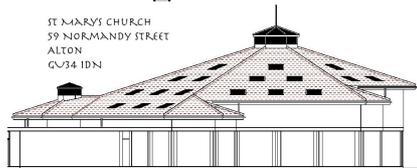


St Mary's Parish Newsletter



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5th Sunday in Ordinary Time 8th February 2026

While the world today may seem to be very indifferent to Christianity most of the time, it can be very critical of Christians who do not seem to be following the most basic tenet of their faith – to be a people of “good deeds”, as Jesus teaches in today’s portion of the Sermon on the Mount. While we may sometimes feel indignant about the world’s criticism of our faults, we have to remember that we are in a vital relationship with “the world” – we are to be its light. This means that we should welcome the world’s gaze and scrutiny of our actions and beliefs and we should, in a sense, be accountable to the world for the way we live. We should never be salt that loses its taste. This openness to the gaze of all is not for our own glory, however: it is so that others may find what we have found – their way to the Father.

‘You are the light of the world.’

A Pope’s Reflection - Pope Benedict

In this Sunday’s Gospel the Lord Jesus tells his disciples: “You are the salt of the earth.... You are the light of the world”. With these richly evocative images he wishes to pass on to them the meaning of their mission and their witness. Salt, in the cultures of the Middle East, calls to mind several values such as the Covenant, solidarity, life and wisdom. Light is the first work of God the Creator and is a source of life; the word of God is compared to light, as the Psalmist proclaims: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”. And, again in today’s Liturgy, the Prophet Isaiah says: “If you pour yourself out for the hungry and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness and your gloom be as the noonday” Wisdom sums up in itself the beneficial effects of salt and light: in fact, disciples of the Lord are called to give a new “taste” to the world and to keep it from corruption with the wisdom of God, which shines out in its full splendour on the Face of the Son because he is “the true light that enlightens every man”. United to him, in the darkness of indifference and selfishness, Christians can diffuse the light of God’s love, true wisdom that gives meaning to human life and action. On 11 February, the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, we shall celebrate the World Day of the Sick. It is a favourable opportunity on which to reflect, to pray and to increase the sensitivity that the ecclesial communities and civil society show to our sick brothers and sisters. In the Message for this Day, inspired by a sentence from the First Letter of Peter, “By his wounds you have been healed”, I invite everyone to contemplate Jesus, the Son of God, who suffered and died but is Risen. God radically opposes the overbearingness of evil. The Lord takes care of human beings in every situation, he shares in their suffering and opens their hearts to hope. I therefore urge all health-care workers to recognize in the sick person not only a body marked by frailty but first and foremost a person, to whom they should give full solidarity and offer appropriated and qualified help. In this context I also recall that today many countries celebrate the “Day for Life”. I hope that everyone will make an effort to increase the culture of life and to make the human being the centre in all circumstances. According to both faith and reason, the dignity of the person cannot be reduced to his or her faculties or visible capacity; thus human dignity is never lacking even when the person is weak, sick or in need of help. Dear brothers and sisters, let us invoke the motherly intercession of the Virgin Mary so that parents, grandparents, teachers, priests and all who are involved in education may inculcate in the young generations wisdom of heart, to enable them to attain fullness of life.

Recognize, Reframe, Repeat

three Rs to help you deal with your daily anxiety. The beauty of this process is that it can work for any person who experiences anxiety - a parent, partner, friend, sibling, boss, coworker, or anyone in your life. You don’t need a psychologist or a social worker to do this, though it may help to bring this process to therapy to talk about how it went. Next time you feel anxious, or any strong emotion, simply look at the thought (Recognize) with Jesus, see how you can reexamine the statement to remove some of the strong emotion (Reframe), and then do it again the next time it comes up (Repeat). And remember: Jesus is always with you. Just ask for help.
“Recognize. Reframe. Repeat.” by Fred Cabras, OFM Cap

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

w/c Sunday 8th February, 2026

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

(A1) (Psalter Week 1)

Saturday	Our Lady on Saturday	
	5.30pm	Intention of The Priest
Sunday	Fifth Sunday of The Year	
<i>St. Lucy’s</i>	9.00am	Intention of The Priest
<i>St. Mary’s</i>	11.00am	Bill Wood, RIP
Monday	Feria	
	9.30am	Angel P Manaois, RIP(CB)
Tuesday	St. Scholastica	
	NO MASS	
Wednesday	Feria	
	9.00am	Rosary
	9.30am	Living & Deceased members of St. Mary’s (F)
Thursday	Feria	
	9.30am	Regina Heal, RIP (DW)
Friday	Feria	
	9.30am	Holy Souls (RG)
Saturday	St. Cyril & St. Methodius	
	5.30pm	Augustine Thomas, RIP (RG)
	Sixth Sunday of The Year	
<i>St. Lucy’s</i>	9.00am	The People of The Parish
<i>St. Mary’s</i>	11.00am	Amy & Leonard Gilbert, RIP (KH)
	Confessions: Saturday at 4.45pm and by appointment	

This week-end we welcome Fr. Stephen who will be making an appeal on behalf of St. Patrick’s Missionary Society

FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Entrance Antiphon

O come, let us worship God and bow low before the God who made us, for he is the Lord our God.

First Reading: Isaiah 58:7-10

Responsorial Psalm

A light rises in the darkness for the upright.

Second Reading: Corinthians 2:1-5

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia ! I am the light of the world, says the Lord, whoever follows me will have the light of life. Alleluia !

Gospel: Matthew 5:13-16

Communion Antiphon

Let them thank the Lord for his mercy, his wonders for the children of men for he satisfies the thirsty soul, and the hungry he fills with good things.

