00am	Special Intention
St Mary's	11.00am	Peggy Hart, RIP (F)

*Confessions: Saturday morning after Mass and 4.45pm
prior to Mass and by request at any time*

Fourth Sunday of The Year

Entrance Antiphon

Save us, O Lord our God! And gather us from the nations,
to give thanks to your holy name, and make it our glory and
praise you.

Responsorial Psalm

O that today you would listen to his voice!
Harden not your hearts.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven
and earth, for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to
mere children. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon:

Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your merciful
love. O Lord, let me never be put to shame, for I call
on you.

Hail, O Queen of Heaven

Hail, Queen of the heavens, hail, Lady of the angels.
Root of our salvation and our gateway to heaven,
the light of the world was born to you. Be joyful,
Virgin of glory, most beautiful of all in heaven.
We greet you now, true beauty – pray for us to Christ.

Fourth Sunday of The Year

28th January, 2024

Where does authority come from? Why is one man regarded as a prophet, and another as a lunatic, and a third as a hypocrite? Jesus startles the crowds with a “new teaching” today, but what amazes them so much is not the message but the authority behind it: they are convinced because what he does somehow adds credibility to what he says. It’s the old situation that we are all familiar with - we look through words to see the actions, which show us the real message. The scribes did not heal or work miracles, but simply talked about God. Jesus talks about the Kingdom of God, but also shows the people what it is - a Kingdom where all that damages human happiness is abolished. The other side to this is that we must listen to a prophet or teacher when they are backed by such authority; we may not “harden our hearts” and ignore the message when we have recognised that the messenger is sent by God. This is the hard part, because it demands that we too show, by our actions, that we have heard.

He taught them with authority

A Pope's Reflection

This Sunday's Gospel presents to us Jesus, who was preaching on the Sabbath in the Synagogue of Capernaum, the little town on the Sea of Galilee where Peter and his brother Andrew lived. His teaching, which gave rise to wonder among the people, was followed by the deliverance of “a man with an unclean spirit”, who recognized Jesus as “the Holy One of God”, that is, the Messiah. In a short time his fame spread across the region which he passed through proclaiming the Kingdom of God and healing the sick of every kind: words and action. St John Chrysostom, the great Father of the Eastern Church, pointed out that the Lord “varies the way of benefiting his hearers, after miracles entering on words, and again from the instruction by his words passing to miracles”. The words Jesus addresses to the people immediately give access to the will of the Father and to the truth about themselves. This was not the case for the scribes who instead had to make an effort to interpret the Sacred Scriptures with countless reflections. Moreover Jesus united the efficacy of the word with the true efficacy of the signs of deliverance from evil. St Athanasius notes that “for his charging evil spirits and their being driven forth, this deed is not of man, but of God”; indeed the Lord “drove away from men all diseases and infirmities”.... Those “who saw his power.. will no longer doubt whether this be the Son and Wisdom and Power of God?”. The divine authority is not a force of nature. It is the power of the love of God that creates the universe and, becoming incarnate in the Only-Begotten Son, descending into our humanity, heals the world corrupted by sin. Jesus' entire existence is the translation of power into humility... here is the sovereignty which lowers itself into the form of a servant”. Authority, for human beings, often means possession, power, dominion and success. Instead for God authority means service, humility and love; it means entering into the logic of Jesus who stoops to wash his disciples' feet, who seeks man's true good, who heals wounds, who is capable of a love so great that he gives his life, because he is Love. In one of her Letters St. Catherine of Siena wrote: “It is necessary for us to see and know, in truth, with the light of the faith, that God is supreme and eternal Love and cannot want anything but our good”.

Pope Benedict XVI



Please remember in your prayers

Maria Proli, Sister Terry, Eileen Bowler,
Francesca Adams, Mary McGrath, Sheila Payne,
Annie Tomlinson, Rita Rawling, Kate Cradock.
Jonathan Wiltshire, Jeanne Abraham, Alex Smith,
Mary Sturgess, Brenda Gregory, Margaret Collins, Theresa
Davies, The Rogers Family, Flavia Stampa Gruss,
and all in need of God's grace at this time.

Saints of the Week

January 28th St Thomas Aquinas

By universal consent, Thomas Aquinas is the preeminent spokesman of the Catholic tradition of reason and of divine revelation. He is one of the great teachers of the medieval Catholic Church, honored with the titles Doctor of the Church and Angelic Doctor. At five he was given to the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino in his parents' hopes that he would choose that way of life and eventually become abbot. In 1239, he was sent to Naples to complete his studies. It was here that he was first attracted to Aristotle's philosophy. By 1243, Thomas abandoned his family's plans for him and joined the Dominicans, much to his mother's dismay. On her order, Thomas was captured by his brother and kept at home for over a year. Once free, he went to Paris and then to Cologne, where he finished his studies with Albert the Great. He held two professorships at Paris, lived at the court of Pope Urban IV, directed the Dominican schools at Rome and Viterbo, combated adversaries of the mendicants, as well as the Averroists, and argued with some Franciscans about Aristotelianism. His greatest contribution to the Catholic Church is his writings. The unity, harmony, and continuity of faith and reason, of revealed and natural human knowledge, pervades his writings. One might expect Thomas, as a man of the gospel, to be an ardent defender of revealed truth. But he was broad enough, deep enough, to see the whole natural order as coming from God the Creator, and to see reason as a divine gift to be highly cherished. The *Summa Theologiae*, his last and, unfortunately, uncompleted work, deals with the whole of Catholic theology. He stopped work on it after celebrating Mass on December 6th, 1273. When asked why he stopped writing, he replied, "I cannot go on.... All that I have written seems to me like so much straw compared to what I have seen and what has been revealed to me." He died March 7th, 1274.

