



The Parish of **St Mary & St Catherine**



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Fr Simon Henry ECLJ GOMLJ BA(Hons) MA

First Sunday of Lent



Saturday 8th March: Vigil Mass for Sunday.	SC 5pm	Pauline Lucas, Anniv CONFESSIONS after Mass
9th Sunday. Year C. 9th March	SM 8.30am	Cuthbert Culshaw, RIP
	SM 10.30am	Norah & Fred Wilkinson
Mon 10th March: Feria of Lent	SM 9.30am	Ed McDermott
Tues 11th Feb: Feria of Lent	SC 9.30am	Special Intention
Wed 12th March: Feria of Lent	SM 9.30am	Tony Myrscough, RIP
Thurs 13th March: Feria of Lent	SC 9.30am	Marjorie, Jos & Ray
Friday 14th March: Feria of Lent	SM 7pm	STATIONS OF THE CROSS
Saturday 15th March: Vigil Mass for Sunday.	SC 5pm	Pro Populorum (People of the Parish) CONFESSIONS after Mass
Second Sunday of Lent. 16th March	SM 8.30am	Cuthbert Culshaw, RIP
	SM 10.30am	Henry & Martha Rimmer

THANK YOU for your offerings to the parish each week.

Retiring Collection next week for CAFOD. Family Fast Day on Friday.

St Catherine's church 100 Club: J. Nix (32)

Fr Simon's blog is at **offerimus tibi domine** (where you will also find the Mass times each week)

SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVES: St Catherine's, Elaine Carr. St Mary's, Marie Tootell.

NEW MISSALS: MASS CAN BE FOLLOWED ON PAGE 995.

Unchanging parts of the Mass in the pink pages. Prayers before Mass, Pg 510. Prayers after Mass, Pg 153.

Maureen O'Brien. Many St Catherine's parishioners will remember Maureen, who has been in a care home for some years; she died this week aged 100 years old. A great character! May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

CONFIRMATION 2025 (ANIMATE). CONFIRMATION PREPARATION IS RUN THROUGH ANIMATE (the diocesan youth service in conjunction with our Catholic schools). YOU CAN STILL JOIN THESE ONLINE SESSIONS EVEN IF YOU ARE NOT AT A CATHOLIC SCHOOL. If your child is in Year 8 and would like to receive the sacrament of confirmation, please register at liverpoolcalled.co.uk. Registration is open until **Monday 17 March 2025**.

Join the Animate team and special guests live for the Sacrament of Confirmation Online Preparation Sessions on 1 May and 15 May from 16.30-18.00 on the Animate Youth YouTube channel. No log in required. This is to run alongside your Local Parish/Deanery preparation.

SO ALL CANDIDATES MUST CONTACT FR SIMON AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Animate will also be offering a special session on Monday 31 March (16.30-18.00) for those who attend non-Catholic schools or schools outside the Archdiocese on YouTube. Please register as normal at liverpoolcalled.co.uk; you will be contacted after Monday 17 March with login details.

ARCHBISHOP MALCOLM

The Archbishop has written a very gracious letter following his visit to the parish.

"Thank you so much for the kindness and hospitality shown me last Sunday. I thoroughly enjoyed the liturgy, and having the opportunity to meet so many members of your parish community after Mass. A wonderful experience."



ST CATHERINE'S FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PREPARATION:

Weekly preparation sessions for children and their families will start this Wednesday at 6pm in the Pope John Paul Room. Let us pray for the children and their families, that God's grace will be renewed in their lives as they make this fresh commitment to Jesus and His Church. Attendance at Mass & the preparation sessions are a pre-requisite of being able to make First Communions.

ST MARY'S FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS: Thank you to the parents & children for the renewed commitment to attend Mass each Sunday. The children's presence at Mass greatly enhances our Sunday experience and is much commented on by other parishioners. Don't forget to sign "Golden Book" at the back of church for the children to make a record of their prayers and attendance at Mass for each Sunday until their First Communion as a gift for Jesus. Attendance at Mass & the preparation sessions are a pre-requisite of being able to make First Communions.

The Sacrament of Baptism recalls that,

"Parents are the first and best teachers of their children."

5 children have not made their First Confession, please contact Fr Simon.



READERS: for those who did not receive the new protocol instruction sheet, they are available in the sacristy, so as streamline and unify our proclamation of the Word more effectively. Could Readers please study it carefully to refresh their minds on the practical format of proclaiming the Word of God. Thank you.

Your Prayers are asked for all the sick, including: Rita Swarbrick, Rosena Stacey, Vivienne Lee, Tom Miller, Paul Casey, Linda Melling, Tilly Gee, Kathleen Ward, Clare Butler, Maureen MacDonald, Louie Baines, Maureen O'Brien, Margaret McNiff, Elle Miller, Mark Duncan, Bill Sutton, Barbara Fow, Mary Ann Monaghan, Bernard Lawson, Mick Marshall, Carol Parkinson, Eric Nielson, Margaret Lawler, Catherine Thompson.

We pray for those who are housebound & for those who love & care for them.

O Mary conceived without sin - Pray for us who have recourse to thee.



THE CHURCH BELL. You may notice that the bell in our clocktower is working again! Until a few years ago, it had been ringing since 1877; presented as a gift to the people of Euxton by William Ince Anderton of Euxton Hall. It is a reminder of God's Presence: Bells represent the voice of God calling out to His people, reminding them of His omnipresence and inviting them to prayer and reflection. It will ring the hours from 8am - 8pm. The call to Mass on Sunday. The Angelus at 9.30am, 12 noon & 6pm. This means we can start weekday Masses with the recitation of the Angelus: there will be sheets with this prayer available at the back of church.



