



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

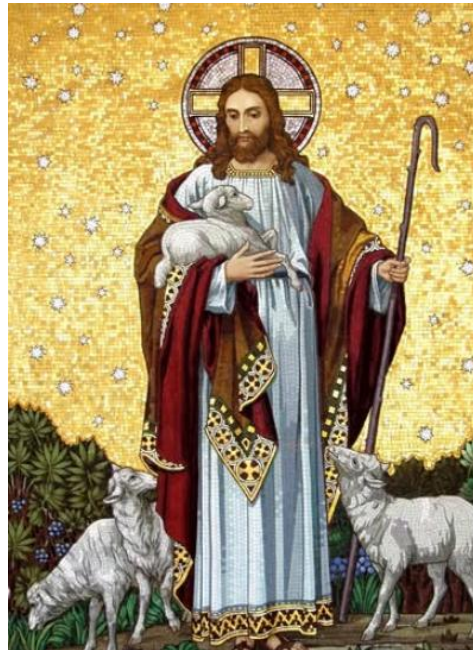
Holy Rosary:

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:
 Mary Burwell



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

SUNDAY 26 th	4 th Sunday of Easter	9:30am 11:00am 6:00pm	St Mary's St Mary's St Alban's	Maria Griffin R.I.P. John Hupalo R.I.P. People of the Parish
MONDAY 27 th	Easter	No Public Mass		
TUESDAY 28 th	TALK Easter	6:00pm 7:00pm	St Alban's St Alban's	FR ANDREW BOWDEN Gray Family
WEDNESDAY 29 th	St Catherine of Siena	9:30am	St Mary's	Private Intention
THURSDAY 30 th	Easter	9:30am	St Alban's	Rev. Paul Coates Int.
FRIDAY 1 st MAY	Easter	9:30am	St Mary's	Fr Canice McGinn (YB)
SATURDAY 2 nd	Easter Vigil Mass	12:15pm 4:00pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Matt & Elizabeth Kidd 1 st Wedding Polish Mass

READERS ROTA

	THIS SUNDAY		NEXT SUNDAY
9:30am	Nicholas Aigbogun	9:30am	Lily Hymas
11:00am	Malcolm Brown	11:00am	Wendy Balahura
6:00pm	Frances Millington	6:00pm	Judith MacDonald

PRAYER LIST: Sadie Mills, David Stanton, John Durkin, Kathleen Durkin, Tony Hintze, Mary Staden, Peter Staden, David Sutcliffe, William Long, Julie Simpson, Charlotte Fitzpatrick, Peter Smith, Julie Hall, Sonya Box, Kathleen Hannan, Nancy McGrath, Eleanor Foran, 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/Paul know so that a visit can be arranged.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

John Burwell who has died recently. *Requiescat in pace.*

MASSES RECEIVED

John Wallis (LD) x 3, Deceased members of the Curley Family, Alberto Gonnella, Tess Dowd, Kevin Toolan, Micheal Toolan, Denis & Veronica Smyth, Bryan & Sheila Greenwood, John Burwell (LD)

YEAR OF CATECHESIS

The next in our series of talks will be **this Tuesday at 6:00pm** in St Alban's Hall and will be given by Fr Andrew Bowden. He will be speaking about "The good life and how to live it" – How do we live out the Gospel in daily life and is it possible to enjoy it? In this talk Fr Bowden will explore the joy and challenge of Christian living.

EASTER HOUSE BLESSINGS

As usual I will be offering traditional Easter House Blessings with the new Easter water. This can take place any time between Easter Sunday and Ascension Thursday. Please send your details to office.stmary.halifax@dioceseofleeds.org.uk or call the presbytery on 01422 352141 to arrange a mutually convenient time.

PILGRIMAGE TO MALTA

Due to changes in the available flights, the pilgrimage to Malta will now run from the 21st to the 24th of September, returning on the Thursday evening rather than early on Friday morning. Because of this change the new package price is: £990pp for a double room

A NIGHT OF MUSIC WITH NICOLA MILLS – LADIES' GUILD

Come and enjoy her wonderful voice and hear her interesting life story. St Alban's church, Thursday 30th April, 7:00pm. Tickets £5 including refreshments.

