



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:
 Private Intention (Sick)



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 February is dedicated to: The Holy Family

SUNDAY 8 th FEBRUARY 2026	5 th Sunday in Ordinary Time	9:30am 11:00am 6:00pm	St Mary's St Mary's St Alban's	Joe Riddeal Micheal Danny People of the Parish
MONDAY 9 th	Feria	No Mass		
TUESDAY 10 th		6:00pm	St Alban's	Fr B. Hilton – Talk
	St Scholastica	7:00pm	St Alban's	Fr John Carter
WEDNESDAY 11 th	Feria	10:00am (School)	St Mary's	Donor's Intention
THURSDAY 12 th	Feria	9:30am	St Alban's	Peter & Peggy Travis
FRIDAY 13 th	Feria	9:30am	St Mary's	Maria Griffin
SATURDAY 14 th	Ss Cyril and Methodius	No Mass 4:00pm	St Mary's	Polish Mass

READERS ROTA

THIS SUNDAY				NEXT SUNDAY			
9:30am	Nicholas Aigbogun			9:30am	John Greenwood		
11:00am	Wendy Balahura			11:00am	Albina Karuna		
6:00pm	Judith MacDonald			6:00pm	Rachel Fitzpatrick		

PRAYER LIST: John Durkin, Kathleen Durkin, 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

Patricia Reynolds, Elaine Collins, Kayleigh Jade Ennis (Recovery), Ann Patricia Staden, Thomas Edmund Staden, Agnes Melia, Winifred Melia

PALM BRANCES - ASHES

Next Sunday I will be collecting old Palm Sunday branches to burn for use on Ash Wednesday. Please bring any palm branches that you have at home to Mass next weekend.

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 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** to the medieval city of Lincoln. We will celebrate Mass before we **leave at 9:00am** 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

FIRST CONFESSION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2026

First Confessions will take place on Saturday **21st of March** for children in Year 3. First Holy

Communions 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.

PARISH LADIES' GUILD

The next meeting of the PLG will be held **this Thursday at 7pm** in St Alban's Hall. New and former members are always most welcome.

200 CLUB JANUARY WINNERS

1st prize £75 no.136 Bernard Wadsworth 2nd prize £50 no.84 Michael Hayes

3rd prize £25 no. 120 Dorothea Baldwin

RECENT FINANCIAL NEWS

Last week's loose collection was **£693.66** Total Approx: **£1407.41** (Inc. standing orders & card)

Please consider remembering the parish in your will.

FROM YOUR PARISH PRIEST

“Attempts to locate the Indus or Harapan language within the Dravidian language family have emphasised the Indo-scripts use of a symbol for what material, which some researchers have claimed is a proto-Dravidian word for elephant?” That was one of the questions on *University Challenge* this week. As usual, I didn’t have a clue. I don’t know why I watch it really. I never seem to get any of the answers right.

That changed with this week’s episode, however, when my ears pricked up at the following question. “The 1890 painting *What is Truth?* by Nikolai Ge depicts which figure questioning Jesus as recounted in Chapter 18 of John’s Gospel?” “Pontius Pilate,” I shouted at the television feeling rather triumphant. From the team of very bright academics from Imperial College London, though, there was silence. After a brief discussion they took a guess with “Thomas.” They were wrong. I was genuinely astonished. These were clearly intelligent young people with impressive knowledge across music, chemistry, languages and history. Yet not one of them could answer a very straightforward question drawn from the Gospel. This is not a criticism of them personally. It is an observation about the society we now inhabit.

We live in an age that values information enormously. Knowledge is everywhere and instantly accessible. People can be highly educated and extremely competent in their chosen fields. Yet at the same time there is a growing unfamiliarity with the basic story of Christianity. Biblical references that once would have been common currency now pass unnoticed. Names, scenes and themes that shaped our culture for centuries are increasingly unknown even to the well-educated. That moment on *University Challenge* was revealing. The problem was not intelligence but formation. The Christian story is no longer assumed. It is no longer part of the shared background knowledge of society. Scripture is often encountered, if at all, in fragments or maybe slightly at Christmas. For many people it simply belongs to the category of cultural trivia.

This presents a challenge for the Church and so for us. For a long time, we could rely on a general familiarity with the Gospel. Even those who did not practise the faith often knew the outlines of the story. That is no longer the case. We now live in a missionary situation, not only in distant lands but on our own doorstep. The basic narrative of who Jesus is, what He says and why it matters cannot be taken for granted. What does that mean for us in practice? First, it means that we cannot outsource the passing on of the faith. Schools, parishes and clergy all have a role but so do families and individual Catholics.

Simply being comfortable speaking about the Gospel in ordinary conversation is already a quiet but powerful witness. Not preaching, not arguing, just knowing the story well enough to share it naturally. Second, it means that we ourselves need to keep returning to Scripture. It is difficult to pass on what we do not know. Reading the Gospels regularly, even in small portions, forms us slowly and deeply. Familiarity grows over time. Confidence follows. The more at home we are with these accounts, the more naturally it becomes part of how we see the world.

Finally, it means resisting the temptation to be embarrassed about our faith. The Christian story is not something we apologise for. It has shaped art, language, law and moral vision in ways that continue to matter. If it is quietly disappearing from cultural memory, then that should concern us not because we wish to dominate others but because we believe it is good news that people need to hear.

The correct answer to the first question was “Ivory” by the way... Who knew?! But the second question mattered far more. Not because I happened to know the answer but because fewer and fewer people do. And that leaves us with a simple question of our own. If the Gospel is becoming unfamiliar, what part will we play in making it known again?

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