



Parish of Holy Cross, Our Lady & Saint Paul

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22nd February 2026 – First Sunday of Lent

CYCLE OF CATECHESIS - JUBILEE 2025. JESUS CHRIST OUR HOPE. II. THE LIFE OF JESUS. THE HEALINGS. 12. THE HEALING OF A DEAF MAN WITH A SPEECH IMPEDIMENT. THEY WERE EXCEEDINGLY ASTONISHED AND THEY SAID, "HE HAS DONE ALL THINGS WELL; HE EVEN MAKES THE DEAF HEAR AND THE DUMB SPEAK." (MK 7:37)

Dear brothers and sisters,

With this catechesis, we conclude our journey through the public life of Jesus, marked by encounters, parables, and healings.

This time in which we live also needs healing. Our world is marked by a climate of violence and hatred that demeans human dignity. We live in a society that is becoming ill due to a kind of "bulimia" of social media connections: we are hyperconnected, bombarded by images, sometimes false or distorted. We are overwhelmed by countless messages that stir within us a storm of contradictory emotions.

In this scenario, it is possible that within us arises the desire to turn everything off. We may come to prefer not to feel anything anymore. Even our words risk being misunderstood, and we may be tempted to close ourselves in silence, into a lack of communication where, despite our closeness, we are no longer able to say to one another the most simple and profound things.

In this regard, today I would like to reflect on a passage from the Gospel of Mark that presents us with a man who cannot speak or hear (cf. Mk 7:31-37). Just as it can sometimes happen to us, perhaps this man chose not to speak anymore because he did not feel understood; he chose to shut off every voice because he had been disappointed and wounded by what he had heard. In fact, it is not he who goes to Jesus to be healed, but others bring him.

One may think that the people who take him to the Master are concerned about his isolation. The Christian community, however, has also seen in these people an image of the Church, which accompanies each person to Jesus so that they may listen to His word. The

episode takes place in pagan territory, so we are in a context where other voices tend to drown out God's voice.

OUR PARISH VISION & MISSION

We are a warm & welcoming community of faith rooted in the love of God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Belonging is at the heart of what we do as members of the body of Christ. We believe worship is not just found in prayer; it's something expressed in everything we do.

MASSES FOR WEEK				
Sunday	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT	9:30am	People of the Parish	SP
		11am	John McGagh R.I.P. 1 st Anniversary	OL
<i>Tea & Coffee are served after both Sunday Masses</i>				
Monday	<i>Saint Polycarp</i>	9am	Sr Frances R.I.P. (Anniversary)	OL
<i>Access to Our Lady's for weekday Mass is through the entrance to the right side of the church</i>				
Tuesday	Ferial	9:30am	Ian McKensie R.I.P.	OL
<i>Tea & Coffee are served in the Saint Joseph chapel after Mass on Tuesday morning. Everyone is welcome!</i>				
Wednesday	Ferial	9am	Michael McElroy	OL
Thursday	Ferial			
Friday	Ferial	9:30am	Alice & Arthur Cooke R.I.P.	SP
Saturday	Ferial			
Sunday	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT	9:30am	People of the Parish	SP
		11am	Ian McKensie R.I.P.	OL

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR FEBRUARY 2026

For children with incurable diseases. Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

SAINT JOSEPH LAMP

The lamp burns for the intentions Sarah Gill (Speedy recovery) at Our Lady's and Anna Coughlan at Saint Paul's. Envelopes for intentions are at the back of each church. A £5 donation is requested.

<p>PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS</p> <p><u><i>Those who are sick</i></u></p> <p><i>Stuart & Jackie, Samuel Adodo, Lily Baker, Christopher Browne, Gerard Carey, Pat Cockran, Anna Coughlan, Teresa Denye, Mary Dooley, Chloe & Irene Fortune, Colin James, Clare McElroy, Fr Philip McGovern, Canon Philip Moor, Helen Ryan, Philip Smith, Margie Sui, Eileen & Julia Ward, Sarah Williams & Pat Wise.</i></p> <p><u><i>Those who have died</i></u></p> <p><i>Maureen Duckworth, Vincent Duggan, Fr Paul O'Grady & Jack Sui.</i></p>

LENT

STATIONS OF THE CROSS – Wednesday mornings after Mass or join the SyroMalabar community Fridays at 5pm in Our Lady's.

BBC RADIO 4 LENT TALKS – every Sunday evening during Lent at 7:45pm, this year they are a series of personal reflections on power inspired by the story of Jesus' Passion. Six essays tracing the hidden currents of power in everyday life: how it shapes us, how it works, how it wounds, and how it can be resisted, claimed, and reclaimed.

CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY FRIDAY 27TH FEBRUARY – This Lent, live out the Gospel call to love your neighbour. By fasting and giving what you save, you join in Christ's compassion and help another family put food on the table. Your donation can help families around the world grow food in difficult conditions – such as on flood-resistant floating gardens or using solar-powered water pumps in times of drought. Envelopes are available at the back of church or you can donate by virtual envelope online at cafod.org.uk/envelope or call 0303 303 3030. Text CAFODLENT to 70085 to donate £10.

