

**OUR LADY OF GRACE  
PARISH, PRESTWICH**

PARISH PRIEST Fr. PHILIP CALDWELL

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**Prayer Intentions for the Sick**

Maureen Holt, Silvana Mantio, Christine Rogers, Craig Millward, David Millward, David Noble, Roxine Callow, Patrick Hullinson, Barbara Murphy, Florence Ward, Peggy Sugrue, Dale Broom, Jackie Berry, Bernard Holt, Patricia Greene, Bernadette Greene, Brenda Neiles.

**Prayer Intentions for the Dead**

**Recently Deceased:** Chi Man Anthony Sung, Thomas Fitzpatrick, Marie Flynn, Dave Hughes, Frances McManus, Eileen Hynes, Steph Breslin.

**Anniversaries:** Maura Cronshaw, Betty Gelder, Margaret Rayner.


**WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS**

“If you imagine for a moment that I would do that—gossip about others—then you don’t know who I am. Hear it plainly. I am a Christian.”  
St Polycarp

“The best penance is to have patience with the sorrows God permits and to dedicate oneself to the duties of everyday.”  
St Peter Damian



“All your hopes and disappointments, your joy and suffering, your achievement and failure, your ups and downs: none of it is wasted. Provided only that you consent without qualification. The work of grace is going on in you this Lent through the whole business of living—to hollow you out and make you capable of receiving God. All your love, your stretching out, your hope, your thirst, God is creating in you so that God may fill you. God is on the inside of your longing.”

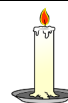
 Last Week’s collection was: £1284.09. Thank you

£££

The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1366.00



This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for those who are sick.



This week, Our Lady’s Lamp burns for peace and justice in the Holy Land.

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

**Sunday 18th February**

**Holy Masses 9am & 11am**

**Monday 19th February**

**Holy Mass 12 noon**

**Tuesday 20th February**

**Holy Mass 12 noon**

**Wednesday 21st February**

**Holy Mass 12 noon**

**Thursday 22nd February**

**Holy Mass 12 noon  
Funeral Service Tony Sung 2pm**

**Friday 23rd February**

**Holy Mass 8am  
Holy Mass 12noon**

**Saturday 24th February**

**Exposition 11.30am-1pm  
Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm  
Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm**

## St Patrick's Night Celebration

We are incredibly fortunate to be able to welcome Rionaghach Connolly to lead our parish's St Patrick's Night celebrations on Saturday, 16th March. Rionaghach, originally from Armagh but now living in Manchester, was BBC Radio 2 folk singer of the year for 2023 and sings with Honeyfeet and The Breath. With a few musicians she'll lead an evening of singing and dancing in the Hall. There will be a hot supper and a bar until late. Please look out for details and save the date.

## Cornerstone Appeal

Cornerstone is appealing for men's boots, shoes, coats, fleeces and jeans. If you have any of these items to spare please drop them to the hall after Mass.

## Children's Liturgy

The next children's liturgy is: Sunday 25th February during the 11am Mass

## Property Committee

The postponed meeting of the Parish Property Committee will be in the presbytery on **Thursday 22nd February at 7.30pm.**

## Baptism Meeting

There are no baptisms during Lent. The next meeting for those seeking a baptism at Our Lady of Grace will be on **Wednesday 6th March at 7.30pm** in the Hall.

## Safeguarding

At some point in the next month, we expect all our parish volunteers who currently need a DBS to have had one. This includes new volunteers and those whose certificate had expired. Many thanks to everyone for your co-operation. Safeguarding is not a job that can be completed but an on-going concern and care for God's people. It's the responsibility of us all to watch out for and keep safe anyone in our community who may be at risk.

## Day of Recollection for Readers and Eucharistic Ministers

On Saturday, 16th March I'm hoping to have a few hours recollection for our parish Ministers and Readers. If we met for Mass at 11am, we could then go over to the Hall for two short talks and a buffet lunch together. I expect the recollection being complete by 3pm at the latest. It would be great if as many of us as possible could meet together.

The Mass of the Lord's Supper on Maundy Thursday provides a perfect opportunity for the commissioning and recommissioning of ministers. I understand that some may be away for Easter but it would be good if as many as possible could attend the commissioning.

## Straight as an Arrow

One of my favourite images for Jesus is an arrow: the strong, swift arrow that takes our humanity straight to the Father's heart. It's a great image for Lent: The association between the arrow and the bow mentioned twice in our first reading—and the fact that Ash Wednesday got caught up with all the Valentine images of red hearts and golden arrows—made me think of it. God, in Christ, is always reaching out to be reconciled with us.

But the real reason to think of Jesus the Arrow, today, and all through Lent, is because it helps with our understanding of sin. From the start, this season confronts us with a strong sense of iniquity: our own sins and the sins of all the world. In truth and with the psalmist, we say in Lent: "my offences, truly, I know them; my sin is always before me." It's not just our sins that are before us—not just a moment of truth but a moment of decision too. At the beginning of Lent we also hear: "See, today, I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster—choose life then!"

How many times have we faced the moment of truth about ourselves and the moment of decision to change? And how many times have we accepted neither?! That this is the 57th Lent of my life makes me shudder—and if I didn't think often of the Arrow, it'd either make me feel either completely frustrated or make me want to hang my head in shame.

But, you see, the Scriptures describe sin as "missing the mark" - all those things we've done and not done that fall short or go astray, like arrows that miss. Things that don't reach their goal or fail to come to completion: all that is inadequate, frustrated, incomplete in our life and in our world.

This is not how we were in the beginning. This is not how God made us. We were on target then—humanity was heading to heaven. So there's something terribly sad about sin—that it has frustrated who we are and spoiled the good work of God: Making us frustrated; a people who can no longer reach the goal for which God made us.

Yet, Jesus, the Son of God, reached the heart of the Father in his and in our humanity. Straight as an arrow he went. Tempted but unswerving, he took us with him and through his death and resurrection, set us free.

This is maybe why Julian of Norwich rightly said "our sin shall be our glory." Because of the happy fault of sin, we have been baptised into Christ Jesus—attached ourselves to Jesus, the Arrow, so that all that is off target, frustrated and incomplete in us, can be brought to completion and perfection: hits a bulls eye—the happiness of heaven in Christ.