

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



6 APRIL 2025

5TH 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. In today's gospel, we are reminded to *'live again and regain our true dignity in a new life'*. The woman caught committing adultery is brought by the scribes and Pharisees to Jesus; they hoped and desired that she would be stoned to death for committing adultery. However, Jesus takes the conversation to a deeper level: *"If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."* Yes, through committing sin, the woman lost her dignity. But the scribes and the Pharisees have also lost their dignity in their hardness of heart and pride - *"If there is one of you who has not sinned, let him be the first to throw a stone at her."*

The Lord offered the woman an opportunity for conversion or repentance: *"Neither do I condemn you; go away and don't sin anymore."* It is easy to judge others because they may not fit our standards or our preferences, but remember, life is perfect for none of us! We all have our struggles and weaknesses, and rather than being judgemental and critical of one another, let us have the loving and compassionate eyes of Jesus.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED. We are grateful to those who volunteer with making teas and coffees after the 10.15am Mass on Sunday. We are always looking for more volunteers! If you are interested, please get in contact with Robert Steward.



GOSPEL. John 8:1-11. *'Let the one among you who has not sinned be the first to throw a stone.'*

EASTER TRIDUUM LITURGY TIMES. Please join us if you can for our Easter celebration.

- Holy Thursday: 7.30pm
- Good Friday: 3.00pm
- Holy Saturday: 7.30pm
- Easter Sunday: 8.30am & 10.15am

EASTER OFFERING. Christmas and Easter are traditionally the times when we make a gift to support our local priests, as it is one of their main sources of income. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. Your regular standing order or Direct Debit does not get included for this purpose, as it's for the parish. Every gift specially donated over Easter weekend (together with any Gift Aid on qualifying donations) will be used to support your priest. Gifts may be given by cash, through a bank transfer (ref: Priest), or via the Dona machines.

ASCENSION PRESS. For a range of great value Catholic books for the whole family, visit the website: <https://ascensionpress.com>.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parish/southsea

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

Saturday 5 April - 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

5.30pm - St. Swithun's (Vigil Mass) *Bishop Philip Egan*

Sunday 6 April - 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

8.30am - St. Swithun's - *People of the parish*

10.15am - St. Swithun's - *The Naylor family*

Monday 7 April - 5TH WEEK OF LENT

No Mass

Tuesday 8 April - 5TH WEEK OF LENT

9.00am - St. Swithun's - *Mary Dever RIP*

Wednesday 9 April - 5TH WEEK OF LENT

9.00am - St. Swithun's - *Jim Mimmagh RIP*

Thursday 10 April - 5TH WEEK OF LENT

9.00am - St. Swithun's - *Pat Gleeson RIP*

Friday 11 April - 5TH WEEK OF LENT

10.00am - St. Swithun's - *Joe McGeer*

Saturday 12 April - 5TH WEEK OF LENT

9.00am - St. Swithun's - *Margaret McGonigal*

5.30pm - St. Swithun's (Vigil Mass) *People of the Parish*

Sunday 13 April - PALM SUNDAY

8.30am - St. Swithun's - *Sick and housebound of the parish*

10.15am - St. Swithun's - *Andrew Gracias*



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 APRIL. *For the use of the new technologies.* Let us pray that the use of the new technologies will not replace human relationships, will respect the dignity of the person, and will help us face the crises of our times.

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

Priest in Charge: Fr. Anthony Fyk - 023 9282 8305

Email: afyk@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish office: southseaparish@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

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

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

Website: www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parish/southsea

Charity number: 1199568

PARISH EVENTS

Sunday 6 April

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

Wednesday 9 April

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

Thursday 10 April

9.30am - Tea & Coffee Fellowship - Canon Kuner Room

Saturday 12 April

9.30am - 10.00am - Sacrament of Reconciliation (Church)
5.00pm - 5.25pm - Sacrament of Reconciliation (Church)



Saturday 10 June
Parish Social Supper

Sunday 13 July
St. Swithun's Parish Fete

PARISH REGISTRATION. It is important to have our parish database up to date, so we can keep in contact with each of you in a more effective and efficient way. In order to do this, we would like you to sign up via a web page. Visit the website: www.caspar.church/me?ID=9840. If you are not confident in using the internet, please speak to Emma in the parish office.

