



THE PARISH OF SAINT MARY, HALIFAX

Incorporating the churches of St Alban and St Mary

Parish Priest: Rev. Fr Joshua Hilton
 Deacons: Rev. John Walsh, Rev. Paul Coates
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MASS SCHEDULE AND DEVOTIONS

Children's Liturgy:

Every Sunday 11:00am

Perpetual Novena:

Wednesday after 9:30am
 Mass

Holy Rosary:

Saturday after 12:15pm
 Mass

Devotions to the Sacred Heart:

First Friday of the month
 after 9:30am Mass

Our Lady's Lamp this week burns for:

"The Pope and our priests"



Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:

Saturday 11:00am –
 12:00pm

at St Mary's

Confessions:

Saturday

11:00am-12:00pm

at St Mary's

Sunday

5:30pm-6:00pm

at St Alban's

or on Request

Marriages and Baptisms

by appointment

See the priest after Mass

The month of January is dedicated to: The Holy Name of Jesus

SUNDAY 25 th JANUARY 2026	3 rd Sunday in Ordinary Time	9:30am 11:00am 6:00pm	St Mary's St Mary's St Alban's	People of the Parish John & Annie Stanton Alison Allen
MONDAY 26 th	Ss Timothy & Titus	No Public Mass		
TUESDAY 27 th	REQUIEM	12:45pm	St Mary's	Veronica Smyth
WEDNESDAY 28 th	St Thomas Aquinas	9:30am	St Mary's	Deceased Members of the Keleher Family
THURSDAY 29 th	Feria	9:30am	St Alban's	Michael Dempsey
FRIDAY 30 th	Feria	9:30am	St Mary's	Maria Griffin
SATURDAY 31 st	St John Bosco	12:15pm	St Mary's	Marie Finn
	Vigil Mass	4:00pm	St Mary's	Polish Mass

READERS ROTA

THIS SUNDAY		NEXT SUNDAY	
9:30am	Kieron Green	9:30am	Lily Hymas
11:00am	Barbara Gregson	11:00am	Malcolm Brown
6:00pm	Rachel Fitzpatrick	6:00pm	Frances Millington

PRAYER LIST: Tony Hintze, Mary Staden, Peter Staden, Gerard James, David Sutcliffe, John Wallis, William Long, Julie Simpson, Charlotte Fitzpatrick, Peter Smith, Julie Hall, Sonya Box, Kathleen Hannan, Nancy McGrath, Eleanor Foran, Rita Baxendale, Michael McDonnell and all the sick and housebound of the parish, their families and those who care for them. If you know of anyone in the parish who is ill or is housebound please let Fr Hilton or Deacon John know so that a visit can be arranged.

MASSES RECEIVED

Deceased Members of the Keleher Family, Thanksgiving (PC), Tom Ratkowski, Maureen Woodhouse, Vic Toolan, Denis & Veronica Smyth, Bryan & Sheila Greenwood

FIRST CONFESSION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2026

First Confessions will take place on Saturday **21st of March** for children in Year 3. First Holy Communion will take place on Sunday **7th of June** for children in Year 4. If your child attends a non-Catholic school and wishes to make either of these Sacraments this year, please let me know as soon as possible. Or contact Helen Mellor on 07931998337.

YEAR OF CATECHESIS

The next in our series of talks will be on **Tuesday 10th of February at 6:00pm** in St Alban's Hall and will be given by my brother Fr Benjamin Hilton. He will be speaking about The Communion of the Saints.

*** The next Q&A will take place on the **Tuesday 24th March at 6:00pm**. ***
Please take note of this revised date.

COACH TRIP TO LINCOLN

The next coach trip will be on **Thursday 12th March** (subject to confirmation) to the medieval city of Lincoln. We will celebrate Mass before we leave at 9:30am from St Mary's. The trip costs £35 per person and includes admission and a guided tour of Lincoln Cathedral – a truly magnificent building. The Cathedral became the tallest building in the world in AD 1311, the title previously being held by the Great Pyramid of Giza built in 2600 BC. It was only surpassed in 1548 by the tower of St. Mary's Church, Stralsund. As usual there will be free time for lunch and exploring the city and we will depart on our return journey at 4:00pm. Register interest on the sign-up sheet at the back of church as usual.