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

The next meeting of the Oratory of St Josph will be on: **Thursday 30th April 6:30pm – 8:30pm** at Hinsley Hall, the diocesan center, in Leeds, LS6 2BX. The Speaker will be Fr John Church O.P. His talk is entitled "Facing your fears: How to grow in Courage" Fr John Bernard is a Dominican priest currently assigned to Holy Cross Priory, Leicester. He is the Promoter of Dominican Young Adults. He studied Classics at Oxford before Joining the Order in 2018. He was ordained a priest in 2025.

HAPPY DAYS FOOD BANK

Next Sunday it is our turn to collect donations for the Food Bank. Please be as generous as possible. They have reminded us, however, no fresh food please.

UNWANTED HOLY ITEMS

Please do not leave old or unwanted religious items/statues/rosaries/books/(children's toys) at the back of church. Unwanted holy books should be burned and unwanted statues should be broken with a hammer and buried in the ground.

RECENT FINANCIAL NEWS

Last week's loose collection was **£769.32** Total Approx. **£1600.30** (Inc. standing orders & card)

FROM YOUR PARISH PRIEST

Today is often referred to as “Good Shepherd Sunday” because of the Gospel account that is read at Mass. I am not able to preach on it this weekend due to our pastoral letter from the Bishop but I feel that it is important that I say a few simple words here, on what is an extremely relevant subject. And that is vocations to the priesthood.

The priesthood is one of the most beautiful gifts that Our Lord has entrusted to His Church and is His way of ensuring that we are still able, 2000 years later, to hear His teaching and be touched by His presence. The priest is a man, who in a very special way is configured to the person of Jesus Christ and is able to act in His name for the good of the community. Only the priest can turn the simple elements of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, only the priest can absolve our sins in the confessional and only the priest can anoint us at life’s end as we prepare to meet face to face with God. In short, we need priests throughout our lives, from the beginning until the very end and there can be no substitute. Without the priest, we have no Sacraments and without the Sacraments, we are cut off from the life of Grace.

Thankfully, the tide seems at last to be turning, but for the last few decades the Church has been reluctant, for whatever reason, to speak plainly about the beauty and importance of the priesthood. There are plenty of priests themselves (who may even read this online) who have an aversion to speaking out boldly about the importance of promoting vocations to the priesthood. That is not to say, of course, that there are not other vocations in the Church but they are for others to speak about. We are not short of married couples, and religious communities of monks and nuns are responsible for their own promotion. What we are short of, in this part of the world, are diocesan priests. And they are who we need.

Among far too many Catholics, an attitude has prevailed of, “We need priests”... “But not me”... “But not my son”... “But not my grandson”. When Bishop Stock wrote his letter last year inviting men from across the diocese to meet with him in Leeds who might consider a call to the priesthood, nearly 40 men attended the initial meeting, it was incredible. What stood out was how many of them said it was the first time anyone had ever asked them, “Have you thought about being a priest?” We have stopped asking that question. And sometimes, that is all it takes. Priests don’t just fall out of the sky, they come from ordinary homes, families and parishes. God has never stopped calling men to His priesthood, too often, we have simply failed to respond.

It always saddens me when I hear people speak about the priesthood as if it were a life that is too difficult or too challenging to choose. Now, yes – of course, the priesthood does indeed have its challenges, but show me a life that hasn’t. Show me a family that is carefree. You won’t find one. But the thing about the priesthood is that its joys and thrills and fulfilments far surpass and outweigh the moments of difficulty and struggle.

In truth, living this life is the most extraordinary and monumental privilege. Not only do priests share in the ministerial Priesthood of Christ Himself but on a human and earthly level, we are surrounded by the love and support of so many people. I have travelled to places, met people and shared in experiences that would never have been possible had I not been ordained. More than that, we share in the most intimate and important moments of our people’s lives. They call us “Father” because that is exactly what we are supposed to be to them. Being a priest is to have a family the size of the parish, and it is the most wonderful life.

So today, I ask you to do three simple things, pray for priests, pray for more priests and do not be afraid to ask the question. If there is a young man in your family, or among your friends, simply ask him, “Have you ever thought about being a priest?” That one question might change a life.

God bless you all,
Fr Hilton