

St Mary's Parish Newsletter



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MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

w/c Sunday 1st February, 2026

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(A2) (Psalter Week 4)

Saturday	St. John Bosco	
	5.30pm	The People of The Parish
Sunday	Fourth Sunday of The Year	
<i>St. Lucy's</i>	9.00am	Special Intention
<i>St. Mary's</i>	11.00am	Special Intention
Monday	THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD	
	9.30am	Mary Monaghan, RIP (F)
Tuesday	Feria	
		NO MASS
Wednesday	Feria	
	9.30am	Peggy Hart, RIP (F)
Thursday	St. Agatha	
		NO MASS
Friday	St. Paul Miki & Companions	
	9.30am	Eileen McDermott, RIP (KMcD)
Saturday	Our Lady on Saturday	
	5.30pm	Priest's Intention
Sunday	Fifth Sunday of The Year	
<i>St. Lucy's</i>	9.00am	Priest's Intention
<i>St. Mary's</i>	11.00am	Bill Wood, RIP (AW)

Confessions: Saturday at 4.45pm and by appointment

On Saturday 7th & Sunday, 8th February we welcome Fr. Stephen Kimani Kariuki of the Kiltegan Fathers. Fr. Stephen will be making an appeal, at all Masses, on behalf of St. Patrick's Missionary Society. Please offer Fr. Stephen a warm St. Mary's welcome.

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 to praise you.

First Reading: Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13

Responsorial Psalm

Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia ! Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.. **Alleluia !**

Gospel: Matthew 5:1-12a

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.

ALTON FOODBANK

Collection date: This week-end

Items needed Please: Pasta Sauce, Tinned meat & custard, Long life custard, sponge puddings, fruit juice. Spreads eg. Jam, peanut butter etc. Thank you for your donations



4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st February, 2026

Last week Saint Matthew described the beginnings of Jesus' public ministry. This week St Matthew begins the most important summary of the proclamation of the kingdom of God – what we refer to as the “Sermon on the Mount.” This great collection of Jesus' teachings begins with the Beatitudes – what one might call the Charter of the Kingdom. It is essential to understand these,

if we are to understand what we will read in Saint Matthew during the rest of this year: the key, as underlined by the First Reading, is that the values of this world are not the values of the Kingdom of God – the Kingdom will see things turned upside down: happiness and blessing belong to those whom this world would ignore or mistreat. If we truly wish to live out the Gospel, we would do well to reflect on the virtues laid out in this familiar passage.

‘Blessed are the poor in spirit.’

A Pope's Reflection - Pope Benedict

*In this Sunday's Liturgy we continue to read Jesus' so-called “Sermon on the Mount”. After the Beatitudes, which are the programme of his life, Jesus proclaims the new Law, his Torah, as our Jewish brothers and sisters call it. In fact, on his coming, the Messiah was also to bring the definitive revelation of the Law and this is precisely what Jesus declares: “Think not that I have come to abolish the Law and the Prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfil them”. And addressing his disciples, he adds: “unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven”. But what do this “fullness” of Christ's Law and this “superior” justice that he demands consist in? Jesus explains it with a series of antitheses between the old commandments and his new way of propounding them. He begins each time: “You have heard that it was said to the men of old...”, and then he asserts: “but I say to you”.... For example, “You have heard that it was said to the men of old, ‘you shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgement’. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgement”. And he does this six times. This manner of speaking made a great impression on the people, who were shocked, because those words: “I say to you” were equivalent to claiming the actual authority of God, the source of the Law. The newness of Jesus consists essentially in the fact that he himself “fulfils” the commandments with the love of God, with the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within him. And we, through faith in Christ, can open ourselves to the action of the Holy Spirit who makes us capable of living divine love. So it is that every precept becomes true as a requirement of love, and all join in a single commandment: love God with all your heart and love your neighbour as yourself. “Love is the fulfilling of the Law”, as St Paul writes in his Letter to the Romans. Dear friends, perhaps it is not by chance that Jesus' first great preaching is called the “Sermon on the Mount”! Moses went up Mount Sinai to receive the Law of God and bring it to the Chosen People. Jesus is the Son of God himself who came down from Heaven to lead us to Heaven, to God's height, on the way of love. Indeed, he himself is this way; all we have to do in order to put into practice God's will and to enter his Kingdom, eternal life, is to follow him. Only one creature has already scaled the mountain peak: the Virgin Mary. Through her union with Jesus, her righteousness was perfect: for this reason we invoke her as *Speculum iustitiae* - the Mirror of Justice. Let us entrust ourselves to her so that she may guide our steps in fidelity to Christ's Law.*

A short prayer for healing by St Augustine

Watch O Lord, with those who cannot sleep or weep tonight. Tend your sick ones. Rest your weary ones. Bless your dying ones. Soothe your suffering ones. Pity your afflicted ones. Shield your joyous ones. Amen.

Saints of the Week

3rd February - Saint Blaise

We know more about the devotion to Saint Blaise by Christians around the world than we know about the saint himself. His feast is observed as a holy day in some Eastern Churches. In 1222, the Council of Oxford prohibited servile labour in England on Blaise's feast day. The Germans and Slavs hold him in special honour, and for decades many United States Catholics have sought the annual Saint Blaise blessing for their throats. We know that Bishop Blaise was martyred in his episcopal city of Sebastea, in Armenia, in 316.

