

# CATHOLIC PARISH OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES & ST. SWITHUN'S NEWSLETTER



23 MARCH 2025

3RD SUNDAY OF LENT

**PARISH VISION.** We are a community of Christian people who seek our strength from the Word of God and the Eucharist, which unites us together. Our mission is to be a living presence of Christ for the people of our area and to share God's love, compassion, reconciliation, and peace with everyone. With his help, we aim to be a place of welcome and hospitality for all.

**FR. ANTHONY'S REFLECTION.** If we were to look up the definition of "to repent" in a dictionary, we might find a definition of to feel or express regret about one's wrongdoing and sins. And although this is one facet of understanding the nature of repentance, there is a much richer significance from a Christian perspective. To live an authentic Christian life means that we live a life of metanoia, which entails a total reorientation and transformation of our being according to the life and teachings of Christ. It means that we do not have a self-centred or self-interested outlook in life through our words and actions but are focused on God and each other.

This occurs with God's grace and our cooperation. Our earthly life is a life project of this metanoia; it is not accomplished once and for all in our baptism but is a daily choice. All of us have areas in our lives where we could improve - maybe becoming less self-centred, maybe giving more of our time to others in need, or maybe becoming less grouchy and pessimistic. Lent is a time to reassess our values and attitudes to see if they are aligned to the life and teachings of Christ. We may avail ourselves of the sacrament of reconciliation during Lent to experience God's mercy and love in a tangible manner and to continue our journey of metanoia.

**ASCENSION PRESS.** <https://ascensionpress.com>.



**GOSPEL.** Luke 13:1-9. *'Leave the fig tree one more year.'*

**COULD YOU HELP?** I am very grateful for your continual support of the parish. Your sharing of your gifts, talents, and time is greatly appreciated. To run the mission of the parish, we depend on your generosity. During this time of Lent, we are invited to be more 'sharing'.

Have you considered 'Stable Giving' by setting up a regular monthly donation to the parish through a Direct Debit? If you are a taxpayer, have you considered 'Sensible Giving' by signing up for Gift Aid, which increases your donation to the parish by 25%? All the forms are available at the back of the church so please return them to the office. If you have any questions, please speak with Emma. *Fr. Anthony*

**SICK AND HOUSEBOUND.** The Catholic Church shows great love and concern towards the sick and suffering through fellowship and the support of the sacraments. If you are interested in a home visit by a priest or parishioner, please get in contact with the parish office.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parish/southsea](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parish/southsea)

# MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

**Saturday 22 March - 3RD SUNDAY OF LENT**  
5.30pm - St. Swithun's (Vigil Mass) *Pope Francis*

**Sunday 23 March - 3RD SUNDAY OF LENT**  
8.30am - St. Swithun's - *Sr. Ellen Munn*  
10.15am - St. Swithun's - *People of the parish*

**Monday 24 March - 3RD WEEK OF LENT**  
No Mass

**Tuesday 25 March - THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD**  
9.00am - St. Swithun's - *Sr. Ellen Munn*

**Wednesday 26 March - 3RD WEEK OF LENT**  
9.00am - St. Swithun's - *Michael Sparkes RIP*

**Thursday 27 March - 3RD WEEK OF LENT**  
9.00am - St. Swithun's - *Fr. Bernard Heaphy RIP*

**Friday 28 March - 3RD WEEK OF LENT**  
10.00am - St. Swithun's - Students & staff of St. Swithun's  
Primary School

**Saturday 29 March - 3RD WEEK OF LENT**  
9.00am - St. Swithun's - *Fr. John O'Donoghue RIP*  
5.30pm - St. Swithun's (Vigil Mass) *People of the parish*

**Sunday 30 March - 4TH SUNDAY OF LENT**  
8.30am - St. Swithun's - *Margaret Darby*  
10.15am - St. Swithun's - *William John Geary*



**OFFERTORY.** The Parish bank account details are as follows:

**Lloyds Bank Account name:** CDP  
Our Lady of Lourdes' and St Swithun  
Church

**Sort code:** 30-93-04

**Parish Account no:** 01730453

## **MASS INTENTIONS & OFFERINGS.**

It is a long-standing Catholic tradition to have the Eucharist offered for a particular intention, for the living and the dead. We do this because our faith is centred on the celebration of the Eucharist, the source of our life in Christ. Of course, Mass is 'free' but it is customary to make a donation in a form of a Mass offering. If you would like to arrange a Mass offering for yourself or loved ones, whether living or dead, please contact Emma in the office.

## **POPE'S INTENTION FOR MARCH.**

*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.

**OUR BIBLE STUDY GROUP** takes place at 7.00pm this Wednesday in the sacristy. Please join us if you can. This is a wonderful way to learn more about the scriptures.

# PARISH OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES & ST. SWITHUN'S

**Address:** 105 Waverley Road, Portsmouth, Hampshire PO5 2PL United Kingdom

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**Parish office:** [southseaparish@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:southseaparish@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

**Parish office opening hours:** Tuesday - Friday, 9.00am - 1.00pm

**Safeguarding:** [safeguarding.porls@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding.porls@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) (Anne Worden and Teresa Rowe)

**Website:** [www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parish/southsea](http://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parish/southsea)

**Charity number:** 1199568

## PARISH EVENTS

### Sunday 23 March

9.30am - 10.00am - Sacrament of Reconciliation  
11.15am - Tea & Coffee Fellowship in St. Swithun's Hall

### Wednesday 26 March

9.30am - Stations of the Cross  
7.00pm - Bible Study Group - Sacristy, entrance through car park

### Thursday 27 March

9.30am - Tea & Coffee Fellowship - Canon Kuner Room

### Sunday 30 March

9.30am - Sacrament of Reconciliation  
11.15am - Tea & Coffee Fellowship - St. Swithun's Hall



### Friday 28 March

10.00am - St. Swithun's  
School Mass

### Saturday 29 March

6.30pm - Soup Supper in  
St. Swithun's Hall

### Sunday 13 July

St. Swithun's Parish Fete

**PARISH REGISTRATION.** We are developing a new parish database and would like you to visit the website [www.caspar.church/me?ID=9840](http://www.caspar.church/me?ID=9840) and fill in a few details. If you don't feel confident using the internet, please speak to the parish office.

