

# THE PARISH OF OUR LADY OF GRACE KIDSGROVE, BIDDULPH & GOLDENHILL

## SUNDAY BULLETIN

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

SUNDAY 18TH FEBRUARY 2024

### A WORD FROM THE PARISH PRIEST

It sounds, maybe, strange, but I would like to wish you a happy Lent. What may come to our minds when we think of confession, repentance, penance, fasting, giving things up are negative thoughts. We like our creature comforts, and our daily habits. Lent comes to shake us from those attachments, and most of all from the attachments to our sinful ways. This leads to freedom, and freedom leads to joy. And so it is a joyful season of simplicity of life, a lightness of heart that comes from an easy conscience, and a time for space and spiritual growth. So let's embrace Lent!

Most importantly Lent is a time for freedom from sin. It is sacramental confession, which is an obligation at least annually, that brings us the assured freedom from sin. We all need

to get to confession! There will be a joint penitential service again with Tunstall, Burslem and Norton parishes. Please see page 3 for details. There are also the normal weekly slots before Sunday Masses. However, if there is great demand, I will provide extra times as required!

In the Year of Prayer, in preparation for the great Jubilee, this Lent is also a call to return to a life of prayer that is regular: daily and faithful. Prayer is something that is personal. The Walk with Me booklets help us to read the Word of God in the daily Mass readings, as a starting point to prayer. In Holy Week, there will also be a four evening retreat based at St Patrick's to prepare for the Easter Triduum.

And so, I really encourage you to make the most of Lent, and the opportunity

it provides for the space or room for growing in holiness.

Last Sunday, we had a lovely celebration, for the first time, of our new Patronal Feast, Our Lady of Grace. As well as celebrating Masses in honour of Our Blessed Lady, we also held our first Healing Service since COVID. It was a beautiful hour of prayer for healing for all who came. Some parishioners received the Sacrament of the Sick, and the time of prayer was profound and beautiful. We will be repeating this experience every three months or so.

The first meeting of Our Lady of Grace Ladies, I am told, was also a great success, and will become a monthly meeting. It is a great first initiative of the newly united parish. Why not come to the next one if you missed the first?

### SAINT OF THE WEEK



#### St Kuriakose Elias Chavara 1805-1871

Kuriakose was a Syro-Malabar Catholic from Kerala, India. He was a priest, religious, philosopher and social reformer. He was ordained priest at the age of 24, and joined with two other priests to live a monastic life, following Carmelite spiritual life

and rule. This became the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate. His great work of charity began with the founding of schools for the poor, with a programme of feeding the children at lunchtime in school. He started the 'handful of rice' initiative to support poor families. He raised the spiritual life of lay people by giving retreats.

### CHURCHES

**Biddulph** English Martyrs' Church, Church Road, Biddulph, ST8 6NE

**Goldenhill** St Joseph's Church, High Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 5RD

**Packmoor** St Patrick's Church, Mellor Street, Packmoor, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 4SN

### PARISH PRIEST

Rev Fr Julian C Green  
St Joseph's Presbytery  
715 High Street  
Stoke-on-Trent ST6 5RD  
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### Parish Secretary

Teresa Harding  
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OLG.parishes@rcaob.org.uk  
Office Hours: Mon, Tues, Fri  
9am to 3.30pm. Weds, Thurs  
9am to 1pm.

### Safeguarding

The Partnership of Parishes operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the National and Archdioceses policies & procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representatives are:

**Biddulph & Packmoor:** Julie Shufflebotham & Lorraine Connell

([sg.englishmartyrs.biddulph@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:sg.englishmartyrs.biddulph@rcaob.org.uk))

**Goldenhill:** Jo Kirkham  
([sg.stjoseph.goldenhill@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:sg.stjoseph.goldenhill@rcaob.org.uk))

Alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding team can be contacted on 0121 230 6240

or [safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk) if you have any concerns.

### Parish Website

[www.partnershipparishes.org](http://www.partnershipparishes.org)

The Parishes are part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity no.

