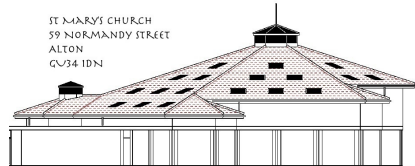


St Mary's Parish Newsletter



ST MARY'S CHURCH
59 NORMANDY STREET
ALTON
GU34 1DN

59, Normandy Street
Alton, Hants
GU34 1DN
Tel: 01420 82030
Fax: 01420 85821

Parish Priest - Rev. James Carling
Website: www.stmarysalton.co.uk
Email: stmarysalton@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk
Parish Deacon: Rev. Stephen Joseph
Safeguarding Rep. Mrs. Anne Bothwell
Contact No: 01420 82030

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS w/c Sunday 11th January, 2026 THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

(A1) (Office Proper)

Saturday	of Christmastide after Epiphany 5.30pm Jim Elliot, RIP (RE)
Sunday	THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
<i>St. Lucy's</i>	9.00am The People of The Parish
<i>St. Mary's</i>	11.00am Kathleen & Michael O'Connor, RIP (MO'C)
Monday	Beginning of Ordinary Time (A2 Ps 1) Feria 9.30am Special Intention
Tuesday	Feria No Mass
Wednesday	Feria 9.00am Rosary 9.30am Intentions of Paula Brown (PB)
Thursday	Feria 9.30am Special Intention
Friday	Feria 9.30am Eileen McDermott, RIP (KMCD)
Saturday	St Anthony Abbott 5.30pm Margaret Collins, RIP (PF)
Sunday	Second Sunday of The Year
<i>St. Lucy's</i>	9.00am The People of The Parish
<i>St. Mary's</i>	11.00am Cynthia O'Reilly, RIP

Confessions: Saturday at 4.45pm and by appointment

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Entrance Antiphon

After the Lord was baptised, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended upon him like a dove, and the voice of the Father thundered: This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.

First Reading: Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Responsorial Psalm

The Lord will bless his people with peace.

Second Reading: Apostles 10:34-38

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! The heavens opened and the Father's voice resounded: 'This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him'. **Alleluia!**

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

Communion Antiphon

Behold the One of whom John said: I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.

The Next Special Collection will be for The Cathedral of St. John's, Portsmouth

The collection will take place on
24th & 25th January

This collection is essential in helping to support the mother church of the Diocese in all her functions



THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

11th January, 2026

It may seem strange, but this is a Christmas Feast. Not if we think of Christmas only in terms of the Baby in Bethlehem, but if we have followed the ideas of the Feasts of Holy Family and especially Epiphany, and have seen the Season in terms of the growing *manifestation* or appearing of the Son of God: first to the shepherds and then to the wise men

from the East. Now in the River Jordan, Jesus, Son of Mary, is revealed to all as the fullness of all God's promises: "This is my Son, the Beloved". On this day we stand before the revelation of God's love for us, such that he would send his only Son into the world. Christmas without the Baptism of the Lord, and the words that are spoken from heaven, would be incomplete, since it is only in them that we fully see the wonder of what happened in Bethlehem, that we fully understand the reason for the joy with which we celebrated Christmas Day. As we come to the end of Christmastide today, and look forward to hearing the Gospel in Ordinary Time, we do so having been shown who it is we listen to: the only Son of God, the Beloved.

