

Parish of Holy Cross, Our Lady & Saint Paul

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9th March 2025 – First Sunday of Lent

CYCLE OF CATECHESIS. THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE. THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES THE PEOPLE OF GOD TOWARDS JESUS OUR HOPE 12. "THE SPIRIT INTERCEDES FOR US". THE HOLY SPIRIT AND CHRISTIAN PRAYER

It is true, we do not know how to pray, we do not know. We have to learn every day. The reason for this weakness in our prayer was expressed in the past with just one word, used in three different ways: as an adjective, as a noun and as an adverb. It is easy to remember, even for those who do not know Latin, and it is worth keeping in mind, because it contains an entire treatise in itself. We human beings, according to the saying, "*mali, mala, male petimus*", which means, being bad (*mali*), we ask for the wrong things (*mala*) and in the wrong way (*male*). Jesus says, "Seek first his kingdom... and all these things shall be yours as well" (*Mt 6:33*). Instead, we seek the extra, namely, our interests – many times – and we completely forget to ask for the kingdom of God. Let us ask the Lord for the kingdom, and everything comes with him.

Yes, the Holy Spirit comes to aid us in our weakness. He does something more important still: He testifies to us that we are children of God and puts on our lips the cry: "Father!" (*Rom 8:15; Gal 4:6*). We cannot say "Father, *Abba*" without the strength of the Holy Spirit. Christian prayer is not man at one end of the telephone, speaking to God on the other end; no, it is God who prays in us! We pray to God through God. To pray means to place oneself inside God, so that God enters into us. It is precisely in prayer that the Holy Spirit is revealed as the "Paraclete", that is, advocate and defender. He does not accuse us before the Father, but defends us. Yes, he defends us. He convinces us of the fact that we are sinners (cf. *Jn 16:8*), but he does so in order to make us able to savour the joy of the Father's mercy, not to destroy us with fruitless feelings of guilt. Even when our heart reproaches us for something, he reminds us that "God is greater than our hearts" (*1 Jn 3:20*). God is greater than our sin. We are all sinners, but think perhaps some of you – I don't know – are very afraid because of the things they have done, afraid of being reproached by God, afraid of many things and unable to find peace. Pray, call to the Holy Spirit, and he will teach you how to ask for forgiveness. And do you know something? God does not know much grammar, and when we ask for forgiveness, he does not let us finish! "For..." and there, he does not let us finish saying the word *forgiveness*. He forgives us first, he always forgives, and he is always beside us to forgive us, even before we complete the word *forgiveness*. We say "for..." and the Father always forgives us.

The Holy Spirit intercedes and he also teaches us how to intercede, in turn, for our brothers and sisters – he intercedes for us and teaches us how to intercede for others. He teaches us the prayer of *intercession* : praying for this person, praying for that sick person, for the one who is in prison,

praying... even praying for one's mother-in-law! And pray, always. Always. This prayer is particularly pleasing to God because it is the most gratuitous and altruistic. When someone prays for everyone – as Saint Ambrose used to say – everyone prays for someone; prayer multiplies (*De Cain et Abel*, I, 39.). This is how prayer is. This is a task that is so precious and necessary in the Church, particularly during this time of preparation for the Jubilee: to unite ourselves to the Paraclete who “intercedes for all of us according to God’s plans”. But do not pray like parrots, please! Do not say, “Blah, blah, blah...”. No. Say, “Lord”, but say it with your heart. “Help me, Lord”, “I love you, Lord”. And when you pray the Lord’s Prayer, pray “Father, You are my Father”. Pray with the heart, not the lips; don’t be like parrots. May the Holy Spirit help us in prayer, which we need so much.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK				
Sunday	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT	9:30am	People of the Parish	SP
		11am	Patricia Clayton R.I.P.	OL
<i>Tea & Coffee are served after both Sunday Masses</i>				
Monday	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	9am	Stephen (Speedy Recovery)	OL
<i>Access to Our Lady's for weekday Mass is through the entrance to the right side of the church</i>				
Tuesday	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	9:30am	Anne Jones (nee McDonnell) R.I.P.	OL
Tea & Coffee are served in the Saint Joseph chapel after Mass on Tuesday mornings. Everyone is welcome!				
Wednesday	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	9:30am	David Townley R.I.P.	OL
Thursday	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>			
Friday	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>	9:30am	John McGagh R.I.P.	HC
Saturday	<i>Weekday of Lent</i>			
Sunday	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT	9:30am	Billy Boylan R.I.P.	SP
		11am	People of the Parish	OL

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.

SAINT JOSEPH LAMP

The lamp burns for *Jason Gallagher (Healing)* at Our Lady's and *Judith Christley R.I.P.* 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

Samuel Adodo, Lily Baker, Christopher Browne, Anna Coughlan, Teresa Denye, Chloe & Irene Fortune, Clare McElroy, Canon Philip Moor, Frank Morris, Michael Murphy, Philip Smith, Eileen & Julia Ward.

Those who have died

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR MARCH 2025

For families in crisis. Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

PARISH

STATIONS OF THE CROSS - Wednesday mornings after Mass or join the SyroMalabar community Fridays at 6pm in Our Lady's.