234216

## LITURGY &amp; DEVOTIONS THIS WEEK

	Biddulph	Goldenhill	Packmoor	Sacrament of Forgiveness (Confessions) St Joseph's Sun 10.30am English Martyrs' Sun 8.30am St Patrick's Sat 5pm (on request)	
<b>Saturday 17th</b>			5.30pm	Holy Mass of Sunday	Julius & Iris Kaminskas
<b>Sunday 18th</b> <b>First Sunday of Lent</b>	9.00am	11.00am		Holy Mass Holy Mass	Tom Nixon Winifred Maughan
<b>Monday 19th</b> Lent Feria					
<b>Tuesday 20th</b> Lent Feria			2.15pm	Stations of the Cross	
<b>Wednesday 21st</b> Lent Feria					
<b>Thursday 22nd</b> <b>Chair of St Peter</b>	11.30am			Stations of the Cross	
<b>Friday 23rd</b> Lent Feria <i>Family Fast Day</i>		5.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm		<i>Eucharistic Adoration &amp; Vespers</i> Holy Mass Stations of the Cross	Special Intention
<b>Saturday 24th</b> Lent Feria			5.30pm	Holy Mass of Sunday	Vincent Davis
<b>Sunday 25th</b> <b>Second Sunday of Lent</b>	9.00am	11.00am		Holy Mass Holy Mass	Mary Jervis Geoff Lovatt
<b>Monday 26th</b> Lent Feria	11.30am	5.45pm 6.00pm		Requiem Mass <i>Vespers</i> Holy Mass	Eric Ball RIP Tony Leech
<b>Tuesday 27th</b> Lent Feria	8.30am 9.15am		2.15pm	<i>Eucharistic Adoration &amp; Lauds</i> Holy Mass Stations of the Cross	Ellen & Joe Flatley
<b>Wednesday 28th</b> Lent Feria		6.00pm 6.30pm		Holy Mass First Confession Service	Sarah Holmes & family
<b>Thursday 29th</b> Lent Feria	11.30am 12noon	9.30am 6.00pm		Holy Mass (St Joseph's School) Stations of the Cross Holy Mass Heart to Heart	People of the Parishes Dec of Child family
<b>Friday 1st</b> <b>St David</b>		5.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm		<i>Eucharistic Adoration &amp; Vespers</i> Holy Mass Stations of the Cross	Jean Green
<b>Saturday 2nd</b> <b>St Chad</b>			4.45pm 5.30pm	<i>Eucharistic Adoration</i> Holy Mass of Sunday	Tony Smith
<b>Sunday 3rd</b> <b>Third Sunday of Lent</b>	9.00am	11.00am		Holy Mass Holy Mass	Karol Grolik, George & Barbara Connell Betty Smithson

**Our Lady of Grace Ladies** The first meeting of our new ladies group was a great success with women from across our church communities coming together for prayer and a social time together. The meetings are going to be monthly. The next one will be on Monday 4th March at St Joseph's Goldenhill (enter through the church's side door) at 7pm. All women welcome!

**CAFOD Family Fast Day** This Friday, 23rd February, is the Lent family fast day. You are invited to make it a day of fasting and prayer for the poor of the developing world. Please give up a meal on that day, and contribute the money saved to CAFOD, and accompany your fasting with a time of prayer. The Lenten Alms collection next Sunday will be for CAFOD.

**Lenten Alms** As in previous years, we will have Lenten alms collections throughout the season of Lent, at the end of each Sunday Mass. This year we will be supporting the following charities with our Lenten alms:  
18th February LEPR  
25th February CAFOD Fast Day  
3rd March Poor Parishes Fund  
10th March Number 11  
17th March Aid to the Church in Need  
24th March Holy Places

**Choir for Holy Week** Each year we bring together a choir from all our churches to lead the singing at the great Holy Week liturgies. If you would like to take part, please come to the first practice at St Joseph's on Wednesday 21st February at 6.30pm

**Red Boxes** Would all Missio red box holders from English Martyrs' and St Patrick's please bring in their boxes for counting before the end of February. Thank you.

**St Patrick's Day** You are invited to come and celebrate the Feast of St Patrick at St Patrick's church on Monday 18th March. The feast is transferred as it occurs on a Sunday in Lent. There will be Mass at 6.30pm followed by a bring and share buffet in the church porch. Everyone is welcome. A plenary indulgence can be

gained through participating in the Mass, together with Sacramental Confession (within two weeks), Holy Communion and praying for the Pope's intentions.

