



St Nicholas of Tolentino RC Church, Lawford's Gate, Bristol BS5 ORE

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Download this Bulletin from the Parish Website: www.tolentino.org.uk

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Catechesis: Mary Hopper (01275-830788) Caretaking of our buildings: Eddie Mgbeoduru

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Parish Administration & Hall/Room Bookings: Astrid Fagon and Team (0117-909-0419)

THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT - YEAR A



MISSION IMPOSSIBLE!

What on earth is He doing? No self-respecting Jewish 'holy man' or rabbi would venture into Samaritan country: they are the hated enemy and for sure God had no time for them. They had destroyed the unity of the nation, of the People of God some 600 years earlier - and we and God have long memories! They are outside the concern of God!

And it gets worse: he is speaking to a woman - in public! A Samaritan woman! Even drinking from her cup! And what a reputation she has! Just goes to show this young rabbi knows nothing and is 'beyond the pale'. Like her, he is a disgrace!

To go the excluded of the excluded - to descend into the pit of condemnation: this is Divine Love, this reveals the true nature of God. Not possessive or precious about 'ritual purity', seeming holiness, but passionate to bring love to the loveless, to gather in the most excluded and reveal them to the world as 'closest to the Father's heart'!

'To the lost Christ shows His face; to the unloved He gives His embrace; to those who cry in pain or disgrace, Christ makes. with his friends. a touching place!'

SUNDAY: PARISH MASS at 10.00am (streamed)

Stations of the Cross for Young People and end to knife crime at 12.45pm (approx)

Mass with the Catholic Handicapped Fellowship at 3.00pm (all welcome)

MONDAY: No Liturgy

TUESDAY: Adoration at 6.00pm Mass at 6.30pm

WEDNESDAY: Adoration at 8.30am Mass at 9.00am (***NB Change of time***)
Pastoral Area Service of Reconciliation with Bp Declan at 7.00pm
(Holy Family, Patchway, BS34 7PL)

THURSDAY: Adoration at 11.30am Mass at 12.00 noon
Parish Area Mass at the Chipato's home (24 Machin Road, Henbury, BS10 7HQ)

Jesus said to the rejected powerless woman of Samaria: If only you knew what I am offering you: the Holy Spirit like water springing up inside you, giving you Life!

FRIDAY: *Adoration* at 8.30am **Mass at 9.00am**

SATURDAY: **Ethiopian Orthodox Mass** at 6.00am to 12.30pm
Adoration at 11.30am **Mass at 12.00 noon** (*NB in the Assisi Centre*)

Sacrament of Reconciliation: after Mass and 4.00-4.30pm

TODAY: [1] On the **Third Sunday of Lent Year A** we celebrate Jesus who reaches out to the most scorned and rejected and promises to give New Life, Water of Life welling up in the heart - the Holy Spirit. The Samaritan Woman, used by men and scorned by the women of her community is embraced with love by Jesus: a love that changes her life and transforms her community! Will we this Lent drink deeply of this Living Water, this Holy Spirit. Mary Hopper will 'Break the Bread of the Word' for us this Sunday.

[2] **Stations of the Cross** at 1.15pm - **praying for Bristol and our nation** for an end to knife crime and gang culture among our Young People. Please come and walk with Jesus the Way of the Cross.

[3] **There is the Retiring Collection for CAFOD's Lenten Fast Day.** Our Fasting is in solidarity with the poorest of the Earth who have no choice but to fast for most of their lives! We must share our plenty to end poverty. CAFOD is involved in trying to get aid and food into the people of Gaza during this horrifying conflict - **please be generous!**

[4] **Mass with the catholic Handicapped fellowship** at 3.00pm - all very welcome!

NEXT SUNDAY: [1] With the **Fourth Sunday of Lent Year A** we celebrate Jesus the Light of the World who brings us into the Light of freedom and hope, new life and love through the waters of Baptism. Like the man born blind, let us witness to others the healing and hope, the joy of New Life we have found in Jesus Christ!

[2] **Stations of the Cross** at 12.45pm - **praying for all who have been hurt by the Church, who feel rejected or marginalised especially victims/survivors of abuse and members of the LBGTQ+ community.** Please come and walk with Jesus and all who suffer the Way of the Cross.

[3] **Signed Mass with the Catholic Deaf Association** at 3.00pm - all very welcome!