**PRAISE TO THE LORD THE
ALMIGHTY THE KING OF CREATION**

Saints of the Week

February 10th - Saint Scholastica

Twins often share the same interests and ideas with an equal intensity. Therefore, it is of no surprise that Scholastica and her twin brother, Benedict, established religious communities within a few miles from each other. Born in 480 of wealthy parents, Ss. Scholastica and Benedict were brought up together until he left central Italy for Rome to continue his studies. Little is known of Scholastica's early life. She founded a religious community for women near Monte Cassino at Plombariola, five miles from where her brother governed a monastery. The twins visited each other once a year in a farmhouse because Scholastica was not permitted inside the monastery. They spent these times discussing spiritual matters. According to the Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great, the brother and sister spent their last day together in prayer and conversation. Scholastica sensed her death was close at hand and she begged Benedict to stay with her until the next day. He refused her request because he did not want to spend a night outside the monastery, thus breaking his own Rule. Scholastica asked God to let her brother remain and a severe thunderstorm broke out, preventing Benedict and his monks from returning to the abbey. Benedict cried out, "God forgive you, Sister. What have you done?" St Scholastica replied, "I asked a favour of you and you refused. I asked it of God and he granted it." Brother and sister parted the next morning after their long discussion. Three days later, Benedict was praying in his monastery and saw the soul of his sister rising heavenward in the form of a white dove. Benedict then announced the death of his sister to the monks and later buried her in the tomb he had prepared for himself.



Reflection: Ss. Scholastica and Benedict gave of themselves totally to God and gave top priority to deepening their friendship with him through prayer. They sacrificed some of the opportunities they would have had to be together as brother and sister in order better to fulfil their vocation to the religious life. In coming closer to Christ, however, they found they were also closer to each other. In joining a religious community, they did not forget or forsake their family but rather found in the world more brothers and sisters.

Preparing for Lent 2026 (Ash Wednesday, 18th February)

Whether we feel ready or not, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Church's observance of the Lenten season - six weeks that are set apart for the purpose of drawing closer to God and seeking him with greater intensity. Unfortunately, the Lenten season often gets reduced to the question, "What are you giving up for Lent?" This is a fine question, but it can only take us so far. The real question of the Lenten season is, "How will I repent and return to God with all my heart?" This begs an even deeper question: "Where in my life have I drifted away from God, and what are the disciplines that will enable me to find my way back?"

Honest to God

Ash Wednesday initiates this season in which we are called to be as honest as we are able about the ways we have "left" God and slipped into spiritual mediocrity. "You desire truth in the inward being," Psalm 51 points out, "Therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart." As God gives us wisdom and insight about our true condition, we can choose spiritual practices that are uniquely suited to help us return to God in the places where we have strayed or to renew our passion where our hearts have grown cold. The Scripture readings for Ash Wednesday provide a good introduction to some of the concrete disciplines that have the potential to loosen the grip of sin and distraction in our lives—prayer and fasting, hiddenness, self-examination and repentance, forgiving others as we have been forgiven, and storing up treasure in heaven by giving generously to others.

Search Me, O God

Left to ourselves, we probably would not choose to devote a whole season to such rigorous and demanding disciplines, but God knows we need it. As we receive the symbolic gesture of

the imposition of ashes on our foreheads, we acknowledge our human finiteness and mortality. No matter who we think we are, receiving the ashes reminds us that, "You are dust and to dust you will return" (Genesis 3:19). This is not meant to be morbid; it is just meant to limit our grandiosity and help us to stay in touch with the real human condition we all share.

The ashes marking our foreheads carry the same meaning contained in the Old Testament practice of covering oneself with ashes. They are a graphic reminder of our sinfulness, an outward sign of inward repentance and mourning as we become aware of our sin. This, too, is good for us because we live in so much denial. With as much openness as we can muster, we invite God to search us and know us and (eventually) lead us into resurrection life.

Longing for God

The purpose for engaging in Lenten disciplines is that we would become more finely attuned to our longing for God so we can seek him with all our hearts. Disciplines of fasting and other kinds of abstinences help us face the hold that our sin patterns have on us so we can somehow let go of our real attachment to anything that is not God. As we wrestle with a more realistic awareness of the grip our attachments have on us, we enter into the godly grief that leads to repentance, and then forgiveness and freedom. Serious as the Lenten season is, it is also a time of great hope as we experience God's steadfast love for us, even in the midst of whatever sin we are honestly acknowledging. In the shadow of Christ's cross and impending resurrection we are assured that there is forgiveness and cleansing for all who turn to him. In him there is the power to pass from death unto life in the places where we ourselves are in need of resurrection.

Ted Loder, *Guerrillas of Grace*

The Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but, in thy mercy, hear and answer me. Amen.

WORDS OF COMFORT FOR THE BEREAVED

Grief never ends...but it changes. It's a passage, not a place to stay. Grief is not a sign of weakness, nor a lack of faith, It is the price of love."

T	L	U	N	D	E	R	D	O	S
B	O	A	E	I	C	E	I	S	E
U	L	O	M	T	L	Y	E	E	I
T	H	E	F	P	H	L	T	N	G
E	L	I	M	R	E	G	O	I	H
A	S	A	L	T	E	T	I	H	C
R	R	I	S	L	H	D	O	S	T
T	Y	A	A	I	T	G	N	O	U
H	T	I	N	R	O	O	I	U	F
B	U	G	C	U	P	I	P	L	E

SALT
EARTH
TASTELESS
NOTHING
TRAMPLED
CITY
LIGHT
UNDERFOOT
HILLTOP
LAMP
TUB
SHINES
SIGHT
MEN
PRAISE



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