

**PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK**

Pope Francis, 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, Philomena Carty, Peter Hovington, Kevin Canny, Sarah McEvans, Bridget Sweeney.

**Anniversaries:** Geoffrey Green, Brian Miller.

**WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS**

“Whoever will not love his enemies cannot know the Lord and the sweetness of the Holy Spirit.”

St Silouan of Mount Athos

“Forgiveness isn’t about accepting a wrong, it’s a choice to let go of the weight of the wrong so as to live in freedom as a child of God.”



It is perhaps not so hard to forgive a single grave injury. But to forgive the incessant provocations of daily life—to keep on forgiving the bossy mother-in-law, the bullying husband, the nagging wife, the selfish daughter, the deceitful son—how can we do it? Only, I think, by remembering where we stand, by meaning our words when we say in our prayers each night, “forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those that trespass against us.” C. S. Lewis

 Last Week’s collection was: £1008.54 Thank you

£££

The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1380.00



This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for a Special Intention.



This week, Our Lady’s Lamp burns for the sick of the parish.



**OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH**

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**SEVENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME**

Sunday 23rd February	Holy Masses 9am & 11am
Monday 24th February	Holy Mass 12 noon
Tuesday 25th February	Holy Mass 12 noon
Wednesday 26th February	Requiem Craig Millward 12 noon
Thursday 27th February	Holy Mass 12 noon
Friday 28th February	Holy Mass 12 noon
Saturday 29th February	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm

## St Patrick's Night Celebration

Tickets are now available for the St Patrick's Night Celebration on Sunday 16th March at 7.30pm. New Silver Dollar will provide the music and there will be a bar and dancing. Tickets at £10 will be at a premium so please get them early to avoid disappointment. Entrance will be by ticket only.

### Parish Premises Committee

There will be a meeting of the Parish Premises Committee at the Presbytery at 7.30pm on Thursday 27 February 2025.

### Book Launch

Fr Allen will launch his two latest books St. Patrick's, Collyhurst, on Monday 3 rd. March, at 5 p.m. Anyone is welcome to attend and all proceeds from the books will go to Caritas, Diocese of Salford.

### Side Altar Votives

Each week a votive candle burns before the statues of the Sacred Heart and Our Lady. The particular intention is included in the newsletter so that people may support it with prayer. If you would like the candle to burn for an intention of yours please write the intention on an envelope, include an offering and place this through the presbytery door.

### Easter Marmalade

I'm back in production. Late January and early February is the season for Seville Oranges. Recently, I purchased plenty so as to be able to make some more marmalade. This will be on sale at Easter to help raise funds for the redecoration of the church. If you have any clean jars with tight fitting lids please drop them into the presbytery as I can make use of them.

### Dona Card Machine

A reminder that the Dona card machine, installed at the foot of the choir-loft stairs is fully functioning. Should it be easier for you to make your weekly offering by card, you can do so with this machine. If you wish your donation to be gift aided then it's necessary to register first through the website at <https://donate.mydona.com/our-lady-of-grace-prestwich>

## The Seventh Beatitude

Today, is the Seventh Sunday of Ordinary Time and the clue, as they say, is in the name. Seven is the number of completeness and perfection and the message of today's readings is how to achieve that perfection in our ordinary lives. The last time I preached on these readings, I was in my previous parish. As I looked up, in the middle of my wonderful words, I met the eyes of a woman whose son had been brutally murdered in a terrible case of mistaken identity. All of a sudden, my words didn't seem so wonderful anymore. And in that parish, I was also aware of two brothers who hadn't spoken for thirty years but attended the same Mass each week. The ordinary lives of people are the same the world over, aren't they? So what of the Gospel demand of loving our enemies and being good to those who hate us? What are we to do?

St Silouan of Mount Athos said, " Lord, you have given the commandment to love enemies but this is difficult for us sinners." Silouan knew what he was talking about. He was born in Russia in 1866 and three things that happened in his life, helped him form an understanding of the radical demands of today's Gospel. As a teenager, he fought with the village bully and nearly took his life. As a young man, he joined the Russian Imperial Army and experienced the brutality of the troops to each other and the horror of war. Later, he became a monk and being young and very strong was put to work in the monastery's mill. He would pray while he worked.

Day by day, lumping heavy sacks of grain to the third floor of the mill he came to realise he was carrying a similar heavy weight in his soul. The faces of enemies from the past would return to him and he would find himself weeping. He knew the deep damage of enmity. One day, he felt himself filled with the Holy Spirit and understood that we cannot love our enemies without God's grace—it is not in our power.

As he tipped the grain onto the millstones and watched the slow, slow grind of the mill he had an image of the workings of God's grace. Slowly, slowly it works on us to grind down all resistance in us—so that eventually a leaven could happen within.

Jesus does not expect that we respond immediately to his commandments and live them instantly. But he does expect an openness in us to begin and to persevere with the Spirit's help. Elsewhere, he says that there is only one sin that cannot be forgiven—sin against the Holy Spirit he has sent to help. To refuse to allow the Spirit to begin to move our hearts is serious. But it is no accident that the seventh Beatitude—blessing in it's perfection— is a blessing on those who are at least willing to be peace makers.