2025 JUBILEE PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES - bookings for the pilgrimage are now open. The brochure and booking forms are available to download from the Pilgrimage website www.shrewsburypilgrimage.co.uk

LENT COURSE - On Friday mornings during Lent in the community room at Saint Paul's after Mass we will be showing the following the DVD based course "No Greater Love - A Biblical Walk through Christ's Passion." You will walk step-by-step with Jesus from the garden of Gethsemane to Mount Calvary. Every step of the way, Old Testament prophecies, messianic expectations, biblical symbolism, and historical context shed light on the mystery of Christ's suffering and death. Experience a deeper understanding and appreciation of God's immeasurable and unconditional love for you – grow closer to Jesus than you ever have before.

CAFOD's BIG LENT WALK IN THE JUBILEE YEAR - You are invited to join CAFOD's Big Lent Walk and journey together with Catholics in England, Wales and Scotland as Pilgrims of Hope in this Jubilee Year - walking 200km over 40 days during Lent. Journey to one of the churches or shrines designated as places of pilgrimage in our diocese as part of your Big Lent Walk. Every £1 you raise will support communities like Lokho's in Kenya, experiencing the worst impact of the climate crisis, to rebuild their lives in hope. Sign up here: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/>

CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY - will be held on Friday 14th March and our donations this Lent will help mums in Africa to grow food in harsh climates, building safety nets for their families. Envelopes are available at the back of church, or you can donate by virtual envelope online at <https://cafod.org.uk/fundraise/parishes/virtual-envelope>

JUBILEE RETREAT - come and learn why a jubilee year includes an important focus on the family on Saturday 15th March 2025, 9.45am - 1.00pm at Saint Columba's Church Hall, Plas Newton Lane, Chester CH2 1SA. To register and for more information, please get in touch with Monika Golembiewska at monika.golembiewska@dioceseofshrewsbury.org, Mobile: 07549 226794, or Jane Deegan jane.deegan@dioceseofshrewsbury.org Mobile: 07517 906435.

A NIGHT AT THE MUSICALS - Friday 4th April at 7.30pm in Saint Michael & All Angels. A Night at the Musicals" performed by the Warrington Male Voice Choir. We invite you to join us on what we are sure will be a thoroughly enjoyable evening. Tickets price £8.00 are available from Saint Philip Neri Parish Office at Saint Joseph's 652 5767 or via contacting Deacon Gerard Boyle 07742659728. We will arrange for the tickets to be delivered to the parish office for you to collect.

JOB VACANCY FOR REFUGEE COORDINATOR AT CARITAS SHREWSBURY - Could you lead our established programme or activities across the four Manchester hotels accommodating people seeking asylum, and support hotel residents to organise and campaign about injustices in the asylum system? For more information visit <https://www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk/news/job-vacancies/>
Closing Date: Friday 14th March

WHOLEHEARTED MONTHLY is a new online mission series starting in March on the second Tuesday of each month, 7:00pm - 9:00pm. What is wholehearted monthly? It's for anyone committed to a vibrant friendship between "Church" and "World" – and a desire for both to flourish. Please book in advance. <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/wholehearted-monthly-tickets-1082366650789?aff=evangelism>


speakers will be:

- ❖ Tuesday 11th March – Nadia Bolz-Weber is a best-selling author, public theologian and pastor, and is the founder and church planter of House for All Sinners and Saints.
- ❖ Tuesday 8th April – Rowan Williams is a theologian, poet and former Archbishop of Canterbury, and is author of fifty books on literature, politics, and being Christian.
- ❖ Tuesday 13 May – Chine McDonald is a writer, broadcaster and author, and is Director of Theos, the religion and society think tank.

STRONGER TOGETHER COMMUNITY GROUP empowers members to address daily life challenges in a supportive environment. *Tuesday mornings (9:30am–12pm)* in Saint Joseph's parish centre, North Road. The group is facilitated by Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury.

KNIGHTS OF SAINT COLUMBA – 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.

EASY FUNDRAISING – thanks to your generosity in using Easy Fundraising, *our latest payout is £47.04*. As you are shopping online, don't forget to use the Easy Fundraising donation reminder so that the parish can collect even more free donations as you shop!

<p><u>PARISH FINANCES</u></p> <p><u>2nd March 2025</u></p> <p>Offertory £542.10 (cash); £17.50 (Standing Orders); £3 (card/contactless); Zambia/Eye Fund/Caritas £72.54</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 a standing order 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.

BONUS BALL SCHEME – Congratulations to the winner in the draw held on Saturday 1st March with no. 53. Payment of £5 is now due for draws from 15th March 2025. If would like to continue or to join, please give in £5 asap. A list of available numbers to buy are at the back of each church.

CHARITY

ASYLUM LINK MERSEYSIDE'S FUNDRAISER – to support destitute asylum seekers and refugees. To be held on Saturday 15th March at St Anne's Church, Overbury Street, Liverpool, L7 3HJ. Tickets are £5 which includes free refreshments. Phone Illa on 0151 70901713 or contact info@asylumlink.org.uk for more information.

WIRRAL FOODBANK – Thank you for your continued support. Donations can be left at the back of Saint Paul's or outside the Saint Joseph chapel in Our Lady'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.

TABLET BLISTER PACKS - used ones can be donated at each church to support the Marie Curie charity.