



CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST JOHN PAUL II, ECCLES

Services held at: Holy Cross, Patricroft and St Mary's, Eccles

Parish Office: Holy Cross Presbytery, 370 Liverpool Road, Patricroft, M30 8QD

4th
Sunday of
Lent

Daily
Prayer
Week 4

THE MAN BORN BLIND

Today's Gospel story focuses on an unlikely teacher. Those in need of his instruction, (though they do not want it and do not wish to listen), are the learned men of their time—the Scribes and the Pharisees. And the teacher, the one with clear sight and wisdom? This is a blind man who has just encountered Jesus. Hardly surprising, we may think, that no-one was too willing to learn the lessons he taught.

Let us consider, firstly, the Pharisees themselves. They are powerful men, who know and understand the Jewish Law to the letter. Everything they see will be held up to the clear light of Law, and this will determine once and for all if it is right or wrong, good or bad. But there is more to the Pharisees than this. They have all the eloquence and power they need not just to protect the Law, but also to protect themselves and their authority. Anything which might seem to undermine their position—and someone presuming to teach who is outside of their group would qualify—they see as a threat, and will use every means they have to discredit them and restore their own, comfortable order. In this, the Pharisees are dangerous, and their interpretations biased in their own favour.

Now, we turn to the conflict today, which arises because Jesus has chosen, on a Sabbath Day, to restore the sight of the man born blind. It is not the only time we have seen him challenge the Pharisees' rigorous interpretation of Sabbath laws forbidding all work to be carried out. Elsewhere he has posed the question of how it can be wrong to do good on this day, insisting that the Sabbath rest is a gift to the people, not a law to bind them. But the Pharisees will not listen, and now they find themselves arguing with the healed man himself who, with a pure heart, has seen the truth of Jesus's power and recognised God's Grace at work in him, whilst the Pharisees can see nothing more than the threat to themselves.

However, before we judge the Pharisees too harshly, how often are we, ourselves, blind to the truths of the Gospel message? How often are we so set in our ways that we cannot recognise or respect God's messengers, whoever (and however unlikely) they may be, and we refuse to be challenged or changed? Let us pray for the gift of sight this Lent—sight to see our own shortcomings before we see the shortcomings of others; sight to perceive the loving presence of our God, and to grow into the people he would have us be. That is, after all, what the season of Lent is all about.

MOTHERING SUNDAY

This mid-point of Lent is an opportunity to reflect upon where we are from, who we are and who has supported us during our life's journey. On a day that began by reflecting upon our "mother churches," the seed-grounds in which our Faith was nurtured from an early age, we give thanks also for our earthly mothers, for their self-giving that enabled us to grow. Our thoughts and prayers today therefore, go out for everyone who answers to the name of "Mum" (or its many equivalents!)

LENTEN STATION MASSES

Thank you to all those who joined us at Holy Cross with Bishop John last week—a wonderful occasion and a great number present. **Deanery Station Masses continue each Wednesday of Lent** at 7.30pm, and each will offer Confessions for half an hour before Mass:

- This week (18th March)—Ss Peter and Paul's, Pendleton
- 25th March—St Teresa's, Irlam

STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR LENT

Each Friday of Lent we celebrate the Stations of the Cross at 6.30pm in Holy Cross Church, as part of the weekly Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament.

DIOCESAN SYNOD PRAYER

As we progress through the implementation stages of the Universal and Diocesan Synods, please use the Synod Prayer whenever you can, praying for each other and for the wider Diocesan community:

Loving Father,
 be with us as we seek new ways
 of being your people in our Diocese.
 May each new day bring us
 closer to your son Jesus,
 as we follow his teaching and
 become disciples of love.
 As we continue our Synodal journey,
 draw us closer to each other.
 May the truth of your Spirit enlighten us.
 Open our hearts, as we listen to each other
 and reach out in love to your people.
 Stay with us, Lord, on our journey. **Amen.**

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

- Tickets for the Easter raffle are on sale after all Masses. Price £1.00.

RETIRING COLLECTIONS

This week and next: Lenten Challenge continues!

MONTH OF RAMADAN

We continue to wish to all our Muslim neighbours "Ramadan Mubarak"— a blessed Ramadan—as they observe (until 19th March) their annual season of fasting. *During this time, we are happy to welcome members of the Eccles Mosque community to use our car park at St Mary's during the evenings.*

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep the following people kindly in your prayers:

The sick: Bernard, William, Marion, Michael, Jacqueline, Denise, Vincent, Colleen, Peter, Geoff, Jan, Margaret, Susan, Pat, Bernard, Danny, Pauline, Joanne, Michael, David, Natallie, Edna, Veronica, Sheila, Stephen, Juliana, Wieslaw.

Lately Dead: Flo Riley, Ann Heaton (Funeral at St Mary's on 24th March), Alan Brackenridge, Jessie Collins (Funeral at Holy Cross on 23rd March, 11.30am), Susan Mary Hill, Joan Vanderlee, Samuel Assah, Jim MacDonald, Fr Robert Morrow, Chris Basson.

Anniversaries: Jim Shaw, Michael Smith (50th Anniv), Thomas Brehony, Brian Platt, Jimmy Evans, Esther Froggatt, Joan Baillie, Winifred Hannan, Gerard Sewell (Birthday Anniv), Sylvia Dickinson, George Devlin (90th Birthday Anniv), Sean Fanning, Martin Roddy, Gerard Nicholls (22nd Anniv).

