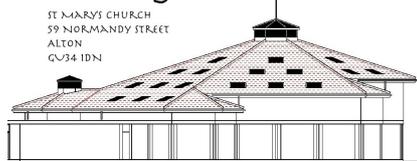


St Mary's Parish Newsletter



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MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS w/c Sunday 15th March, 2026 FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (A2) (Psalter Week 4)

Saturday	Lent Feria	
	4.45pm	Stations of the Cross
	5.30pm	Eileen McDermott, RIP
Sunday	4th Sunday of Lent	
St. Lucy's	9.00am	The People of The Parish
St. Mary's	11.00am	John Walmsley, RIP (F)
Monday	Lent Feria	
	9.30am	Dec'd members of the Quinn Family (F)
Tuesday	St. Patrick	
		NO MASS
Wednesday	Lent Feria	
	9.30am	Mary Dzwig, RIP (F)
Thursday	St. Joseph	
	9.30am	
Friday	Lent Feria	
	9.30am	Benefactors of the Priest's Retirement Fund
Saturday	Lent Feria	
	4.45pm	Stations of the Cross
	5.30pm	Bridie Toal, RIP (MD)
Sunday	5th Sunday of Lent	
St. Lucy's	9.00am	The People of The Parish
St. Mary's	11.00am	John McGinty, RIP (MMcG)
Confessions: Saturday at 3.20pm and by appointment		

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Entrance Antiphon

Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her. Be joyful, all who were in mourning; exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast

First Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a

Responsorial Psalm

The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing I shall want.

Second Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

Gospel Acclamation

Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus. I am the light of the world, says the Lord; whoever follows me will have the light of life. Praise and honour to you, Lord Jesus.

Gospel: John 9:1-41

Communion Antiphon

The Lord anointed my eyes: I went, I washed, I saw and I believed in God.



4th Sunday of Lent 15th March, 2026

When we get to Easter, there are two symbols of the resurrection that we use in Church: fire and light (the Easter Candle) and water (the Font). Last week we reflected on water, and this week there are passages all about light – true light, that defeats the blindness of sin. Again, this would have been offered to those preparing for Baptism, but speaks to all of us who have been baptised, inviting us to be renewed in the light of Christ at Easter. Remember that one of the

oldest titles of the newly baptised was “neophyte”, which means “newly enlightened”. There is a subtle link between the readings on this Sunday: in the first reading, David is anointed, and the Spirit of the Lord seizes on him. This anointing lights him along the right path - ‘no evil would I fear’ as the Psalm says. Then Paul tells us more about this light: it is Christ shining on us, calling us to live as children of light.

All this is summed up in the Gospel, the marvellous story of the healing (by being ‘anointed’ with spittle) of the man born blind. Jesus is the light of the world

‘He went and washed and received his sight’

A Pope's Reflection - Pope Benedict

The Lenten journey that we are taking is a special time of grace during which we can experience the gift of the Lord's kindness to us. The Liturgy of this Sunday, called “Laetare”, invites us to be glad and rejoice as the Entrance Antiphon of the Eucharistic celebration proclaims: “Rejoice, Jerusalem! Be glad for her, you who love her; rejoice with her, you who mourned for her, and you will find contentment at her consoling breasts”. What is the profound reason for this joy? Today's Gospel in which Jesus heals a man blind from birth tells us. The question which the Lord Jesus asks the blind man is the high point of the story: “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”. The man recognizes the sign worked by Jesus and he passes from the light of his eyes to the light of faith: “Lord, I believe!”. It should be noted that as a simple and sincere person he gradually completes the journey of faith. In the beginning he thinks of Jesus as a “man” among others, then he considers him a “prophet” and finally his eyes are opened and he proclaims him “Lord”. In opposition to the faith of the healed blind man is the hardening of the hearts of the Pharisees who do not want to accept the miracle because they refuse to receive Jesus as the Messiah. Instead the crowd pauses to discuss the event and continues to be distant and indifferent. Even the blind man's parents are overcome by the fear of what others might think. And what attitude to Jesus should we adopt? Because of Adam's sin we too are born “blind” but in the baptismal font we are illumined by the grace of Christ. Sin wounded humanity and destined it to the darkness of death, but the newness of life shines out in Christ, as well as the destination to which we are called. In him, reinvigorated by the Holy Spirit, we receive the strength to defeat evil and to do good. In fact the Christian life is a continuous conformation to Christ, image of the new man, in order to reach full communion with God. The Lord Jesus is the “light of the world”, because in him shines “the knowledge of the glory of God” that continues in the complex plot of the story to reveal the meaning of human existence. In the rite of Baptism, the presentation of the candle lit from the large Paschal candle, a symbol of the Risen Christ, is a sign that helps us to understand what happens in the Sacrament. When our lives are enlightened by the mystery of Christ, we experience the joy of being liberated from all that threatens the full realization. In these days which prepare us for Easter let us rekindle within us the gift received in Baptism, that flame which sometimes risks being extinguished. Let us nourish it with prayer and love for others. Let us entrust our Lenten journey to the Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church so that all may encounter Christ, Saviour of the world.