PARISH TRIP TO FRANCE: Over the past three years parishioners from St Catherine's have enjoyed a parish holiday in France at St Peter's International College in Saint Pierre de Maillé (the venue is in the process of changing from having been an active Catholic School to now functioning as a pilgrimage/conference/retreat centre/ holiday venue.

In the hope that we will be able to go again this year, the following have been identified as possible dates, to include the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, which is the village's festal day, so we can enjoy the celebrations,

including a fantastic fireworks display over the River Gartempe, which flows through the village.

Monday 11th August. 13.40 Departing from Manchester.

Wednesday 20th August: 15.25 Departing from Limoges.

Cost per person (no single room supplements) around £650 (excluding baggage and insurance).

This includes flights and transfer to and from airports.

Staying at St Peter's College in Saint-Pierre-de-Maillé in the beautiful Poitou-Charentes region. Daily visits to local attractions, picturesque towns & villages, local Chateau & historic cities. Breakfast and Dinner (including wine) included each day. Lunch included on days when we are not out for the whole day, for example, in Poitiers (Cathedral & historic town). Accommodation is en-suite in twin or single rooms. There are also a limited number of family apartments. Daily Mass in the chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The building is a 200 year old convent, founded by local saints St André Hubert and St Jeanne-Elisabeth Bichier, whose shrine is in the neighboring village.



There will be an information evening THIS WEEK on Thursday 7pm at St Catherine's in the Pope John Paul Room to give a more detailed picture of the what is on offer and to answer your questions.



LENT: As early as the late third century, Egypt observed a 40-day fast to commemorate the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert before beginning his public ministry. In the fourth century, Lent developed as a time to accompany catechumens preparing for baptism. It was first explicitly mentioned at the Council of Nicaea in 325AD.

The practice of imposing ashes—once reserved for penitents but later extended to all believers—was first mentioned in the late 10th century by Benedictine monk Aelfric, abbot of Eynsham in England. Pope Urban II then made it a universal Christian practice at the Council of Benevento in 1091.

At its core, Lent has roots in Jewish tradition. Covering oneself in ashes was a sign of repentance and humility before God, recalling the dust from which Adam was formed. The number 40 appears more than 90 times in the Bible, symbolizing both trial and closeness to God. It echoes the 40 days Moses and the prophet Elijah spent on the mountain with God, the 40 days of the Great Flood while Noah and his family remained safe in the ark, and the 40 years the Israelites wandered in the desert seeking the Promised Land. The word “Lent” itself comes from the Latin *quadragesima*, meaning “fortieth.”

How does Lent unfold?

“Repent and believe in the Gospel.” “Remember that you are dust, and to dust, you shall return.”

Lent begins with one of these phrases spoken during Ash Wednesday. A priest will mark the foreheads of the faithful with ashes from the previous year’s Palm Sunday branches. “Lent is framed by two great processions,” said Father Sébastien Antoni, an Assumptionist priest, liturgist, and journalist. “The first is the penitential procession to receive ashes, inviting believers to seek God’s strength, love, and joy. The second, at the end of Lent, follows the light of the Paschal candle at the Easter Vigil, calling us to walk in Christ’s footsteps.” During Lent, the faithful pray for and with catechumens—those preparing for baptism—before being received into the church at Easter. **We have two candidates being received into the Church this Easter - David and Louise - so we pray for them especially.**

What are the pillars of Lent?

Lent was originally structured around fasting. In the fourth century, St. Augustine emphasized the importance of adding prayer, almsgiving, and forgiveness. The strictness of Lenten fasting has varied over time and was eased after World War II. Today, the Catholic Church prescribes fasting (one simple meal) on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, as well as abstinence from meat on Ash Wednesday, all Lenten Fridays, and Good Friday. Though **every Friday in the year we are called to make an act of penance, so Lent is a good time to make a special effort on this.** (Like not eating meat on Fridays’) Recently, some Christians have embraced more ascetic practices, such as eliminating additional foods and drinks, praying the rosary daily, dedicating an hour each week to charity (visiting the homeless, calling someone in isolation), or even sleeping on the floor. Everyone sets their own limits. The goal is not to achieve an extreme feat but to experience emptiness—a sense of lack—to create more space for relationships with others and God.

What is the spiritual purpose of Lent?

Pope Francis has frequently emphasized the demands of Lent in his Ash Wednesday homilies. He described it as a “favorable time to return to what is essential, to divest ourselves of all that weighs us down, to be reconciled with God, and to rekindle the fire of the Holy Spirit hidden beneath the ashes of our frail humanity.” Lent is a process of stripping away distractions to find greater authenticity. “To return to the heart means to go back to our true self and to present it just as it is, naked and defenseless, in the sight of God,” the pope said. “It means looking within ourselves and acknowledging our real identity, removing the masks we so often wear, slowing the frantic pace of our lives, and embracing life and the truth of who we are.” Ultimately, Lent is an opportunity to “reconsider the path we are taking, to find the route that leads us home and to rediscover our profound relationship with God, on whom everything depends,” Pope Francis said.

Three acts on which faith stands.

— From the homily of St. Peter Chrysologus, From the Divine Office (the priest’s Breviary) for Third Tuesday of Lent.

“There are three things, my brethren, by which faith stands firm, devotion remains constant, and virtue endures. They are prayer, fasting, and mercy. Prayer knocks at the door, fasting obtains, mercy receives. Prayer, mercy, and fasting: these three are one, and they give life to each other.

Fasting is the soul of prayer; mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. Let no one try to separate them; they cannot be separated. If you have only one of them or not all together, you have nothing. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ear to others, you open God’s ear to yourself.