**St Joseph's Day** You are invited to come and join in the celebration of St Joseph's Day at St Joseph's church on Tuesday 19th March. There will be Mass with the school children from St Joseph's Academy at 9.30am followed by tea, coffee and refreshments in church. This will replace the 'Welcoming Space' in school on that day.

**World Day of Prayer** Formerly known, more accurately, as Women's World Day of Prayer, it is on Friday 1st March. It is a day when Christian women throughout the world get together to pray together. You are invited to take part at Bidulph Methodist Church starting at 1.30pm for a service devised by Christian women from Palestine.

**Stations of the Cross** There will be Stations of the Cross from the beginning of Lent as follows: Tuesdays at 2.15pm at St Patrick's (replacing the usual Rosary), Thursdays at 11.30am at English Martyrs', and on Fridays at 6.30pm at St Joseph's. Come and join in this beautiful form of prayer!

**Holy Week Retreat** The Prayer & Life Workshop guides are offering a four evening retreat called "A Way of Pain and Love" as a wonderful way of preparing for the Easter Triduum. It will be taking place at St Patrick's Packmoor on four consecutive evenings from Palm Sunday to Spy Wednesday, 24th to 27th March. The retreat sessions will begin at 7pm and each one is an hour and a half. On the weekdays this will be preceded by Mass and Stations of the Cross at 6pm. Keep the dates free!

**Archdiocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes** The annual diocesan pilgrimage will take place from Monday 27 May to Saturday 1 June 2024 under the leadership of His Grace, Archbishop Bernard Longley and Bishop David Evans. For booking enquiries and to find out more about what the pilgrimage entails visit

## OUTREACH TO CARE HOMES

Please come and join us at Lawton Rise Goldenhill on Wednesday 21st February at 11am for our next care home service. Please come and join us and help the singing. Meet outside before the service to gain access.

### HOSPITALITY



Our Parish hospitality is up and running again now the New Year is here.

The Warm Space at English Martyrs' is back on Wednesdays from 11am to 2pm. Come and get refreshments or lunch and meet with others.

The Welcoming Space at St Joseph's Goldenhill is on Tuesdays from 10am to 12noon. Drop into St Joseph's Academy and meet with friends and have some light refreshments.

The Young at Heart Club, for senior citizens, takes place at Kidsgrove Town Hall on the last Tuesday of the month. The next meeting is on Tuesday 27th February from 2pm to 4pm. Everyone welcome!

[www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/news/join-us-for-the-diocesan-lourdes-pilgrimage-2024](http://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/news/join-us-for-the-diocesan-lourdes-pilgrimage-2024)

### Parish Youth Leader Training

The Bethsaida course is your gateway to a rewarding voluntary role working with young people in your parish. This free course is taking place at Our Lady and St Werburgh's, Clayton on Saturday 24th Feb from 2-6pm, and Saturday 2nd March from 2-6pm, and with an online session at 7pm on Wednesday 28th February from home. All are welcome whether you are interested in working with young people in your parish in the future or this is something you are already part of. The certificated course is run by the Kenelm Youth Trust with sessions that are informative, relaxed, interactive and friendly. To register or find out more email: [anna.howard@kenelmyouthtrust.org.uk](mailto:anna.howard@kenelmyouthtrust.org.uk)

# POPE FRANCIS' MESSAGE FOR LENT 2024

*Here is an excerpt from Pope Francis' message to the Church for this season of Lent 2024:*

The exodus from slavery to freedom is no abstract journey. If our celebration of Lent is to be concrete, the first step is to desire to *open our eyes to reality*. When the Lord calls out to Moses from the burning bush, he immediately shows that he is a God who sees and, above all, hears: "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey" (Ex 3:7-8). Today too, the cry of so many of our oppressed brothers and sisters rises to heaven. Let us ask ourselves: Do we hear that cry? Does it trouble us? Does it move us? All too many things keep us apart from each other, denying the fraternity that, from the beginning, binds us to one another. [...]