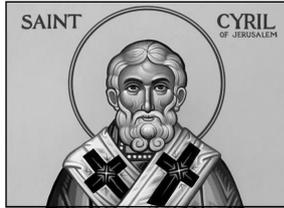
The Special Collection this week-end, 14th & 15th March is for The Clergy Assistance Fund

Saints of the Week

18th March—St. Cyril of Jerusalem

The crises that the Church faces today may seem minor when compared with the threat posed by the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ and almost overcame Christianity in the 4th century. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem was to be caught up in the controversy, accused of Arianism by Saint Jerome, and ultimately vindicated both by the men of his own time and by being declared a Doctor of the Church in 1822. Raised in Jerusalem and well-educated, especially in the Scriptures, he was ordained a priest by the bishop of Jerusalem and given the task during Lent of catechizing those preparing for Baptism and catechizing the newly baptized during the Easter season. His Catecheses remain valuable as examples of the ritual and theology of the Church in the mid-4th century. There are conflicting reports about the circumstances of his becoming bishop of Jerusalem. It is certain that he was validly consecrated by bishops of the province. Since one of them was an Arian, Acacius, it may have been expected that his "cooperation" would follow. Conflict soon rose between St Cyril and Acacius, bishop of the rival nearby see of Caesarea. Cyril was summoned to a council, accused of insubordination and of selling Church property to relieve the poor. Probably, however, a theological difference was also involved. He was condemned, driven from Jerusalem, and later vindicated, not without some association with and help from Semi-Arians. Half his episcopate was spent in exile; his first experience was repeated twice. He finally returned to find Jerusalem torn with heresy, schism and strife, and wracked with crime. Even Saint Gregory of Nyssa, who was sent to help, left in despair. They both went to the Council of Constantinople, where the amended form of the Nicene Creed was promulgated in 381. St Cyril accepted the word consubstantial that is, Christ is of the same substance or nature as the Father. Some said it was an act of repentance, but the bishops of the Council praised him as a champion of orthodoxy against the Arians. Though not friendly with the greatest defender of orthodoxy against the Arians, Saint Cyril may be counted among those whom Athanasius called "brothers, who mean what we mean, and differ only about the word consubstantial."

Reflection: Those who imagine that the lives of saints are simple and placid, untouched by the vulgar breath of controversy, are rudely shocked by history. Yet, it should be no surprise that saints, indeed all Christians, will experience the same difficulties as their Master. The definition of truth is an endless, complex pursuit, and good men and women have suffered the pain of both controversy and error. Intellectual, emotional, and political roadblocks may slow up people like Cyril for a time. But their lives taken as a whole are monuments to honesty and courage.



FAITH & HOPE

Faith always takes us on a journey beyond the obvious and tangible. This was often lacking in those who experienced Jesus and His teachings. When He spoke of offering His Body and Blood, they exclaimed: "How can this man give us flesh to eat?" They totally missed the spiritual dimension of His words and message. He was pointing them to a higher realm of understanding, while they chose to remain on an earthly level leading only to darkness and death. Faith does not come easy.

While we see and know people for whom faith seems like second nature, for many of us it is a gift that reveals itself only with the utmost diligence and care. It usually begins to appear in times of transition, distress and/or sickness, for it is in moments like these that the Lord is able to get our attention long enough, so that we can hear His voice above the noise and confusion of our daily lives. Whenever trouble breaks into the serenity of our daily existence, we can be sure the Divine potter is at work trying to mold us into something beautiful.

—Fr. Dominic P. Irace

The Requiem Mass for Sr Barbera and Sr Joan will be at 12pm at Lucy's, Medstead on 20th March.

EASTER SERVICES 2026

Thursday, 2nd April—Holy Thursday

8pm Mass of the Lord's Supper
Watching until 10pm

Friday, 3rd April—Good Friday

10.00am Children's Stations
3.00pm Solemn Passion Liturgy

Saturday, 4th April—Holy Saturday

10.00am, Blessing of Polish Food Baskets
8.00pm, Solemn Easter Vigil

Sunday, 5th April

9.00am, Mass at St. Lucy's
11am, Mass at St. Mary's

Prayers for Lent Week 4:

Love and Compassion

Prayer for Love

Lord, fill my heart with Your love. Help me love others as You love me. Remove hatred, anger, and bitterness from my heart. Teach me to show kindness and compassion. May my life reflect Your love to everyone I meet. Amen.

Prayer for Forgiveness

Merciful Father, help me forgive those who have hurt me. Remove resentment and bitterness from my heart.

Teach me to forgive as You have forgiven me.

Bring healing and peace to my soul. Amen.

Prayer for Compassion

Lord, open my eyes to the needs of others. Help me show compassion to those who are suffering. Give me a heart that reflects Your kindness. Help me serve others with love. Amen.

Prayer for Kindness

Father, help me speak and act with kindness. May my words encourage and uplift others. Help me be patient and gentle. Let my life reflect Your grace and goodness. Amen.

Prayer for Generosity

Lord, teach me to give freely and generously. Help me share my blessings with others. Remove selfishness from my heart.

Help me reflect Your generosity. Amen.

Prayer for Service

Heavenly Father, give me a servant's heart. Help me serve others with humility. Teach me to follow the example of Jesus Christ. May my actions bring glory to You. Amen.

Prayer for Unity

Lord, help bring unity among believers. Remove division and conflict. Help us love and support one another. Strengthen our faith together. Amen.



"Mum: someone who does the work of twenty people for free."

"I smile because you're my mum and I laugh because there's nothing you can do about it!"

"Mum: powered by love, fuelled by tea."

S	R	E	N	N	I	S	L	E	T	BLIND	SPAT	PASTE
S	E	D	E	V	O	U	T	H	S	SPITTLE	SIGHT	RESTORED
P	E	I	R	T	R	O	H	R	T	PROPHET	PARENTS	DISCIPLES
I	S	L	A	S	A	R	G	E	N	SINNERS	DEVOUT	BELIEVE
T	E	H	P	O	R	P	I	S	E			
T	A	S	P	I	A	A	S	T	R			
L	H	G	I	S	C	O	P	O	A			
E	O	U	T	I	P	S	I	R	P			
E	V	E	I	L	E	B	I	E	S			
E	D	N	I	L	B	L	N	D	I			

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

