



The Parish of St Mary & St Catherine



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Presbytery: St Catherine's, Stanifield Lane, Farington. PR25 4QG. 01772 421174

Fr Simon Henry ECLJ GOMLJ BA(Hons) MA

First Sunday of Lent



First Sunday of Lent. Year A. 22nd February	8.30am	Special Intention MM
<i>Also, Feast of the Chair of St Peter</i>	10.30am	Pro Populorum. (People of the Parish)
Mon 23rd Feb: Feria of Lent	9.30am	Alice Proctor, RIP
Tuesday 24th Feb: Feria of Lent	9.30am	Eric Neilson, RIP
Wednesday 25th Feb: Feria of Lent	9.30am	Frank & Jean Shaw, RIP
Thursday 26th Feb: Feria of Lent	9.30am	The Holy Souls
Friday 27th Feb: Feria of Lent	7pm	STATIONS OF THE CROSS
	7.30pm	CONFESSIONS
Saturday 28th Feb: Feria of Lent	9am—10am	CONFESSIONS
Second Sunday of Lent. Year A. 1st March	8.30am	Rita Carney, RIP
	10.30am	Pro Populorum. (People of the Parish)

THANK YOU for your Offerings each week.

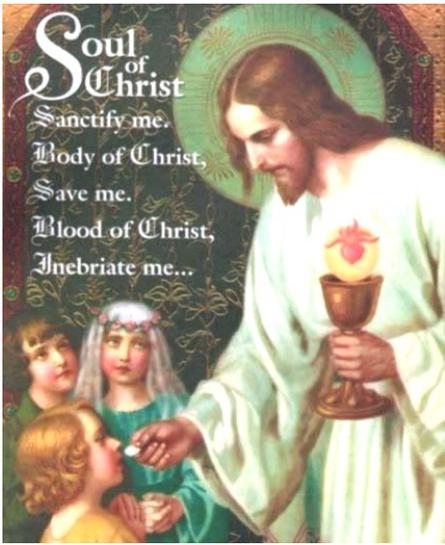
100 Club: 79 (Rosaleen Wood).

Fr Simon's blog is at **offerimus tibi domine** (where you will also find the Mass times each week)

SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVE: New appointment pending.

MISSAL PAGES for today: Page 153.

Unchanging parts of the Mass in the pink pages. Prayers before Mass, Pg 510. Prayers after Mass, Pg 673.



FIRST CONFESSION & HOLY COMMUNIONS.

Our First Communion preparation has begun, with forty or so children taking part. The next session is in the Social Centre **THIS Wednesday 4th March at 6.30pm.**

Children must sign the “Golden Book” at the back of church.

This is to make a record of their prayers and attendance at Mass for each Sunday until their First Communion as a gift for Jesus. It will be carried up to the altar on the day of their First Communion.

Please note that attendance at Mass & the preparation sessions are a prerequisite of being able to make First Communions in Eastertide. If families are not able to make this commitment, then those children can defer and join the program next time round.



“Those whose names are written in the book of life.” Phil 4:3 .

CONFESSIONS: During Lent there will be Confessions each Saturday morning between 9am—10am. This is to enable children and their families to come to Confession in the normal way and thus accustomize them to coming again. These times are also open to all parishioners, to enable people to come to Confession during Lent and make their Easter Duties: this is a traditional way to refer to the Church’s teaching that all should come to Confession at least once a year. There are some leaflets for both adults and children to assist you at the back of church.

THOSE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CATHOLIC: There is one person who has expressed interest in becoming a Catholic recently; that being so, it seems opportune to ask if there is anyone else “hovering on the brink” - either already attending sometimes or someone you might know, so that we can follow a course of instruction together. Please contact Fr Simon.



Why be Catholic? For many of us it might be because we were raised in the Faith as were our parents and grandparents, and it’s something we’ve always known. But it’s worth thinking about. Why should one become Catholic? Why stay Catholic?

First off, Catholics believe that our Church goes all the way back to Jesus Himself. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said to Peter, “*And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it.*” As Catholics, we believe Jesus created His Church with Peter as the successor of Him to lead it. Throughout history, every other branch of Christianity separated from the Church founded by Christ through Peter.