SIX BIBLE STUDIES ON THE LENTEN SUNDAY GOSPELS – Mauro Iannicelli will break-open the forthcoming Lenten Sunday Gospels with in-depth teaching and stimulating questions. Six consecutive Tuesdays which started on 17 Feb | 24 Feb | 03 Mar | 10 Mar | 17 Mar | 24 Mar at 7pm – 8:15pm. Free of Charge | LIVE on YouTube. Registration: comeandsee.org/lent26

PARISH

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR FR PAUL O'GRADY – he will be received into Saint Werburgh's church, Birkenhead at 7pm tonight; Bishop Mark will celebrate Fr Paul's Requiem Mass tomorrow at midday in Saint Werburgh's church, Birkenhead. Fr Paul will be laid to rest with his family in Southern Cemetery in Manchester.

CONFIDENT CHRISTIANITY HALF DAY CONFERENCE – a half day conference will be held next Saturday 28th February 2026, at Hope Community Church, Aintree, L10 2JJ with keynote speakers Andy Bannister and David Hutchings from Solas, partnering with Northwest Baptist Association and Together for the Harvest. The conference will help believers become confident and empowered to talk about Jesus more naturally, engage in evangelism that persuades people, and feel more equipped to have good conversations with friends. Please contact 0151 291 6640 or email office@hccaintree.co.uk to book your place, tickets are £5 each.

THE SIXTEENS CHORAL PILGRIMAGE TOUR 2026 – a concert will be held on Friday 24th April at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral at 7:15pm to 9:15pm. The music of the Spanish Renaissance is the focus of this year's tour, 'Lead, Kindly Light'. Tickets cost £17 and are available at <https://thesixteen.com/event/the-choral-pilgrimage-2026-liverpool/> or phone 02079 363 420.

BETROTHED: A MARRIAGE PREPARATION COURSE OFFERED BY THE SHREWSBURY DIOCESE will help to prepare both from a spiritual/faith perspective and relational perspective. You are welcome to attend the course whether you are to be married at the parish where it is being run or not. The course runs over two consecutive Saturdays 9.30am to 4.30pm at Saint Clare's Church Parish Hall (Downsfield Road, Chester CH4 8HH) on 20th & 27th June 2026. For more information, please contact

Jane Deegan at jane.deegan@dioceseofshrewsbury.org &/or Mobile: 07517 906435. Registration is essential by contacting Monika at: monika.golembiewska@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

PIETY STALL – A selection of cards for all occasions is available to buy at each church. Looking for alternative gifts? To families & friends? Why not look at our parish branded merchandise (pens £1, Mugs £6, bundle deal of one mug and two pens £7) or World Gifts from CAFOD? <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/collections/all>

YEAR OF ST FRANCIS PILGRIMAGE TO ASSISI – Pope Leo has declared this a Jubilee Holy year for Saint Francis, therefore the parish of Saint Anne & Saint John are trying to organise a special pilgrimage to Assisi on from 28th June to 3rd July. The pilgrimage includes Mass in the Basilica of Saint Francis, veneration of Saint Carlos Acutis's body in the church of Saint Mary Major, a trip to the Holy House in Loreto, visits to both the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angel Portiuncula where the Franciscan movement started and the monastery of the first order of Saint Clare in San Damiano. Cost £995. If interested, it is IMPORTANT that you, please telephone Maria Fryer on 07576 243343 NOW to secure a place.

A&K COMMUNITY HUB AFTERNOON TEA PARTY – this free of charge event for pensioners with live entertainment is to be held this Wednesday 25th February from 12:30 until 3pm at 310 Park Road North, Birkenhead. For information about this & other activities that are held at the Hub during the week & also availability to hire it for family occasions, please contact Laura on 0151 458 5562 or Lauara.akcommunity@gmail.com

PARISHIONERS WHO ARE HOUSEBOUND – If you know of anyone who wishes to receive Holy Communion at home, please ask them to contact the Parish Office or help them to do so.

CARITAS – If you know someone in need of assistance, please contact Trish Spencer, Deputy CEO of Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury at Wheatland Lane, Wallasey, CH44 7ED Tel: 0151 652 1281, email: info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk

BONUS BALL SCHEME – The winning number on Saturday 21st February was 14 & congratulations to the winner from Our Lady's. If you would like to join, the next payment will be due **TODAY** for draw's commencing next Saturday 28th February 2026. A list of available numbers is at the back of each church.

<p><u>PARISH FINANCES</u></p> <p><u>Sunday 22nd February 2026</u></p> <p>Offertory - £441.123(Cash); £17.50 (Standing Orders)</p> <p>£10 (Card/Contactless/Web); Zambia/Caritas £8.</p> <p><i>Thank you for your continuing generosity.</i></p>	<p>To donate online, please scan the QR code.</p> 
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STANDING ORDERS – You can set one up through your online banking or via the form which is available from the parish office. If you are a UK taxpayer, please gift aid these payments.

CHARITY

WIRRAL FOODBANK – As Lent 2026 has now started, Wirral Foodbank will continue to provide emergency food parcels for local individuals and families facing hardship. The immediate shortages

are Shampoo, Tinned Fruit, Tinned vegetables, Custard & Tinned Potatoes. Donations can be left outside the Saint Joseph chapel at Our Lady's or in the sacristy at Saint Paul's.

STAMPS & GLASSES - These are donated to the RNIB to support their work with those suffering sight loss. There is a box at the back of each church for any used stamps or glasses you have.

USED TABLET BLISTER PACKS TO SUPPORT THE MARIE CURIE CHARITY - can be donated at each church but **PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DO NOT INCLUDE ANY OTHER ITEMS**, sadly this has continued to happen.