A Pope's Reflection - Pope Benedict XVI

On this Sunday after the Solemnity of the Epiphany, we are celebrating the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which ends the liturgical season of Christmas. Today, we fix our gaze on Jesus, who was baptized at the age of about 30 by John in the Jordan River. It was a baptism of penance that used the symbol of water to express the purification of the heart and of life. John, known as the "Baptist", that is, the "Baptizer", preached this baptism to Israel in preparation for the imminent coming of the Messiah; and John the Baptist told everyone that someone else would come after him, greater than he, who would not baptize with water but with the Holy Spirit. And so it was when Jesus was baptized in the Jordan, the Holy Spirit came down and settled upon him like a dove, and John the Baptist recognized that he was Christ, the "Lamb of God" who had come to take away the sins of the world. Therefore, the Baptism in the Jordan is also an "epiphany", a manifestation of the Lord's Messianic identity and of his redeeming work, which will culminate in another "baptism", that of his death and Resurrection, for which the whole world will be purified in the fire of divine mercy. On this Feast, St. John Paul II used to administer the Sacrament of Baptism to various children. This morning, for the first time, I too have had the joy of baptizing 10 newborn babies. I renew with affection my greeting to these little ones and their families, as well as to their Godparents. The baptism of children expresses and accomplishes the mystery of new birth to divine life in Christ: parents who are believers bring their children to the baptismal font that represents the "womb" of the Church, from whose blessed waters God's children are brought forth. The gift received by newborn infants needs to be accepted by them freely and responsibly once they have reached adulthood: the process of growing up will then bring them to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, which precisely strengthens the baptized and confers upon each one the "seal" of the Holy Spirit. Dear brothers and sisters, may today's solemnity be a favourable opportunity for all Christians to rediscover with joy the beauty of their own Baptism, which is an ever-timely reality if it is lived with faith: it ceaselessly renews within us the image of the new person, in holiness of thought and action. Baptism, moreover, unites Christians of every denomination. And as baptized persons, we are all children of God in Christ Jesus, our Teacher and our Lord. May the Virgin Mary obtain for us an ever-deeper understanding of the value of our Baptism and of witness to it by leading a dignified life.

Pope's Intentions—January '26 For prayer with the Word of God.

Let us pray that praying with the Word of God be nourishment for our lives and a source of hope in our communities, helping us to build a more fraternal and missionary Church.

Saints of the Week

January 12th—Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys

"God closes a door and then opens a window," people sometimes say when dealing with their own disappointment or someone else's. That was certainly true in Marguerite's case. Children from European as well as Native American backgrounds in 17th-century Canada benefited from her great zeal and unshakable trust in God's providence.



Born the sixth of 12 children in Troyes, France, Marguerite at the age of 20 believed that she was called to religious life. Her applications to the Carmelites and Poor Clares were unsuccessful. A priest friend suggested that perhaps God had other plans for her. In 1654, the governor of the French settlement in Canada visited his sister, an Augustinian canoness in Troyes. Marguerite belonged to a sodality connected to that convent. The governor invited her to come to Canada and start a school in Ville-Marie (eventually the city of Montreal). When she arrived, the colony numbered 200 people with a hospital and a Jesuit mission chapel. Soon after starting a school, she realized her need for co-workers. Returning to Troyes, she recruited a friend, Catherine Crolo, and two other young women. In 1667, they added classes at their school for Indian children. A second trip to France three years later resulted in six more young women and a letter from King Louis XIV, authorizing the school. The Congregation of Notre Dame was established in 1676 but its members did not make formal religious profession until 1698 when their Rule and constitutions were approved. Marguerite established a school for Indian girls in Montreal. At the age of 69, she walked from Montreal to Quebec in response to the bishop's request to establish a community of her sisters in that city. By the time she died, she was referred to as the "Mother of the Colony." Marguerite was canonized in 1982.

Reflection: It's easy to become discouraged when plans that we think that God must endorse are frustrated. Marguerite was called not to be a cloistered nun but to be a foundress and an educator. God had not ignored her after all.