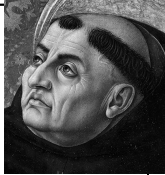
Reflection: We can look to Thomas Aquinas as a towering example of Catholicism in the sense of broadness, universality, and inclusiveness. We should be determined anew to exercise the divine gift of reason in us, our power to know, learn, and understand. At the same time we should thank God for the gift of his revelation, especially in Jesus Christ.

February 2nd Presentation of the Lord

At the end of the fourth century, a woman named Egeria made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Her journal, discovered in 1887, gives an unprecedented glimpse of liturgical life there. Among the celebrations she describes is the Epiphany (January 6th), the observance of Christ's birth, and the gala procession in honour of his Presentation in the Temple 40 days later—February 15. (Under the Mosaic Law, a woman was ritually "unclean" for 40 days after childbirth, when she was to present herself to the priests and offer sacrifice—her "purification." Contact with anyone who had brushed against mystery—birth or death—excluded a person from Jewish worship.) This feast emphasizes Jesus' first appearance in the Temple more than Mary's purification. The observance spread throughout the Western Church in the 5th and 6th centuries. Because the Church in the West celebrated Jesus' birth on December 25th, the Presentation was moved to February 2, 40 days after Christmas. At the beginning of the 8th century, Pope Sergius inaugurated a candlelight procession; at the end of the same century the blessing and distribution of candles which continues to this day became part of the celebration, giving the feast its popular name: **Candlemas**.

Comment: In Luke's account, Jesus was welcomed in the temple by two elderly people, Simeon and the widow Anna. They embody Israel in their patient expectation; they acknowledge the infant Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah. Early references to the Roman feast dub it the feast of St. Simeon, the old man who burst into a song of joy which the Church still sings at day's end.

Quote: "Christ himself says, 'I am the light of the world.' And we are the light, we ourselves, if we receive it from him.... But how do we receive it, how do we make it shine? ...The candle tells



us: by burning, and being consumed in the burning. A spark of fire, a ray of love, an inevitable immolation are celebrated over that pure, straight candle, as, pouring forth its gift of light, now it exhausts itself in silent sacrifice" (Paul VI).

From the Catechism of the Church—CCC 547-550

Jesus accompanies words with miracles

Jesus accompanies his words with many "mighty works and wonders and signs", which manifest that the kingdom is present in him and attest that he was the promised Messiah. The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him. To those who turn to him in faith, he grants what they ask. So miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father's works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God. But his miracles can also be occasions for "offence"; they are not intended to satisfy people's curiosity or desire for magic. Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of demons. By freeing some individuals from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness and death, Jesus performed messianic signs. Nevertheless he did not come to abolish all evils here below, but to free men from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts them in their vocation as God's sons and causes all forms of human bondage. The coming of God's kingdom means the defeat of Satan's: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." Jesus' exorcisms free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus' great victory over "the ruler of this world". The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: "God reigned from the wood."

SYCAMORE LENTEN RETREAT 2024

We are intending to run a retreat on the Fridays of Lent, using material produced by the excellent Sycamore group based in Westminster Diocese. Sycamore is an informal course about the Christian faith and its relevance for life today. It gives you space to meet other people, share ideas, explore your beliefs, and think about questions that really matter. If you wish to be part of it we would like to ascertain the best time to meet.

It will be held on Friday evening apart from the 12th March which is a Tuesday. Please indicate your preference by signing a box on the sheet at the back of the Church. You can sign for more than one if you are more flexible. 5-6.30pm; 6-7.30pm; 7-8.30pm. Beginning the Friday after Ash Wednesday.

Each session involves a short film and some time for discussion. There's no pressure. You can be yourself

Join us in the Parish Hall on

Friday, 2nd February, 2024

First Friday Coffee Followed by

Fish & Chip Lunch at the Community Centre

To book lunch, please contact Pauline Fell on Alton 82617

Alton Foodbank

The next collection will be delivered to the foodbank **after the 11am Mass on 4th February**. Main Requirements are:

Tinned meat (pies, stewing steak, hot dogs etc.), Tinned fruit, Tinned vegetables, Tinned custard, Long life sponge puddings, Tinned or instant potatoes, Tinned rice pudding. All donations will be gratefully received and may be left in the box in the Church Porch. Thank you

F	O	N	N	R	T	I	T	P	S	CAPERNAUM	SABBATH	SYNAGOGUE
Q	O	A	S	E	B	I	R	C	S	TEACH	SCRIBES	UNCLEAN
U	M	L	I	C	R	I	A	H	S	SPIRIT	DESTROY	HOLY
I	N	U	L	I	R	P	Y	T	R	QUIET	ORDERS	OBEY
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