



## *Parish of Holy Cross, Our Lady & Saint Paul*

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## **8<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – Third Sunday of Lent**

### **POPE LEO – MESSAGE FOR LENT 2026**

*Fasting* – If Lent is a time for listening, fasting is a concrete way to prepare ourselves to receive the word of God. Abstaining from food is an ancient ascetic practice that is essential on the path of conversion. Precisely because it involves the body, fasting makes it easier to recognize what we “hunger” for and what we deem necessary for our sustenance. Moreover, it helps us to identify and order our “appetites,” keeping our hunger and thirst for justice alive and freeing us from complacency. Thus, it teaches us to pray and act responsibly towards our neighbour. With spiritual insight, Saint Augustine helps us to understand the tension between the present moment and the future fulfilment that characterizes this custody of the heart. He observes that: “In the course of earthly life, it is incumbent upon men and women to hunger and thirst for justice, but to be satisfied belongs to the next life. Angels are satisfied with this bread, this food. The human race, on the other hand, hungers for it; we are all drawn to it in our desire. This reaching out in desire expands the soul and increases its capacity.” Understood in this way, fasting not only permits us to govern our desire, purifying it and making it freer, but also to expand it, so that it is directed towards God and doing good.

However, in order to practice fasting in accordance with its evangelical character and avoid the temptation that leads to pride, it must be lived in faith and humility. It must be grounded in communion with the Lord, because “those who are unable to nourish themselves with the word of God do not fast properly.” As a visible sign of our inner commitment to turn away from sin and evil with the help of grace, fasting must also include other forms of self-denial aimed at helping us to acquire a more sober lifestyle, since “austerity alone makes the Christian life strong and authentic.” In this regard, I would like to invite you to a very practical and frequently unappreciated form of abstinence: that of refraining from words that offend and hurt our neighbour. Let us begin by disarming our language, avoiding harsh words and rash judgement, refraining from slander and speaking ill of those who are not present and cannot defend themselves. Instead, let us strive to measure our words and cultivate kindness and respect in our families, among our friends, at work, on social media,

in political debates, in the media and in Christian communities. In this way, words of hatred will give way to words of hope and peace.

### **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.

| <b>MASSES FOR WEEK</b>  |                              |               |                             |           |
|---|------------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------|
| Sunday  | <b>THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT</b>  | <b>9:30am</b> | People of the Parish        | <b>SP</b> |
|   |                              | <b>11am</b>   | Eileen Boylan               | <b>OL</b> |
| <i>Tea &amp; Coffee are served after both Sunday Masses</i>   |                              |               |                             |           |
| Monday  | Lent                         | <b>9am</b>    | Patrick Walsh               | <b>OL</b> |
| <i>Access to Our Lady's for weekday Mass is through the entrance to the right side of the church</i>              |                              |               |                             |           |
| Tuesday   | Lent                         | <b>9:30am</b> | Kate McVeigh                | <b>OL</b> |
| <i>Tea &amp; Coffee are served in the Saint Joseph chapel after Mass on Tuesday morning. Everyone is welcome!</i> |                              |               |                             |           |
| Wednesday   | Lent                         | <b>9am</b>    | Eileen Gurney               | <b>OL</b> |
| Thursday  | Lent                         |               |                             |           |
| Friday  | Lent                         | <b>9:30am</b> | Alice & Arthur Cooke R.I.P. | <b>SP</b> |
| Saturday  | Lent                         |               |                             |           |
| Sunday  | <b>FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT</b> | <b>9:30am</b> | People of the Parish        | <b>SP</b> |
|   |                              | <b>11am</b>   | Anna Coughlan               | <b>OL</b> |

### **POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR MARCH 2026**

For disarmament and peace. Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

### **SAINT JOSEPH LAMP**

The lamp burns for the intentions John Callaghan at Our Lady's and Marie Morris (Birthday) at Saint Paul's. Envelopes for intentions are at the back of each church. A £5 donation is requested.