January 15th—Saint Devasahayam Pillai

Neelakandan Pillai was born into an affluent Hindu family in 1712. As a young man he went into the service of the royal household in India's Travancore province. Eventually put in charge of state affairs, Pillai became friendly with Captain Eustachius De Lannoy, the Dutch naval commander who trained the king of Travancore's forces. Their relationship awakened Pillai's interest in the captain's Christian faith. At his baptism in 1745, Pillai chose the name Lazarus, or Devasahayam in the Malayalam language. His wife and other members of his family were baptized at the same time. Soon after, Pillai's enemies convinced the royal court that he was using his position to force others to convert, leading to his imprisonment. European Christians in Travancore came to Pillai's defense, urging the king to release him. After three years the king complied under condition that Pillai go into exile to a hostile territory. Though beaten and tortured almost daily, Pillai consistently responded with kindness, openly praying for his captors. Shot to death by local soldiers in 1752, Pillai's body was transported to St. Xavier Church in Kottar. Later when his remains were interred beneath the altar, the site became a popular pilgrimage destination. In 2012, Saint Pillai became the first Indian layman not connected to any religious institute to be beatified. Ten years later he was canonized in Rome. His liturgical feast is celebrated on January 14th.



Reflection: At the May 15, 2022, canonization Mass, Pope Francis said that the lives of the saints prove that holiness is not an unreachable goal accomplished by a select few but comes from acknowledging and sharing God's love. Saint Pillai, he said, exemplified the Christian call "to serve the Gospel and our brothers and sisters, to offer our lives without expecting anything in return, or any worldly glory."

*May you always know the peace of Jesus
The light of his love And the joy of his life within you*

A message from the Diocesan Offices

Gift card fraud is an increasingly common way of tricking victims into purchasing gift cards and sharing their details, leading to financial loss. Please be aware that there have been scam messages circulating which appear to come from priests or diocesan staff, asking people to buy gift cards or provide financial help urgently.

The Diocese and its clergy will never ask for money, gift cards, vouchers, or personal details by email, text message, or social media. If you receive a messages of this kind, do not respond and do not send any money. Please report it to your parish office or to the Diocese communications team so that we can alert others. Thank you for your vigilance and for helping to protect our parish communities.
communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Date for your diary—28th February, '26 1pm—3pm

St. Mary's Youth Club Reunion 1970—1975

Buffet Lunch at the Community Centre.

If you would like to join us, please call

Mike O'Connor on 07748646130

In the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I Trust

Look to the Star, Call upon Mary!

In danger, in difficulty or in doubt,

think of Mary, call upon Mary,

Keep her name on your lips,

Never let it pass out of your heart.

Following in her footsteps,

you will not go astray:

praying to her, you will not fall into despair:

thinking of her you will not err.

While she keeps hold of your hand,

you will not fall ...you will not grow weary ...

you will have no fear ...

Enjoying her protection, you will reach the goal.

(Saint Bernard of Clairveaux)



ANIMA CHRISTI

(translated by John Henry Newman)

Soul of Christ, be my sanctification. Body of Christ,

be my salvation. Blood of Christ, fill all my veins.

Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains.

Passion of Christ, my comfort be. O good Jesus,

listen to me. In Thy wounds I fain would hide;

Ne'er to be parted from Thy side. Guard me, should the

foe assail me; Call me when my life shall fail me.

Bid me come to Thee above. With Thy saints

to sing Thy love. World without end. Amen.

T	N	A	E	D	V	O	I	E	C	JESUS	JORDAN	JOHN
S	I	D	R	O	J	F	A	R	A	BAPTISM	FITTING	DEMANDS
U	D	R	O	J	I	R	N	T	S	WATER	HEAVENS	SPIRIT
E	M	S	I	T	P	A	B	A	S	DOVE	VOICE	SON
S	C	S	T	P	D	T	A	W	D			
E	E	I	U	R	S	D	A	W	N			
J	N	N	O	S	O	T	N	H	A			
G	O	J	I	V	E	M	O	O	M			
T	O	H	E	R	E	J	E	J	E			
E	S	N	E	V	A	E	H	E	D			



Please remember in your prayers

Baby Polly Phillips, Matthew & Duncan Graham,

John D., Sr. Joan Henry; Mary McGinty,

Maria Proli, Francesca Adams, Mary McGrath,

Annie Tomlinson, Rita Rawling, Kate Cradock,

Alex Smith, Jonathan & Lindy Wiltshire,

Simon Wilder, Mary Sturgess, Theresa Davies,

Flavia Stampa Gruss, Kay Hulbert, Pam Barbour