DIOCESAN PRAYER The Diocese prays today for the Parishes in Communion for Mission of Christ the King, Thornbury and Holy Cross, Wotton-under-Edge, served by Fr George Malecki SDS, Deacons Kingsley Fulbrook, Lawrence McCarthy, Parish Administrator Lawrence McCarthy, and both their communities.

PRAY FOR THIS WEEK'S PARISH MINISTRY OR MISSION We pray for our **Parish Finance Committee**, led by Akwa Orock our Chair and Armand our Parish Treasurer. This committee has oversight of all income and expenditure, seeking ways to increase our income and lessen our annual shortfall. All funds in the parish are for the life and mission of our parish community here in the inner city. If we do not increase the parish income we will run out of money to enable the parish to thrive. If this were to happen we would be failing in the Mission that God has entrusted to us among the poor and marginalised of our Inner City. We seek to strengthen our Finance Committee - if able to join us contact Richard - thank you.

COLLECTION LAST WEEK

G.A.Env £35.00 + Loose £249.60 + Card Reader £73.73 + S/O £165.88 = £524.21 **Thanks!**

Foodbank £100.00 **Caritas** £40.00 - **many thanks!**

DATES FOR THE DIARY **2024**

6th March Pastoral Area Service of Reconciliation with Bp Declan -

Holy Family Patchway (BS34 7PL) at 7.00pm

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9th March	Ethiopian Orthodox Mass in St Nick's Church
14th March	Parish Pastoral Council meets at 7.30pm (Assisi Centre)
17th March	Important Parish Forum on the future of the Parish 12.30-2.00pm
20th March	St Nick's School Governors meeting
21st March	Parish Finance Committee meeting (via Zoom)
22nd March	Celebrating St Oscar Romero's witness to Justice and peace - Mass at 7.00pm
23rd March	Service of Reconciliation including First Reconciliation at 2.30pm
24th March	PALM SUNDAY - HOLY WEEK BEGINS
27th March	Mass of the Chrism at Clifton Cathedral at 11.30am - all invited
28th March	Holy Thursday - Mass of the Last Supper 7.30pm Watching until midnight
29th March	Good Friday - Liturgy of the Passion at 3.00pm
30th March	Holy Saturday - Tenebrae Prayer at 9.30am - waiting at the Tomb
30th March	THE GREAT EASTER VIGIL at 9.00pm - welcoming the Light of Christ
31st March	EASTER MORNING - THE LORD IS RISEN ALLELUIA! 10am Mass
13th April	Jesus Youth Vigil & Mass 8.00-11.00pm at St Nicks
20th April	Joint Committees Meeting (PPC, PFC, Legacy Group) 9.30-11.45am
1st May	New Deanery Pastoral Council Inaugural meeting 7.30pm (St Nicks)

LENTEN MEETINGS 'YEAR OF PRAYER' AND THE FUTURE OF THE PARISH As part of our 'Year of Prayer' **each Saturday in Lent 10.30am to 11.45am** you are invited to come together in the Assisi Centre to share where you feel you are in prayer and faith and also how we build the future of our parish, based on the 'Servant leaders' document. **Saturday 9th March** we will share on the theme of 'Pastoral Care - how to build a welcoming, caring inclusive community that can bring healing'. Please come, help one another grow in prayer and prepare for the future of our parish community & mission.

LENTEN AREA HOUSE MASSES **This Thursday 7th March at 7.30pm there is an Area House Mass** for all parishioners in the **North West of Bristol (Henbury, Westbury, Avonmouth etc)**. Thank you to Christopher and Epiphania for hosting this Mass at their home - 24 Machin Road, Henbury, **BS10 7HQ**, after which we will have a discussion over a cup of tea/coffee and biscuits, about our part in building a new and dynamic future for our parish. Please support the Area Mass in your part of Bristol. Are you prepared to host such a Mass in your home? Please contact Richard as soon as possible.

IMPORTANT PARISH FORUM - Sunday 17th March 12.30-2.00pm There are important changes taking place in our parish community as expressed in the **'Community Elders' and the 'Servant-Leadership' documents**. It is important that we share our feelings and our thoughts as we move forward together to the 'New Way of Being Church' (words of Pope Francis). The Parish Forum is for everyone, so that all can speak their voice and share their questions and insights. Refreshments will be available after Mass and a creche will be organised for the children in the Parish hall. **PLEASE MAKE IT A PRIORITY TO ATTEND.**

PREPARING FOR BAPTISM AT EASTER The next Baptismal Sunday is **Easter Sunday, March 31st at 10.00am Mass**. The **Rite of Catechumen (Welcome)** is on **Sunday 10th March at 10.00am Mass**. **First Preparation session** for parents and God Parents is **Friday 8th March at 6.30pm** (Assisi Centre). The **Second Preparation session** is **Friday 22nd March at 6.30pm** (Assisi Centre). For information please contact Richard or Eustace.