Secondly, what also makes the Catholic Church distinctive are the Sacraments. The sacraments are celebrated by the Church to bring us closer to Jesus. They are visible signs of God’s love and grace. In particular, the Catholic Church has the Sacrament of Eucharist. In John 6:53-55, Jesus says, “*Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.*” At the Last Supper, in Luke 22:19, Jesus said, “*This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.*” Jesus commanded us to celebrate the Eucharist in memory of Him, and we do so at every Mass. Through the Holy Spirit, we believe that Jesus is truly present at Mass with us in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is not a symbol of Christ, but truly His Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity. The Eucharist gives us food for the journey and brings us closer to God as do the other Sacraments.

Thirdly, the Catholic Church believes in “Tradition” with a capital “T.” What this means is we believe the Bible is sacred, but we also understand the Bible, and what Jesus has taught us, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Saints, Popes, theologians and Councils of Bishops over the centuries have helped us to do that; especially Bishops and Popes in a special way as successors of Peter. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit and teaching of the Church, we are able to grow in our understanding of God’s teachings and look at how they apply to things the Bible might not address with clarity, such as abortion, slavery, or the dignity of the human person. We also believe the Bible needs interpretation, which the Bishops, assisted by Scripture scholars and theologians, have given us over the ages.

So why become (or stay) a Catholic? Because the Catholic Church will help you become a Saint and get to Heaven. The Catholic Church will help you experience God’s love and know what that love means and how to be an agent of God’s love in the world.



Your Prayers are asked for all the sick, including: Rosena Stacey, Vivienne Lee, Tom Miller, Paul Casey, Linda Melling, Tilly Gee, Kathleen Ward, Clare Butler, Maureen MacDonald, Louie Baines, Margaret McNiff, Elle Miller, Mark Duncan, Mary Ann Monaghan, Bernard Lawson, Mick Marshall, Carol Parkinson, Margaret Lawler, Catherine Thompson, Pat Fishwick, Stephen Dilworth.

We pray for those who are housebound & for those who love & care for them.
Mary conceived without sin - Pray for us who have recourse to thee.

JOIN OUR PARISH 100 CLUB: Thank you to those who have signed up for our 100 Club. Please be patient as we digitalize the process and collate all our new members. You will be informed of your numbers in due course. Thanks to Grace Barton, who has volunteered to revamp and streamline how the 100 Club functions and help our parish in this way. **Please take a SIGN UP FORM from the back of church for a Standing Order or scan the QR Code on the coloured leaflets.**

The Parish Centre is open during Sunday Masses, where toilets are easily accessible.



SOME THOUGHTS FOR PARISH PILGRIMAGES: With that in mind over the next weeks we will ascertain whether there might be enough interest to arrange two possible parish pilgrim holidays.

This year, **early August or early September 2026 a 5 day Pilgrimage holiday to Saint Pierre de Maillé in France**, where St Catherine's parishioners have visited several times over the years. The dates can be flexible until we see which would suit people best. An historic area in the heart of France, exploring history and Catholicism, staying in the Villa St Pierre. Suitable for families as well, with particular activities like canoeing possible to be built in to the timetable. Cost to be around £600 per person. Including transport, flights and most meals (with wine for the meals) and en-suite accommodation & daily Mass.

Pilgrimage next year 2027 in Rome, again, in the late summer/Autumn. Staying in a 3* hotel in the heart of the *Centro Storico*, the ancient heart of Rome, visiting the famous sites but also some less well-known ones, giving a fascinating glimpse into *La Bella Roma!*

Please note that both of these involve walking the routes, which requires anyone with mobility issues to think carefully about their ability to take part.

A SIMILAR MEETING AS WE HAD FOR FRANCE WILL BE HELD FOR A TRIP TO ROME IN 2027 IN DUE COURSE.

Act of Spiritual Communion. My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Spiritual communion is a practice that allows us to connect with God and express our longing for His presence, especially during times when we cannot attend Mass or receive the Eucharist. Many saints have emphasized the importance of this prayer, as it fosters a deep spiritual relationship with Christ & helps maintain one's faith and devotion.