God has not grown weary of us. Let us welcome Lent as the great season in which he reminds us: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Ex 20:2). Lent is *a season of conversion, a time of freedom*. Jesus himself, as we recall each year on the first Sunday of Lent, was driven into the desert by the Spirit in order to be tempted in freedom. For forty days, he will stand before us and with us: the incarnate Son. Unlike Pharaoh, God does not want subjects, but sons and daughters. The desert is the place where our freedom can mature in a personal decision not to fall back into slavery. In Lent, we find new criteria of justice and a community with which we can press forward on a road not yet taken.

This, however, entails *a struggle*, as the book of Exodus and the temptations of Jesus in the desert make clear to us. The voice of God, who says, "You are my Son, the Beloved" (Mk 1:11), and "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3) is opposed by the enemy and his lies. Even more to be feared than Pharaoh are the idols that we set up for ourselves; we can consider them as his voice speaking within us. To be all-powerful, to be looked up to by all, to domineer over others: every human being is aware of how deeply seductive that lie can be. It is a road well-travelled. We can become attached to money, to certain projects, ideas or goals, to our position, to a tradition, even to certain individuals. Instead of making us move forward, they paralyze us. Instead of encounter, they create conflict. Yet there is also a new humanity, a people of the little ones and of the humble who have not yielded to the allure of the lie. Whereas those who serve idols become like them, mute, blind, deaf and immobile (cf. Ps 114:4), the poor of spirit are open and ready: a silent force of good that heals and sustains the world.

It is time to act, and in Lent, *to act also means to pause*. To pause in prayer, in order to receive the word of God, to pause like the Samaritan *in the presence of a wounded brother or sister*. Love of God and love of neighbour are one love. Not to have other gods is to pause in the presence of God beside the flesh of our neighbour. For this reason, prayer, almsgiving and fasting are not three unrelated acts, but a single movement of openness and self-emptying, in which we cast out the idols that weigh us down, the attachments that imprison us. Then the atrophied and isolated heart will revive. Slow down, then, and pause! The contemplative dimension of life that Lent helps us to rediscover will release new energies. In the presence of God, we become brothers and sisters, more sensitive to one another: in place of threats and enemies, we discover companions and fellow travellers. This is God's dream, the promised land to which we journey once we have left our slavery behind. [...]

Lent becomes a time of conversion, an anxious humanity will notice a burst of creativity, a flash of new hope. Allow me to repeat what I told the young people whom I met in Lisbon last summer: "Keep seeking and be ready to take risks. At this moment in time, we face enormous risks; we hear the painful plea of so many people. Indeed, we are experiencing a third world war fought piecemeal. Yet let us find the courage to see our world, not as being in its death throes but in a process of giving birth, not at the end but at the beginning of a great new chapter of history. We need courage to think like this". Such is the courage of conversion, born of coming up from slavery. For faith and charity take hope, this small child, by the hand. They teach her to walk, and at the same time, she leads them forward. I bless all of you and your Lenten journey. Pope Francis

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## PARISH REGISTERS

### Baptism

Welcome to the family of the Church to Chantelle Isabel Doherty who is being baptised today at St Joseph's.

### Funerals

Of your charity please pray for the soul of Eric Ball. Requiem Mass will be at English Martyrs' on Monday 26th February at 11.30am followed by committal at Carmountside.

*Requiescat in pace*

### Sanctuary Lamp Dedications

#### *Week beginning 18th February*

English Martyrs': Jean Green

St Joseph's: Winifred Maughan & family

St Patrick's: John Martin

#### *Week beginning 25th February*

English Martyrs': Helena Jeffries

St Joseph's: Private Intention

St Patrick's: Jean Harding

*If you would like to dedicate a lamp in one of our churches for any intention, please place donation (min £5) in an envelope*

### Parish Office & Parish Priest's Open House

The Parish Office is open at the times advertised on the front of the bulletin. Please note that the Parish office will not be open for the whole of the week beginning Monday 26th February. Please call before visiting.

**Open House** is when Fr Julian is available to be seen for consultations about baptisms, weddings, or for any other reason. There is no Open House this Monday. Next one is on Monday 26th February at 6.30pm.