DIOCESE OF LEEDS YOUNG MEN'S GROUP FOR AGES 21-35

The diocese is forming a group for young men from across our parishes to come together to pray, listen to engaging speakers, socialise and grow in faith and fraternity. The group is under the patronage of St Joseph and takes the following format: Devotions to St Joseph, talk from a guest speaker, food and social time and concludes with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The next meeting will be on:

Thursday 26th February 6:30pm – 8:30pm at Hinsley Hall, the diocesan center, in Leeds, LS6 2BX

WELCOME AND THANK YOU

To Fr Royston Price CSsR, who has very kindly offered to say all of the Masses in the parish next weekend. You may remember Fr Price from our parish mission that he preached with Fr Hemer a couple of years ago. He is back in the diocese for the tour of the relics of St Gerard Majella and will be staying here in the presbytery at St Mary's. I'm very grateful for his kindness, please make him welcome.

RELICS OF ST GERARD MAJELLA

On **Monday 26th January**, Holy Redeemer Parish, Huddersfield will have the privilege of hosting the relics of St Gerard Majella. He is popularly invoked as a patron of mothers, particularly expectant mothers, couples trying to conceive, and those looking for work. Come along to pray in front of his relics, participate in Mass at St Patrick's at 7:00pm and receive a blessing with his relics.

HAPPY DAYS FOOD BANK

A reminder that next week is our turn to contribute to the food bank.
Please be your usual generous selves.

RECENT FINANCIAL NEWS

Last week's loose collection was **£859.95** Total Approx: **£1578.70** (Inc. standing orders & card)

The second collection for the Poor Mission Fund raised: **£435.46**

Please consider remembering the parish in your will.

FROM YOUR PARISH PRIEST

This week the Church celebrates the feast of St Thomas Aquinas (pictured on the front). You will probably not be surprised to hear me say that he is one of my favourite saints. Those of you who listen carefully to my sermons (as I'm sure you all do!) will know that I quote him fairly often. Sometimes I try to be subtle about it. Sometimes less so. Either way, he has a habit of saying things so clearly that it seems a shame not to borrow his words.

St Thomas lived in the 13th century and is often described as one of the greatest theologians the Church has ever produced. That description is accurate but it can also be a little off-putting. When people hear words like "theologian" or "philosopher," they sometimes assume we are dealing with someone remote, abstract or disconnected from ordinary faith. St Thomas Aquinas was none of those things. At heart, he was a Dominican friar who loved God deeply and wanted to understand Him better.

One of the most important things St Thomas teaches us is that faith and reason are not enemies. In fact, he insisted that they belong together. Reason is not something we leave at the church door and faith is not a substitute for thinking. Both are gifts from God and both are meant to work in harmony. That might sound obvious but it is surprisingly countercultural. We live in a world that often pushes us into extremes. Either faith is treated as a private feeling that should not ask too many questions or reason is treated as the only authority, with no room for mystery or revelation. Aquinas quietly refuses both options. He shows us that believing deeply and thinking carefully are not opposites.

St Thomas had a great confidence in truth. He believed that all truth ultimately comes from God and therefore nothing that is genuinely true can threaten faith. That confidence allowed him to engage with ideas from outside the Church, including the philosophy of Aristotle, without fear. He trusted that truth, wherever it is found, points back to its source. There is something refreshing about that calm assurance.

St Thomas is perhaps best known for his major work, the *Summa Theologiae*. Even the name can sound intimidating. In reality it is an enormous attempt to think through the Christian faith clearly and systematically. St Thomas asks questions, considers objections and then responds carefully. He takes his readers seriously. He assumes that faith deserves to be thought about, not simply repeated.

Yet for all his intellectual brilliance, St Thomas was not a dry academic. He was a man of prayer. Towards the end of his life, after a profound experience of God while celebrating Mass, he famously said that everything he had written seemed like straw compared to what had been revealed to him. That moment reminds us that theology is not an end in itself. It is meant to lead us into deeper humility and worship.

He has a great deal to say about ordinary Christian living. His teaching on virtue, on conscience and on the moral life is deeply practical. He understood that holiness is not about dramatic gestures but about the steady formation of good habits. We become holy, he believed, not overnight but through repeated acts of faithfulness. That insight remains hugely relevant. Perhaps that is why he remains such a helpful guide. He does not ask us to switch off our minds in order to believe. Nor does he pretend that everything can be neatly explained. He invites us to think, to pray and to trust. The Church continues to hold him up not because he had all the answers but because he shows us how to ask the right questions, with faith, humility and confidence in God.

God bless you all,
Fr Hilton

Mass Offerings, Notices and News Items for the Parish Bulletin should be given to Fr Hilton or Deacon John by Wednesday evening. Notices and News can be sent again by Wednesday evening to office.stmary.halifax@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

The Parish Safeguarding Representative is Sharon Costello

Leeds Diocese Charity Registration No. 249404