The legendary Acts of St. Blaise were written 400 years later. According to them Blaise was a good bishop, working hard to encourage the spiritual and physical health of his people. Although the Edict of Toleration (311), granting freedom of worship in the Roman Empire, was already five years old, persecution still raged in Armenia. Blaise was apparently forced to flee to the back country. There he lived as a hermit in solitude and prayer, but he made friends with the wild animals. One day a group of hunters seeking wild animals for the amphitheater stumbled upon Blaise's cave. They were first surprised and then frightened. The bishop was kneeling in prayer surrounded by patiently waiting wolves, lions and bears. The legend has it that as the hunters hauled Blaise off to prison, a mother came with her young son who had a fish bone lodged in his throat. At Blaise's command the child was able to cough up the bone. Agricolaus, governor of Cappadocia, tried to persuade Blaise to sacrifice to pagan idols. The first time Blaise refused, he was beaten. The next time he was suspended from a tree and his flesh torn with iron combs or rakes. Finally, he was beheaded.

Reflection: Four centuries give ample opportunity for fiction to creep in with fact. Who can be sure how accurate Blaise's biographer was? But biographical details are not essential. Blaise is seen as one more example of the power those have who give themselves entirely to Jesus. As Jesus told his apostles at the Last Supper, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you". With faith we can follow the lead of the Church in asking for St. Blaise's protection. Saint Blaise is the Patron Saint of: Relief from Throat Ailments & English Wool Combers

7th February—Saint Colette

Saint Colette did not seek the limelight, but in doing God's will she certainly attracted a lot of attention. Colette was born in Corbie, France. At 21, she began to follow the Third Order Rule and became an anchoress, a woman walled into a room whose only opening was a window into a church. After four years of prayer and penance in this cell, she left it. With the approval and encouragement of the pope, she joined the Poor Clares and reintroduced the primitive Rule of St. Clare in the 17 monasteries she established. Her sisters were known for their poverty—they rejected any fixed income—and for their perpetual fast. Colette's reform movement spread to other countries and is still thriving today. In 1807 Colette was canonized. Her liturgical feast is celebrated on March 6.

Reflection: Colette began her reform during the time of the Great Western Schism (1378-1417) when three men claimed to be pope and thus divided Western Christianity. The 15th century in general was a very difficult one for the Western Church. Abuses long neglected cost the Church dearly in the following century. Colette's reform indicated the entire Church's need to follow Christ more closely.

Parish Administrator - St Mary's Alton

We are seeking a Parish Administrator to maintain and uphold efficient administrative support to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the parish, supporting the Parish Priest. For details, Person Specification and more information, please visit: <https://portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/vacancy/parish-administrator-alton/>

The closing date for applications is Sunday 6th February at 23.59



This year's Bosco Experience & Reunion Afternoon

will be held on Sunday 22nd February from 2-4pm at St Peter's Catholic Church, Winchester SO23 8RY. A chance for new boys who want to find out more and have a 'taste' of the Bosco Experience and for those who have been on camp to meet with old friends. Fun activities and a chance for parents to find out more and sign up for camp.

There is no cost for the afternoon.

The 2026 Portsmouth Diocesan Don Bosco Boys' Camp will run from Sunday 26th July to Saturday 1st August. We are delighted that camp will once again be held this summer at St.

Cassian's, Kintbury for boys who are currently in Year 6 Primary school to Year 11 Secondary school. There will be plenty of sport, outings, competitions and fun and games to ensure that boys will have a fantastic time. This will continue to take place within the context of the celebration of the Catholic Faith, including daily Mass and morning prayer. The cost of the camp is £280 which includes all food and activities for the week. For more information please see our website <https://www.portsmouthdiocesedonboscocamp.co.uk> or email dbcamps@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

CHORISTER OPPORTUNITIES

AT WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL CHOIR SCHOOL

I am writing to ask whether there might be any Catholic boys with musical potential, in Years 2, 3 or 4 in your parish, who might consider becoming choristers at Westminster Cathedral.

Every September Westminster Cathedral Choir School welcomes up to six choristers into Years 4 or 5. Becoming a chorister at Westminster Cathedral offers boys the opportunity to sing both here in central London, and on tour internationally, in one of the world's great choirs. Boys also receive an outstanding education at one of London's leading schools, up until the end of Year 8. Choristers board during the School week only, heading home to their families from Friday afternoon until Sunday morning at 9.45 am.

Becoming a chorister at Westminster Cathedral is a wonderful, one-off opportunity to join a thriving choir and school.

There are no financial barriers to entry: all boys receive generous scholarships, with bursaries worth up to 100% of fees available on a means-tested basis. We are an inclusive and diverse community: almost all our choristers join us from Catholic primary schools in the maintained sector; the only universal element is a love of singing!

Our next Zoom sessions, each lasting 30 minutes, are at 6.30pm on Wednesday 11th March. We take a behind-the-scenes look at the life of a chorister, focusing on what it means to board, and why being in a top choir is such a joyous experience. Families simply contact Rachel Bonnet for a link. Email rbonnet@choirschool.com



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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 Stampia Gruss, Kay Hulbert, Pam Barbour