LENTEN ALMS: During Lent, traditionally a collection is taken known as Lenten Alms. There is a basket at the back of church for your offerings, which will go towards the work of the Order of St Lazarus—specifically, supporting training Special Needs teachers in Rwanda. A project of Cardinal Kambanda, the Archbishop of Kigali.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN EUXTON

Just a note for those involved. The next meeting is this week on Wednesday at 7pm in our Social Centre.



STATIONS OF THE CROSS ARE PRAYED EACH FRIDAY DURING LENT AT 7pm.

The Stations of the Cross harken back to the earliest days of Christianity. The first Christians in Jerusalem venerated the places where Christ suffered, the *Via Sacra*, the sacred way.

It is a great way to include more prayer in your week during Lent, one of the three Pillars of Lent, along with fasting and almsgiving. Of course, you can also choose to come to a weekday Mass during the course of Lent as well, as another way of accomplishing this goal.

"This is the "folly" of the cross: a folly capable of changing our sufferings into a declaration of love for God and mercy for our neighbor." – Pope Benedict XVI

THE MILITARY AND HOSPITALLER ORDER OF ST LAZARUS OF JERUSALEM.



Following on from our Burns Night Supper raising funds for the Order of St Lazarus, a number of people have asked about the Order, so here is just a little about it. In common with other Orders of chivalry founded during the Crusades, such as the Hospitaller Knights of Saint John and the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre, the Order of Saint Lazarus still aims to defend Christianity while expecting its members to practice the Christian tenets of protecting the weak, helping the sick, and promoting justice. A solemn undertaking to maintain this code of conduct through personal spirituality and observance of the Constitutional Charter is made publicly before God and the assembled congregation on formal admission to the Order.

Funds are raised by Dinners, sponsored events, donations, and many more activities. The Carol Concert held annually at St Catherine's and last year at St Mary's church is an example of this. There is also a "junior branch" which encourages young people to take part in the spirituality and life of the Order.

In Great Britain, we are a small group and struggled to get back to normal following COVID. We are now trying to build up our numbers again and looking to recruit new members. So speak to me or Our Prior, Anthony Dickinson, who is a member of our parish and plays the organ each Sunday. You can find more information online as well. Although be careful to find our own sites, as there are many other similar Green



Cross" organizations, but we are the only one with a Cardinal as our Spiritual Protector, the Archbishop of Kigali in Rwanda, Cardinal Kambanda, whom we hope might be able to come to invest new members in due course. We are supporting his educational project in Rwanda, raising funds to train special needs teachers there, where the Church is increasingly being asked to look after the education of children.

www.oslj.org.uk

orderofsaintlazarus.com

Fr. Simon

EUXTON GALA: This year the parish will take an active part in the Euxton Gala. Although it is held on the joint playing fields of both our School and the Church of England School and our car park and hall are used, we have not been properly a part of the Gala. A separate St Mary's Summer fete was held but this seems to have lapsed some years ago. It seems only suitable that we should take an active part in an event at the heart of Euxton life each summer. We are particularly looking for helpers for the Refreshments and the Tombola which we will help to collect prizes for nearer the time). Anyone can take part if you are a local charity or want to sell your local products or crafts on a stall. Any of our schools could also take part, as a shopfront to present themselves by running some event; a junior football tournament is also being proposed, if anyone can help with that. This would mean that we share in the work and fun of the day but also in the funds it raises.

Any ideas in ways which we could contribute—stalls, displays charity stands etc would be very welcome. We will also need parishioners to set up any of these ideas that come to the fore. If you would be interested in helping with this, please email Fr Simon or parish assistant Michael Thompson, via the parish email address.



ST PATRICK'S DAY CÉILIDH Saturday 21st March 2026.

A traditional Irish celebration with Irish Stew and live music to dance to.

Suitable for all the family.

Bring your own drinks but the ticket includes the price of the Irish stew.

£10 per person. Children £3. Raising money for our parish funds.

Please sign up on the list at the back of church. "Dia dhuit"



REFRESHMENTS AFTER MASS.

All are welcome to come in for a cup of tea or coffee after Mass. Come and say hello!

WE ARE STILL SHORT OF VOLUNTEERS TO HELP AFTER THE 10.30AM MASS. PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING TO HELP US CONTINUE ENABLING US TO MEET ONE ANOTHER AFTER MASS.

