

**PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK**

Caroline Williams, Christine Rogers, David Noble, Patrick Hullinson, Barbara Murphy, Florence Ward, Peggy Sugrue, Dale Broom, Jackie Berry, Bernard Holt, Patricia Greene, Bernadette Greene, Eileen Butt, Carol Doherty, Frank Colgan, Marian Whyte, Stephen King, Dan McCormack, Joan Eastwood.

**PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE DEAD**

**Recently Deceased:** Craig Millward, Clark Davidson, Philomena Carty, Catherine McGavican.

**Anniversaries:** David Heath, Robert Broe, Betty Gelder.

**WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS**

“Do not let your weakness make you impatient. Instead let the serenity of your spirit shine through your face.”

St Peter Damian

“Here I am, the servant of the Lord, let it be according to your word.”

St Alessio Falconieri



We call the “Message of Lourdes” the gestures and words that were exchanged between the Blessed Virgin Mary and Bernadette Soubirous at the grotto of Massabielle. These actions are biblical actions. Bernadette acts out the Incarnation, when God joined us in the dust, the Passion and death when she looked for water in what was barren. Moving on her knees to the back of the filthy cave and eating bitter herbs she became one with Christ in suffering.

 Last Week’s collection was: £1040.21 Thank you

£££

The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1380.00



This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for the intentions of the parish.



This week, Our Lady’s Lamp burns for the homeless and the poor.



**OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH**

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**SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**

Sunday 16th February

Holy Masses 9am & 11am

Monday 17th February

Holy Mass 12 noon

The Seven Holy Founders

Tuesday 18th February

Holy Mass 12 noon

Wednesday 19th February

Holy Mass 12 noon

Thursday 20th February

Requiem Clark Davidson  
12 noon

Friday 21st February

Holy Mass 12 noon

St Peter Damian

Saturday 22nd February

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament  
Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm  
Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm

St Peter’s Chair

## Radcliffe Male Voice Choir

Tickets are available for an evening concert with the Radcliffe Male Voice Choir. On Friday 21st February the choir will perform in the Hall and the bar will be open. Tickets are £5 each and there will be a raffle and bar on the night. All proceeds are for the redecoration of the church.

## Book Launch

There will be a launch of the two books that Mgr. John Allen has written recently—and which are available from the piety stall. The launch will take place at St Patrick's Church, Collyhurst on Monday 3rd March at 5pm. All proceeds from these books will go to the Diocesan Charity, Caritas. If you require additional information please consult the diocesan website or speak to the parish Caritas rep Eddie Welch.

## Car Parking

Over the coming weeks and months, carparking is going to become more difficult in the vicinity of the church. Work will commence on the adjacent council site and people will be looking to park elsewhere. This will be made worse by the fact that a number of bays in our carpark, adjacent to the dividing wall, will be out of action due to scaffolding. At Mass times, the carpark is for parishioners and otherwise for hall users. We may have to look at ways of restricting entry—especially when contractors arrive to work on our own buildings after Easter.

## A Date for Your Diary

The Social Committee has arranged for New Silver Dollar to perform at a St Patrick's Night Celebration in the Hall on Sunday 16th March at 7.30pm. Tickets at £10 will be at a premium as space for dancing will mean we will need to restrict numbers to 100. Entrance will be by ticket only.

## Church Building Works

Recently, I met with Dominic Roberts, the architect from Roberts and Stone and with Adrian Walker the contractor from Walker Conservation Ltd. This was to discuss the scheduling for the works on the church roof and side door. These works will begin straight after Easter and should last for a period of around twenty weeks. During this time the roof over the aisle on the sacristy side of the church will be renewed as well as the lantern roof above the Sacred Heart chapel. A new entrance porch will also be fashioned near the present side door. Plans will be displayed shortly.

## The Virgin and her Smile

It's February, cold, dark and rainy - and soon, on the fifth of March, we will begin the penitential season of Lent. We can't help but think of Lourdes - especially not at Our Lady of Grace and in the light of today's readings: 'Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.'

Bernadette Soubirous was such a blessed one, wasn't she? She was like a tree planted by the stream who put her roots down deep into today's Gospel of the beatitudes and didn't fear when heat came. She wasn't anxious but bore much fruit. And those awesome words from St Paul today, weren't they repeated to Bernadette by the beautiful Lady who stood in the cleft of the rock. Paul says: "Brothers and sisters ... If in Christ we have hope in this life only, we are the most pitiable people of all ." And Mary says to Bernadette: "I do not promise you happiness in this world only in the next."

The message of Jesus in the Gospel is the heart of his message about the kingdom - and how it will come on earth. When we accept and look up from our pitiable state in poverty, sin, bereavement, sickness; when we reach out to God from that place we find blessing, happiness, healing.

Think of Bernadette kneeling in that filthy cave at Massabielle; poor, illiterate, sickly . It was on the 18th of that cold, dark month of February that Our Lady said she only promised happiness in the next world - but the promise and her smile transformed that dark cave - the happiness of heaven showed itself that day when Bernadette planted herself by the stream.

There is a touching story about Le Comte de Bruissard who witnessed Bernadette kneeling and radiantly looking up at the cliff. Because he was so-called nobility he thought he had the right to question her:

"How did she smile, the Lady?" He asked. "The little shepherdess looked at me with astonishment, then, after a moment of silence she said, "Sir, you would have to be in heaven to recreate that smile." "Could you not do it for me now? I am a doubter and I don't believe in the apparitions." The face of the child grew dark and took on a severe expression. "So, sir, do you think I am a liar?" I was disarmed. No, Bernadette was not a liar, and I was about to go on my knees to beg forgiveness. Then she added, "Since you are a sinner, I am going to recreate the smile of the Virgin for you." Since then, I have lost my wife and two daughters, but I am not alone in the world. I live with the smile of the Virgin." Doesn't Jesus say today, "Blessed are those who mourn"? - the very message of the Virgin's smile.