

**PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK**

Trudy Eastwood, Caroline Williams, Christine Rogers, Craig Millward, David Noble, Patrick Hullinson, Barbara Murphy, Florence Ward, Peggy Sugrue, Dale Broom, Jackie Berry, Bernard Holt, Patricia Greene, Bernadette Greene, Brenda Neiles, Eileen Butt, Johnny Falloon, Carol Doherty, Mary Jane Cruz.

**PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE DEAD**

**Recently Deceased:** Chris Burke, Maeve Donnelly, Jay Barker, Moira Reid, Kathleen Colgan, Noreen Dempsey-Reynolds.

**Anniversaries:** Michael Duffy, Charlie Farrugia, James McManus, Harold Sailsbury, Annie and Joseph Kane, Rita Allen, Patricia Barrett.

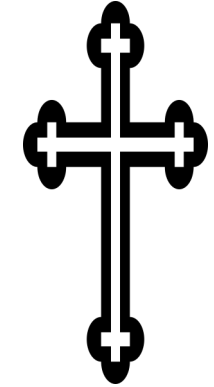
**WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS**

“We must speak to them with our hands by giving before we speak to them with our lips.”

St Peter Claver

“No matter how just your words may be, you ruin everything when you speak with anger.”

St John Chrysostom



**The Kiss of Christ**

There he hangs—pale figure, pinned against the wood  
 God grant that I could love Him as I really know I should.  
 I draw a little closer to share that love divine  
 and almost hear him whisper, “O foolish child of mine!”  
 “If I should now embrace you, my hands would stain you red  
 and if I leaned to whisper, the thorns would pierce your head”  
 And then I knew in silence that love demands a price  
 It was then I learned that suffering,  
 is but the Kiss of Christ.

 Last Week’s collection was: £1077.30 Thank you	<b>£££</b>	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1373.00
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 This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for a Special Intention.	 This week, Our Lady’s Lamp burns for Victor and Vivian—recently married here.
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**OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH**

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**TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**

<b>Sunday 8th September</b> <b>Our Lady’s Birthday</b>	<b>Holy Masses 9am &amp; 11am</b>
<b>Monday 9th September</b> <b>St Peter Claver</b>	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Tuesday 10th September</b>	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Wednesday 11th September</b>	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Thursday 12th September</b> <b>Most Holy Name of Mary</b>	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Friday 13th September</b> <b>St John Chrysostom</b>	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Saturday 14th September</b> <b>Exaltation of the Cross</b>	<b>NO MORNING MASS</b> <b>NO EXPOSITION OR CONFESSIONS</b> <b>Holy Mass: Vigil 5pm</b>

## Welcome Mark

Welcome to Mark who has arrived for his Extended Pastoral Placement at Our Lady of Grace. He is studying for the priesthood at Oscott College and will be with us until February getting involved in all aspects of parish life.

## Eritrean Orthodox Church

The Eritrean Orthodox Community of St John the Baptist have asked to have a celebration in our church and Bishop John has given permission for this to go ahead. We will be very pleased to welcome their community on the eve and day of Saturday September 14th—the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. Anyone is very welcome to attend their liturgies which begin at 2am! There will be no morning Mass, Exposition or Confessions that day.

## 200 Club

There are about ten numbers remaining for the 200 Club. The first draw will take place on the last weekend of the month at one of the Sunday masses.

## Book Club

The next meeting of the group will be held on Monday 9th September at 2pm in the Cottage. We will be sharing and discussing “Welsh Poetry”. Please bring (if you can) 12 copies of any poem by a Welsh poet, or about Wales or the Welsh. New members welcome. Contact: Vin 07305727900

## Sacramental Programme

The Sacramental programme will begin again shortly. If your child doesn't attend Our Lady of Grace School and you would like them to make their First Holy Communion here, please contact me. The sessions will take place on a series of Sundays from 9.50-10.50am in the Hall.

## Catholic Gap Year

Do you know anyone who is Catholic, around 18-22 and still not got anything lined up for the year ahead? Castlerigg Manor, the Diocese of Lancaster in the Lake District is looking for someone to join their youth ministry team—email Jack Regan [director@castleriggmanor.co.uk](mailto:director@castleriggmanor.co.uk)

## RCIA

If you are interested in becoming a Catholic or in knowing more about your faith please let me know. We will be looking to start a weekly course on Wednesday evenings from October. The more the merrier!

## Eye Hath Not Seen, Nor Ear Heard ...

Francesco Marto was the third visionary of Fatima. He was seven years old when, with his sister Jacinta and cousin Lucia, he saw the Mother of God at Cova de Iria, Portugal. All of them were desperately poor and illiterate but amongst the three children, Francesco's experience was unique. Unlike the girls, he could not hear what Mary said. In rapture at the beautiful Lady - he was totally deaf to her words. I used to find this frightening - especially because I was made to understand that his not hearing was a punishment: Our Lady telling him he must pray many rosaries before getting to heaven - and he an innocent child of seven years old! We tend to think of deafness as a disability and sadly, in the past, even as a punishment.

Around the same time I got to know about Fatima, I learnt, in a school assembly, of the inspirational deaf-blind girl, Helen Keller. That seemed like double punishment, until our teacher told us of a wonderful moment when her companion, Anne Sullivan, held one of Helen's hands under the tap and in the other hand traced the word “water”. Her suddenly coming to an inner knowledge from her silent, dark world seemed fantastic to me.

There is no sense of punishment when Jesus takes the non-verbal, deaf man aside in today's Gospel: Only a sense that his silent world facilitates a privileged encounter with the Son of God - “eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of humanity, what God has prepared for those who love him”. It was this man's so-called disabilities that gave him the ability to meet Jesus in a profoundly personal way.

As an adult I learnt the truth about Saint. Francesco Marto too: That he had the gift of contemplation - far from being under a punishment, he enjoyed a wordless rapture with Our Lady that was an expression of his unique prayer life - the silent world that his many rosaries took him to and in which he met the Mother of God.

Today is Our Lady's Birthday—the day when we remember God's making of a poor, silent soul with which he would enjoy unique and beautiful communication—throughout her life on earth and forever in heaven. He made each of our souls with such an intention: he wants a conversation with us that will last for ever.

Maybe today's readings will make us think twice about the differently abled, about our abilities and disabilities and about how we encounter the divine. Are we so accustomed to words, to talk and chat - to sheets and missalettes and all the rest, that we miss what might happen if we risked entering our personal wasteland and ‘disability’ - where, away from the crowd, God communicates directly to our heart? Like Mary, we shouldn't be afraid. We aren't under the threat of punishment but called by grace.