Remembrance: Sheila Devlin and Ada Serapiglia (Mothers' Day blessings)

We also pray: for the residents of Monica Court, for Pope Leo and the Church throughout the world, the cancellation of world debt, for the people of the Middle East and Ukraine and all those affected by the wars there, for other countries suffering unrest, for victims of terrorist attacks, for migrants and refugees, for children suffering from poverty, for the victims of modern slavery, for the success of the Diocesan and Universal Synods, for Michael Wheeler, Rebecca Long-Bailey and all who serve us in Westminster, for peace all around the world, for an end to racism in all its forms. We pray for Fr Stanto and the Syro-Malabar Mission of St Euphrasia based at St Mary's, and for each of our schools. We pray for all world leaders, for God's guidance and support throughout these troubled times, for the housebound and those in hospital, nursing and residential homes, for NHS and Care Home workers, and for a number of special intentions.

USUAL SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Saturday (Vigil Mass): 6.00pm at Holy Cross
Sunday Morning: 9.30am at St Mary's
11.15am at Holy Cross
Children's Liturgy at most 11.15am Masses
Refreshments are normally served after 9.30am Mass at St Mary's
and as announced after 11.15am Mass at Holy Cross
Sunday Evening: 6.30pm at St Mary's
The 6.30pm Mass is kept quiet to be autism-friendly
Weekdays: See Calendar below
Holidays: As announced beforehand

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Confessions are *usually* available during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Fridays and Saturdays.
Please check the calendar below

BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

by arrangement
At least 6 months' notice is required for weddings, and a time of preparation is also required before Baptism.
Please refer to the website for further information

Calendar for This Week

<i>4th Sunday of Lent</i>	Sat 14th March:	6.00pm Mass at Holy Cross (Vigil Mass for Sunday) *
	Sunday 15th:	9.30am Mass at St Mary's (with Fr Stanto) 11.15am Mass at Holy Cross 6.30pm Evening Mass at St Mary's
	Monday 16th:	<i>No Mass in the parish on Mondays</i>
<i>St Patrick</i>	Tuesday 17th:	9.00am 1st Mass at Holy Cross with St Patrick's High School—All welcome 1.20pm 2nd Mass at Holy Cross with St Patrick's High School—All welcome 2.00pm Prayer Group at St Gilbert's Presbytery—All welcome
	Wednesday 18th:	7.30pm Deanery Lenten Station Mass at Ss Peter and Paul PC Church Park Road, Salford M6 8JR with Confessions from 7.00pm
<i>St Joseph, husband of Mary</i>	Thursday 19th:	10.00am Mass at Holy Cross & All Saints' School with Y2—All welcome
	Friday 20th:	6.00pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament */Confessions with 6.30pm Stations of the Cross for Lent * followed by 7.00pm Benediction and Mass, all at Holy Cross *
<i>Stations of the Cross every Friday of Lent—6.30pm at Holy Cross</i>	Saturday 21st:	11.00am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament (Confessions available) followed by 12 noon Benediction and Mass, all at St Mary's 4.00pm Confirmation Group session at Holy Cross Community Hall 6.00pm Mass at Holy Cross (Vigil Mass for Sunday) *
<i>5th Sunday of Lent</i>	Sunday 22nd:	9.30am Mass at St Mary's (with Fr Stanto) 11.15am Mass at Holy Cross 6.30pm Evening Mass at St Mary's

* Livestreamed

Saturday's Vigil Mass will continue to be available on the [Live!](#) page of our website on Sunday and throughout the week, and on our [Facebook Page](#). It can also be viewed live and during the week on our [YouTube channel](#).

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

Thank you for last week's collection of £952.36 (with £1,202.42 from the previous week). The retiring collection raised £107.05 for the SVP. Thank you also to all those who donate to the parish by Standing Order, Direct Debit, [online](#) and via the contactless devices at the back of both Churches. Scan the QR Code, (right), if you would like to donate to the parish today. Thank you!



KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE

Please ensure that your children are supervised to and from the toilet. Please help us to keep them safe at all times. Thank you!

CYCLE of PRAYER



This week throughout the diocese we pray for the parishioners of St Anne's parish, Openshaw, for Fr Churchill Emeghera, MSSCC, their parish priest, and for their parish primary school.

A HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUEST

The "default" position for kneelers in both churches is **DOWN**. If you need to raise them to move into or out of the bench, please ensure they are then lowered immediately. They can cause serious injury to the young and to the elderly if they fall. **If you need help to adjust a kneeler, please speak to one of the stewards who will be happy to assist you.**

PARISH CONTACT DETAILS *(Please note that email addresses below can NOT be copied as links)*

Parish Priest: Fr Martin A Collins GTCL
Telephone: 0161 789 4424
Mobile: 07502 633383
Email: martin.collins@dioceseofsalford.org.uk
or via contact form on the parish website.

Parish Secretary: Mrs Marie Twemlow
Telephone: 0161 789 4424 (Mon & Tue, 10am-4pm)
Sec. Email: rosemarie.twemlow@dioceseofsalford.org.uk
Newsletter: newsletter@ourparishcommunity.co.uk

Parish Website: www.ourparishcommunity.co.uk
Facebook: [@ourparishcommunity](#)
YouTube: www.youtube.com/ParishofStJohnPaulIIEcclcs/

Parish Halls Hire: Enquiries to Steve Jackson, Hall Manager
Telephone: 07580 571839—*please leave a voicemail*
Email: hall@ourparishcommunity.co.uk

Holy Cross RC Church
370 Liverpool Road
Patricroft
M30 8QD

St Mary's RC Church
Oxford Street
Eccles
M30 0LU

Parish Safeguarding Reps: Marie Twemlow/Anna Raynor/Ged Dale
Email: safeguarding@ourparishcommunity.co.uk

Schools:
Holy Cross and All Saints: 0161 789 4386
St Gilbert's: 0161 567 9012 *(note, new number)*
St Mary's: 0161 789 4532
St Patrick's High School: 0161 921 2300

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Stay with us, Lord, on our Journey