WHAT AND WHY IS THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION? The Church encourages us to celebrate with particular depth and openness this sacrament of God's Mercy and Healing (formerly called 'Confession') during these weeks of Lent. Why? Because Lent is a time to let God's Word of Love call to recognise the ways we have wandered apart from closeness to God. And to 'come back home' to the Father's love, where we will find ourselves again and experience the joy of being true disciples of Jesus His Son, our Brother.

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Lent is a time to dare to be honest with ourselves - and we can because that honesty is met with the purest love and tenderness. The Church has changed the name of this Sacrament because 'confession' focusses on our sin and what we do, but 'Reconciliation' speaks of God's loving action in Christ, reconciling us to God, to each other, to our deepest and real self. Then we are ready to renew our Baptismal commitment at Easter, and make 2024 a deeper Year of Prayer, Discipleship and Mission. If you have been away from this life-giving and healing sacrament for a long time - perhaps many years - then God says to you 'Do not be afraid - come back to me with all your heart! For Love alone awaits you.'

PASTORAL AREA SERVICE OF RECONCILIATION ('CONFESSION') Bishop Declan is leading a Lenten Service of Reconciliation for our Pastoral Area of St Edmund of Abingdon (our 'deanery') on **Wednesday 6th March at 7.00pm at Holy Family Church**, Southsea Road, Patchway BS34 5DP. A number of priests will be available for individual Confession and absolution. The Church encourages us all to prepare for our Easter Recommitment to our Baptismal promises, to saying 'yes' again to living as missionary disciples of Jesus, by letting God's infinite mercy and forgiveness fill our lives through celebrating this Sacrament of Repentance. Do try to come and meet Christ in this shared celebration of forgiveness.

POPE FRANCIS ON LENTEN FASTING: "Eat whatever you want at Easter, the sacrifice is not in the stomach, but in the heart. They abstain from eating meat, but they do not talk to their siblings or family members, they do not visit their parents or care for them, they do not share their food with the needy, they forbid their children to see their father, they forbid their grandparents to see their grandchildren, criticise the lives of others, beat their wives, etc. A good roast or stew will not make you a bad person, just as a fish fillet will not make you a saint. Better to try to have a deeper relationship with God through better treatment of others. We should be less proud and more humble of heart."

POPE CALLS A YEAR OF PRAYER PREPARING FOR THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE 2025 Pope Francis invites us to hold a 'Year of Prayer' 2024, to deepen our prayer life as individuals and as the Church as we prepare for the **Jubilee Year 2025 - a Jubilee of Hope**, building towards a more Synodal Church. Pope Francis emphasises especially the Prayer of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the 'Lectio Divina', prayer reflection upon the Word of God. We have Adoration of Christ Jesus in the Eucharist before each weekday Mass.

GOD'S CALL TO SERVE THE LIFE AND MISSION OF YOUR PARISH Our parish, together with all churches and voluntary organisations around the country, has not yet recovered fully from the effects of the Covid Pandemic and the restrictions placed upon our meeting together during that time. A significant number of our community are not coming to Mass here for a variety of reasons. It is a joy to welcome new families and individuals who have found their way to St Nicks. However there has been great difficulty in drawing members of the parish into being part of the many ministries and tasks of the parish. **Whether it is the Welcoming Ministry, Church Cleaning, the Foodbank, Catechists, Parish Office Ministry too few are doing too much in support of the parish's life and mission.** We are all called by our baptism to serve, to sacrifice time and energy to build our parish community and support the Mission of Christ entrusted to us. I well realise that many have heavy commitments caring for children or elderly family members and juggling work and family. They are indeed serving Christ in these ways. ***But I do ask everyone to reflect whether some time can be given to sustain the parish's life and mission as we move towards a lay-led parish.***

'ALL ARE WELCOME IN THIS PLACE' It is our privilege to host here at St Nicks the Diocesan Ministry among the LBGQT+ community. It would be a great sign of welcome, valuing 'Gay' Catholics, if more parishioners would come sometimes to our 3rd Sunday a month Mass with our LBGQT+ friends. Do try to come occasionally and share with us.

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