



**OUR LADY OF GRACE
PARISH, PRESTWICH**

PARISH PRIEST Fr. PHILIP CALDWELL

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PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK

Caroline Williams, Silvana Mantis, Christine Rogers, Craig 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, Joseph Arnfield, Nonie Brehony.

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE DEAD

Recently Deceased: David Millward, Kenneth Heap, Joe Evans, George Hewison,
Anniversaries: Wilf English, Mary Gilbert, Bernadette McNulty, Ernest Wallace, Dorothy Dolan Teresa McNulty, Trevor Ogden, Jack Makin, Pat O’Beirne, Molly Horner, Helen Munro, Agnes Holt, Edward Francis Ryan, William Christian, Anna O’Hanlon.

WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS

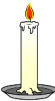
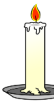
“God loves each of us as if there was only one of us.”
St. Augustine

“Do not abandon yourselves to despair. We are the Easter people and hallelujah is our song.”
St John Paul II



So let us spread before his feet, not garments or soulless olive branches, that delight the eye for a few hours and then wither, but ourselves, clothed in his grace, or rather, clothed completely in him. We who have been baptised into Christ, must ourselves be the garments that we spread before him. Now that the crimson stains of our sins have been washed away in the saving waters of baptism and we have become white as pure wool, let us present the conqueror of death, not with palm branches but with the rewards of his victory. Let our souls be the branches.

	Last Week’s collection was: £1114.37. Thank you	£££	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1366.00
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	This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for the health of Pope Francis.		This week, Our Lady’s Lamp burns for all who are receiving cancer treatment.
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PALM SUNDAY

Sunday 24th March	Holy Masses 9am & 11am
Monday 25th March	Holy Mass 12 noon
Tuesday 26th March	Holy Mass 12 noon
Wednesday 27th March	Holy Mass 12 noon
Maundy Thursday 28th March	Holy Mass 7.30pm
Good Friday 29th March	Stations of the Cross 10am Good Friday Service 3pm
Holy Saturday 30th March	Easter Vigil 8pm

Holy Week Time Table & Clock Change

Please take home a schedule of the Holy Week Services so that you are aware of all the times—and please remember that the clocks go forward one hour on Holy Saturday Night/Easter Sunday Morning. You should be given a schedule with your newsletter.

Palms and Palm Crosses

There are enough Palms/Palm Crosses for each household. Please take one. The palms will be blessed at the start of Mass.

St Patrick's Night

We had a wonderful celebration on the eve of St Patrick's Day. It was great to see the Hall so full and everyone enjoying themselves. Thanks to all who helped to make the night such a success and thanks to Riognach and her band who were such a treat. Same time next year?! We made just over £1000 for parish funds.

Ecumenical Good Friday Walk of Witness

On Good Friday, the local Christian Communities gather to give witness to our faith. At 11am we walk from St Mary's Flower Garden to the Car Park at Tesco, where there's a short service. I'm sorry that I'm not able to attend but I'm sure this will be well supported by our parish. Everyone welcome.

CAFOD Lent Fast Collection

The final total for the Cafod Collection was £1733.00. Thank you.

YCW Sponsored Walk

There was a lot going on last Saturday! Congratulations to the young people from our parish who walked from the Cottage to Peel Tower that day. If anyone would like to sponsor this event you could drop an envelope through the presbytery letterbox. Their next venture is to paint the Cottage!

I'm really pleased that some young people are gathering now and involved in the parish: they're the future! It would be good, if like last year, we could pay for a couple of them to go to Lourdes. After Easter, I'll arrange for a collection.

Children's Liturgy

This Sunday, there will be a Children's Liturgy at the 11am Mass in the Hall. If the children could gather at the side door after the procession with palms—they will then go for their own liturgy. Parents are welcome.

Direct, O Lord, We Beseech Thee ...

On the 11th May, 1977, Fr Alfonso Navarro Oviedo was assassinated on the outskirts of San Salvador by the security services. It was another tragedy during the civil war that blighted such a beautiful country and its people.

At his funeral, Archbishop, now Saint Oscar Romero, preached a sermon which became famous for its opening illustration. An illustration which Romero proved by the testimony of his blood a few years later. "There is a story," Romero began, "about a caravan of people travelling through the desert with a Bedouin man as guide. The journey was difficult and the travellers became thirsty and desperate. They were looking for water in the mirages of the desert. Their Bedouin guide was trying to keep them safe and on course and so kept on repeating, 'Not that way, but this way.'"

He had repeated these words so many times that a frustrated and angry member of the caravan suddenly took out a gun and shot the guide. As the guide was dying, he extended his hand and managed to say one last time, 'No, not that way but this way.' He died pointing the way to a well.

In the two Gospels that we've listened to today, the Lord gives exact directions to his disciples for the Passover – go this way, not that way: follow a man with a pitcher of water to such and such a street. Isaiah, opens up our ears to the Lord's directions. With his prophetic voice, he speaks to the weary who have gone astray, and he calls them to listen to the Lord. And in the Gospel of the Passion there are others who point out the way too: the woman with the alabaster jar, who makes her way to the Master's feet. Peter who says he won't lose faith on the journey, even Judas gives a signal. And here, in our own church, John, the Beloved disciple, like a faithful guide, constantly points up to the Saviour's side as if to say – as his Gospel does: "not that way but this way – to the spring of living water."

At the start of Lent, we heard, "See I set before you: life and prosperity, death and destruction. Choose life then!" – From Moses, through the prophets, saints and good people we have known on our journey – we've been gently guided by the hand of God; 'not that way but this way.' But there's something in us all, isn't there, that makes us resist instruction, reject the way – and kill the inspiration that gives us direction. Well, today, as we stand on the threshold of Holy Week the Lord calls for our attention: He speaks to us, waves amid the palms, calls out from the crowd: not that way but this way. He asks us to follow him into the city – to go with him to the citadel of our heart and to remain with him – while through the signs and words of this Holy Week – he dies – with his arms stretched out pointing to the well of new life which comes along his way. Let's not shoot the messenger.