#### **PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS**

##### **Those who are sick**

*Stuart & Jackie, Samuel Adodo, Lily Baker, Christopher Browne, Gerard Carey, Pat Cockran, Anna Coughlan, Teresa Denye, Mary Dooley, Chloe & Irene Fortune, Anne Gillet, Colin James, Clare McElroy, Canon Philip Moor, Helen Ryan, Philip Smith, Eileen & Julia Ward, Sarah Williams & Pat Wise.*

##### **Those who have died**

*Rosie Anderson & Margie Sui.*

## **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.

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 will continue 10 Mar | 17 Mar | 24 Mar at 7pm – 8:15pm. Free of Charge | LIVE on YouTube. Registration: [comeandsee.org/lent26](https://comeandsee.org/lent26)

## **PARISH**

SYROMALABAR YOUTH VALENTINES RAFFLE – raised a total of £212.27, they would like to thank everyone who took part in this event.

THE SIXTEENS CHORAL PILGRIMAGE TOUR 2026 – a concert will be held on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> June 2026. For more information, please contact Jane Deegan at [jane.deegan@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto:jane.deegan@dioceseofshrewsbury.org) &/or Mobile: 07517 906435. Registration is essential by contacting Monika at: [monika.golembiewska@dioceseofshrewsbury.org](mailto: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).

YEAR OF SAINT 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 28<sup>th</sup> June to 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (SVP) – BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT - During April 2026 the SVP will be running a series called "At a Loss" It is designed to provide support for people who are grieving because of the death of a loved one. The seven-session programme aims to provide a safe space for people who have experienced a bereavement recently or in the past. Sessions are guided by

trained facilitators, to help people to explore steps to promote the path to recovery. The sessions will be held in Wallasey Village. If you feel this programme would be helpful to you or someone you know, please contact us, in confidence, on telephone 07894 240 469 or by emailing [recovery.hamsvp@gmail.com](mailto:recovery.hamsvp@gmail.com) or speak to an SVP member.

IS GOD CALLING YOU TO BE A PRIEST? - Have you considered exploring a vocation to the diocesan priesthood in imitation of Jesus the Good Shepherd? Why not speak to Fr Michael or the diocesan vocations director, Fr Sean Davidson. You can also visit [www.Shrewsburyvocations.org](http://www.Shrewsburyvocations.org).

A&K COMMUNITY HUB - for information about activities that are held at the Hub, 310 Park Road North, Birkenhead, please contact Laura on 0151 458 5562 or [Lauara.akcommunity@gmail.com](mailto:Lauara.akcommunity@gmail.com)

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](mailto:info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk)

CATENIANS - The Birkenhead circle meets each month at Prenton Golf club to enjoy each other's company & to support one another & our families. Membership is open to Catholic men who are aged 18 & over. If you would like to know more, please contact [p.davenport.123@btinternet.com](mailto:p.davenport.123@btinternet.com).

KNIGHTS OF SAINT COLUMBA - the order believes in charity, unity & fraternity, over many years they have helped priests, parishes & our Catholic schools & many projects internationally. Membership is open to Catholic men who are aged 18 & over. Please contact Tony Connolly on 07950 392193.

BONUS BALL SCHEME - The winning number on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> February was 23, & congratulations to the winner from Our Lady's. If you would like to join, the next payment is due by 29<sup>th</sup> March for draw's commencing Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2026. A list of available numbers is at the back of each church.

EASY FUNDRAISING As you are shopping online, don't forget to use the Easy Fundraising! *Our latest payout was an amazing £171.35!!!!* Thank you to everyone who has used it. Don't forget to use it when shopping for car, home or travel insurance!

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| <p><b><u>PARISH FINANCES</u></b><br/><b><u>Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2026</u></b><br/>Offertory - 746.55 (Cash); £17.50 (Standing Orders)<br/>£0 (Card/Contactless/Web); Zambia/Caritas £20<br/><b><u>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2026</u></b><br/>Offertory - £536.46 (Cash); £17.50 (Standing Orders)<br/>£10 (Card/Contactless/Web); Zambia/Caritas £10.10.<br/><br/><i>Thank you for your continuing generosity.</i></p> | <p>To donate online,<br/>please scan the<br/>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 -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.**