RECONCILIATION: A GREAT WAY TO PREPARE FOR EASTER. Through the sacrament of 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, being the doorway to fullness of life and to the kingdom of God, is the first sacrament of initiation celebrated. If you are thinking of having your child baptised and to raise them up in the practice of the faith, please speak with Fr. Anthony directly for the form and to arrange a meeting.

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.

LAST SUNDAY'S COLLECTION. £1,104.40
Second Collection (Clergy Assistance) £218.90

LAUDATO SI' 10TH ANNIVERSARY - SATURDAY 10 MAY. Join CAFOD and Caritas in a joint celebration for the 10th anniversary of the publication of Laudato Si' at St. Peter's, Winchester, on Saturday 10 May from 10.00am - 1.00pm. The session will be packed with practical information. There will be an opportunity to ask questions on how we can make a difference in our lives and that of our parish, including CAFOD's LiveSimply Award. Find out more at: www.caritasportsmouth.org.uk. All are welcome.

A MESSAGE FROM POPE FRANCIS

On this Fifth Sunday of Lent, the liturgy presents us the episode of the adulterous woman (cf. Jn 8:1-11). In it, there are two contrasting attitudes: that of the scribes and the Pharisees on the one hand, and that of Jesus on the other. The former want to condemn the woman because they feel they are the guardians of the Law and of its faithful implementation. Jesus, on the other hand, wants to save her because he personifies God's mercy which redeems by forgiving and renews by reconciling. Let us thus look at the event. While Jesus is teaching in the Temple, the scribes and the Pharisees bring him a woman who has been caught in adultery. They place her in the middle and ask Jesus if they should stone her as the Law of Moses prescribes. The Evangelist explains that they asked the question in order *"to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him"* (v. 6). One might think that this was their purpose: behold the iniquity of these people - a 'no' to the stoning would have been a pretext to accuse Jesus of disobeying the Law; a 'yes' instead, to report him to the Roman Authority which had reserved such sentences to itself and did not permit lynching by the people. And Jesus must respond.

Jesus' interrogators are confined to narrow legalism and want to oblige the Son of God to conform to their perspective of judgment and condemnation. However, he did not come into the world to judge and condemn, but rather to save and offer people a new life. And how does Jesus react to this test? First of all, he remains silent for some time and then he bends down to write on the ground with his finger, almost as if to remind them that the only Legislator and Judge is God who had inscribed the Law on stone. And then he says: *"Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her"* (v. 7). In this way, Jesus appeals to the conscience of those men: they felt they were the *'champions of justice'*, but he reminds them of their own condition as sinners, due to which they cannot claim the right to life or death over one of their fellow human beings. At

that point, one after the other, beginning with the eldest - that is, those who were more fully aware of their own failings - they all went away, and desisted from stoning the woman. This episode also invites each of us to be aware that we are sinners, and to let fall from our hands the stones of denigration, of condemnation, of gossip, which at times we would like to cast at others. When we speak ill of others, we are throwing stones, we are like these people.

And in the end only Jesus and the woman are left there in the middle: *"misery with mercy"*, as Saint Augustine says (In Joh 33:5). Jesus is the only one without fault, the only one who could throw a stone at her, but he does not do so, because God *"does not want the death of the wicked but that the wicked convert and live"* (cf. Ez 33:11). And Jesus sends the woman on her way with these wonderful words: *"Go and do not sin again"* (Jn 8:11). And thus Jesus opens a new path to her, created by mercy, a path that requires her commitment not to sin again. It is an invitation that applies to each one of us. When Jesus forgives us, he always opens a new path on which to go forward. In this Lenten Season, we are called to recognize ourselves as sinners and to ask God for forgiveness. And, in its turn, while forgiveness reconciles us and gives us peace, it lets us start again, renewed. Every true conversion is oriented toward a new future, a new life, a beautiful life, a life free from sin, a generous life. Let us not be afraid to ask Jesus for forgiveness because he opens the door to this new life for us. May the Virgin Mary help us to bear witness to all of the merciful love of God, who through Jesus, forgives us and renders our lives new, by always offering us new possibilities.

Francis