**RECONCILIATION THROUGH THE SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION.** Through Confession, we obtain the pardon of God's mercy for the sins we have committed by not loving him and each other. We are reconciled to God and with one another. We are healed, restored, and given peace. Confession times are Saturdays from 9.30am to 10.00am and 5.00pm to 5.25pm. During Lent, the Sacrament will also be available in between the 8.30am and 10.15am Masses. If you would prefer, an appointment can be made with Fr. Anthony.

**IN THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY,** spouses signify and participate in the mystery of unity and fruitful love between Christ and the Church. If you are thinking of getting married, please speak to Fr. Anthony to arrange a meeting. Please keep in mind that a minimum of six months is needed to prepare.

**BAPTISM.** If you are thinking of having your child baptised, please speak to Fr. Anthony.

**PARISH SOCIALS.** As Christians, it is important to gather for fellowship or socials to build and strengthen the bonds between us. We are looking for ideas for social activities. Please share your ideas at the back of the church on the Parish Socials Poster.

**PETITION.** Please consider signing the Care Not Killing petition which calls on MPs to vote against legalising assisted suicide in England and Wales. The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill would make vulnerable people - including the elderly and disabled - feel a burden on family or carers resulting in pressure to end their lives.

**LAST SUNDAY'S COLLECTION.** £1,210.50 (CAFOD Collection: £475.00)

**SCHOOLS NEWS.** Mr Matthew Quinn will retire as the Headteacher of Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College in Waterlooville at the end of this academic year. Mr Richard Cunningham will become the Interim Executive Headteacher of Oaklands, whilst retaining his position at St. Peter's Primary School in the capacity of Executive Headteacher, for a period of 12 months. Mr Quinn will remain CEO of the Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust.

## A MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS

We are at the heart of our Lenten journey, and today the Gospel begins by presenting Jesus who comments on some news of the day. While people still remember the 18 who died when a tower collapsed on them, they tell him about some Galileans whom Pilate had killed. And there is a question that seems to accompany these tragic affairs: who is to blame for these terrible events? Perhaps those people were guiltier than others and God punished them? These are questions that also come up today.

When crime news weighs on us and we feel powerless before evil, we often ask ourselves: is it perhaps a punishment from God? Did he bring about a war or a pandemic to punish us for our sins? And why does the Lord not intervene? We must be careful: when evil oppresses us, we run the risk of losing our clarity and, in order to find an easy answer to what we are unable to explain, we end up putting the blame on God. And very often the bad habit of using profanities comes from this. How often do we attribute to him our woes and misfortunes in the world, to he who instead leaves us always free and hence never intervenes by imposing himself, but only by proposing himself; He who never uses violence and indeed suffers for us and with us!

In fact, Jesus rejects and strongly contests the idea of blaming God for our evils: those persons who were killed by Pilate and those who died beneath the tower were not any more at fault than others, and they were not victims of a ruthless and vindictive God, which does not exist! Evil can never come from God because *"He does not deal with us according to our sins"* (Ps 103:10), but according to his mercy. This is God's style. He cannot treat us otherwise. He always treats us with mercy. But rather than blaming God, Jesus says we need to look within ourselves: it is sin that produces death; it is our selfishness that tears apart relationships; it is our wrong and violent choices that unleash evil. At this point the Lord offers the true solution.

What is it? Conversion: He says, *"unless you repent you will all likewise perish"* (Lk 13:5). It is an urgent call, especially during this time of Lent. Let us welcome it with an open heart. Let us convert from evil, let us renounce the sin that seduces us, let us be open to the logic of the Gospel because where love and fraternity reign, evil no longer has power!

But Jesus knows that conversion is not easy, and he wants to help us here. He knows that we often repeat the same mistakes and the same sins; that we become discouraged, and perhaps it may seem that our commitment to do good is useless in a world where evil appears to rule. Thus, after his appeal, he encourages us with a parable that tells of the patience of God. We must keep in mind God's patience, the patience he has for us. He offers the comforting image of a fig tree that does not bear fruit during the accorded season, but is not cut down. More time is given to it, another possibility.

I like to think that a nice name for God could be *"the God of another possibility"*: God always gives us another opportunity, always, always. That is what his mercy is like. This is how the Lord is with us. He does not cut us out of his love. He does not lose heart or tire of offering us his trust again, with tenderness. Brothers and sisters, God believes in us! God trusts us and accompanies us with patience, the patience of God with us. He does not become discouraged, but always instils his hope in us. God is Father and looks after you like a father. As the best of fathers, he does not look at the achievements you have not yet reached, but the fruits you can still bear. He does not keep track of your shortcomings but encourages your potential. He does not dwell on your past, but confidently bets on your future. This is because God is close to us, he is close to us. Let us not forget that the style of God is closeness. He is close with mercy and tenderness. In this way, God accompanies us: with closeness, mercy, and tenderness. He accompanies us in love.