

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK

Ann Berry, Christine Rogers, David Noble, Patrick Hullinson, Florence Ward, Barbara Murphy, Della McKernan, Dale Broom, Jackie Berry, Bernard Holt, Patricia Greene, Bernadette Greene, Eileen Butt, Frank Colgan, Marian Whyte, Stephen King, William Lyons, Beth Anistead-Cargan, Sue Zimny, Tom Cutler, Rosemary Keyes, Anne Holland, Caroline Hoad, Kevin McCormick, Ellen Sumaya and Sean Galvin.

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE DEAD



Recently Deceased: Barry Kealing, Stephen Palmer, Noel Galvin, Sadie Bell, Chris Tracey.

Anniversaries: Mary Cavey, John and Elizabeth Caldwell.

WISDOM OF THE SAINTS



	Last week's collection was £1,111.57	£££	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1380.00
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	This week the Sacred Heart Lamp burn for the sick of our parish		This week, Our Lady's Lamp burns for religious sisters and brothers in our diocese.
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WEEKLY NEWSLETTER 1ST FEBRUARY 2026



OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

Sunday 1st February	Holy Masses 9am & 11am
Monday 2nd February Presentation of the Lord	Holy Mass 12 noon
Tuesday 3rd February St Blaise	Holy Mass 12 noon
Wednesday 4th February	Holy Mass 12 noon
Thursday 5th February St Agatha	Holy Mass 12 noon
Friday 6th February St Paul Miki and Companions	Holy Mass 12 noon
Saturday 7th February Memoria of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm

SVP

The next meeting of the members of the SVP will be after the 9am Mass on Sunday February 1st in the Parish Hall.

Heat and Light

Last week, Meadway Heating came to work on the blowers that project the heat into the church. They hadn't been serviced for years and were full of dust. The fans should now be working more efficiently and I hope you notice a difference. The engineer suggested that distributions fans could be installed in the roof space where the hot air rises and gathers—to send it back down: a consideration for the future maybe?

The external lights have also been serviced and where necessary replaced in the last few days. A new timer has been installed to control the car park lights.

Fr Gerard and the Future

This week, your new parish priest, Fr Gerard is having surgery. He has known that this would be necessary for quite a while but the timing of the procedure remained a mystery until recently. What needs to be done is routine but delicate and he will need a period of convalescence afterwards. There is never a good time and though it's inconvenient as he starts a new parish it is necessary and cannot be avoided. Please keep him in your prayers. This may mean that Fr Gerard is not available to start at Our Lady of Grace at the time of my departure but be assured that the Bishop will make provision for the pastoral care of the parish should he be absent.

SVP and CAFOD

The wall collection boxes at the back of the church which used to be designated for St Anthony's Bread and Starving World have been rebranded as SVP and CAFOD. In future all the monies donated here will be given to these two charities.

Visit of Relics

The relics of St Carlo Acutis—a young Italian man who was baptised and lived in London recently canonised by Pope Leo—are visiting our diocese. The relics will be brought to St Patrick's Collyhurst and anyone wishing to venerate them is welcome to attend. Details of times and services are on the noticeboard in the porch outside the church.

Picturing Happiness

What does happiness look like? How can we picture the life of the blessed?

The world's first photograph was taken in 1826: the view of some buildings and a field, taken from Joseph Niépce's bedroom window. By 1935, cameras were increasingly available and portrait pictures were becoming common. Probably, St Bernadette of Lourdes was the first saint to be photographed, with St John Bosco and St Teresa of Lisieux close behind. Did that change our vision of the blessed, of what happiness looks like? Surely, it must have done? Suddenly, we had a snap-shot of heaven in the black-and-white image of a confident, young Teresa, her hair done up in a bun: A true likeness in the still, asthmatic face of a poor Bernadette, and in the sympathetic smile of an elderly Don Bosco. The distant, sugary representations of saints came to an end and now the grace of God could be seen in real people who lived in a certain setting.

Today's Gospel tells us that seeing the crowd, Jesus sits down to look at the people and to speak. Do His words describe what He sees in this setting on the mountain, what He notices in the faces of the women and men before Him? Of course they do! He loves them all, and finishes His explanation of what happiness looks like, ends His picture of the Kingdom of God, by saying, "and blessed are you!"

My favourite photograph of a saint is of a young man in the midst of a crowd at a football match. His head is thrown back with laughter and he has a cigarette in his hand! He's full of life, energy and good humour. St Pier Giorgio Frassati was canonised by Pope Leo recently, but when St John Paul II beatified him, he called him a man of the beatitudes because his life seemed to picture perfectly the words of today's Gospel.

Despite his youth, despite worries and difficulties, disappointments and ill health, Pier Giorgio worked at being happy by devoting himself to the poor, remaining free and present to people in need, sharing life with his friends and with God. There was nothing monochrome about this man – his short life was full of colour and fun.

And how does Jesus see us? How does He picture our lives and reframe them with His vision and in His grace? Well, we learn from the Gospel Beatitudes that He notices every element and regards what He sees with complete compassion: those who struggle, those who mourn, the poor, and those trying to make peace. But in the real and raw realities of life Jesus doesn't see anything sad. With the eyes of faith, He only sees the coming of His Father's Kingdom and a glimpse of heaven.

If some photographs can cause such a change in our perception of things how might God's living word help us to picture better all his blessings?