

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK

John Higgins, Caroline Williams, Christine Rogers, David Noble, Patrick Hullinson, Barbara Murphy, Florence Ward, Peggy Sugrue, Della McKernan, Dale Broom, Jackie Berry, Bernard Holt, Patricia Greene, Bernadette Greene, Eileen Butt, Carol Doherty, Frank Colgan, Marian Whyte, Stephen King, Joan Eastwood, William Lyons, Winnie Shelton.

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE DEAD

Recently Deceased: Ann McQuillen, Miaread Quinn.

Anniversaries: Bernadette Durkin, Lucy Cawley, Fr Vincent Cavey, Irene Caswell.

WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS

“Nothing great is ever achieved without much enduring.”

St Catherine of Siena


“Have patience with all things—but first of all with yourself”.

St Francis de Sales



The Spirit as Mother

If believers are ‘born’ of the Holy Spirit then in a way we must think of the Spirit as Mother—the one who brings us to birth in faith. And if the Holy Spirit is the Comforter—as the Gospel of John teaches—then presumably the Spirit comforts as mother comforts her child (Jn 14:26 Is 66:13) - after all it’s the Spirit who makes us children of God.

	Last Week’s collection was: £1150.99 Thank you	£££	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1380.00
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	This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for a Special Intention.		This week, Our Lady’s Lamp burns for all our mothers.
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OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Sunday 30th March	Holy Masses 9am & 11am
Monday 31st March	Holy Mass 12 noon
Tuesday 1st April	Holy Mass 12 noon
Wednesday 2nd April	Holy Mass 12 noon
Thursday 3rd April	Holy Mass 12 noon
Friday 4th April	Holy Mass 8am Holy Mass 12 noon
Saturday 5th April	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm

Gift Envelopes

Boxes of envelopes for the offertory collection scheme, for the new tax year starting on April 6th, are available for collection from near the sacristy door. If you don't already use the envelopes, please consider joining – especially if you are a taxpayer. You can give as much as you like, and as often as you wish – there is no commitment to any fixed donation. If you are interested, please drop an email to Fr. Philip, or telephone Vin Allerton on 0161773 3318.

Quiz and Bingo Night

The OLOG Parish Quiz and Bingo Night is on Friday April 4th at 7.30pm. Tickets are £2 and are available after Mass.

Easter Market

Over the weekend of Palm Sunday—12th and 13th April we will have a little market in the Parish Hall after the Masses. All the proceeds of the market will go to the redecoration fund.

Easter Baskets

There is a Polish tradition of blessing food to be eaten at Easter on Holy Saturday. Food is gathered in a basket and brought to the church to be blessed by the priest. This will happen here at 12 noon on Holy Saturday—more details to follow.

Big Lent Walk

My name is Kathryn Keenan, I'm a parishioner of OLOG and I'm doing the Big Lent Walk to support the work of CAFOD—I'm walking 200km during the 40 days of Lent. If any fellow parishioner would like to support me, my fundraising page can be accessed at: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/kathryn-and-marleys-big-lent-walk>. Many thanks, Kathryn kkeenan@cafod.org.uk

Cafod Lent Fast Day

The total amount given in the Fast Day envelopes so far is £1,119. We will be collecting the Fast Day envelopes throughout Lent – just put them in with the normal Offertory collection. If you didn't get an envelope, you can put a donation in the “Starving World” box at the back of church, the contents of which will go to CAFOD this month. .

The Missing Person

We have a few things to consider today, haven't we? It's Laetare Sunday: the fourth of Lent is always a joyful interlude on the long through the season. It's Mothering Sunday: in our country, traditionally, we remember our mothers today and all those who have touched us with a mother's love. And we have said that this Season we would reflect especially on the Holy Spirit week by week. How are we going to hold these things together today: Lent, the Spirit, all our mothers, our joyful journey? In a moment of respite how are we going to be inspired to carry on to Easter?

It's always best to take the Word of God as our point of departure. And what have we just heard? The parable of a Father and his two sons! Surely, today above all days, the Gospel leaves us with a question then: A question about who is missing? Where's the mother?! Why no mention of her? And in fact, it's that very question that holds things together for us today.

St Luke gives a story to illustrate the mercy and compassion of God, our Father. A beautiful story of a father who had two sons. A parable that is firmly fixed in the minds of generations, that has moved the imagination of so many artists and writers: a story we all know. But it's a story without a mother. Why is that? If it was any other Gospel than Luke's, we might be tempted to say that the mother's missing because the Gospels in general don't give a prominent place to women. But that just isn't true of this evangelist. Women are prominent and important from start to finish in the Third Gospel. So why is the mother missing in this wonderful parable?

Surely, she was there in the background. Wouldn't she have reasoned with the son not to ask for his inheritance now, not to go? She'd have tried to encourage and cajole. Wise and practical, wouldn't she have pleaded with the father, asking him not to give the full amount at once so all wouldn't be lost and their son ruined? For time immemorial mothers have been the go-betweens, caught amid the egos of fathers and sons – seeking reconciliation and peace. St Luke, a wise observer of life, knew this. So she isn't missing, she certainly had a role. She's there just without a face, without a name.

The Holy Spirit is often called the missing Person of the Trinity and Luke's Gospel the Gospel of the Spirit. The *Catechism* uses a lovely phrase when it tells us that the Spirit is “Divine Self-Effacement”. Luke's “missing mother” is properly present in such effacement. The Spirit's power comes from the self-effacing way that the Spirit works in the world. Without regard for self—even to the point of having no name and no face—the Spirit empties Her love between Father and Son and mothers the life of the world. No wonder that in the Spirit we are called to remember the self-effacing love of every mother today: the self-effacing love of God.