

BRINDLE St JOSEPH'S

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Fourth Sunday of Lent 10th March 2024

(Sunday cycle year B, weekday cycle year 2, psalter week 4)

Lætare Sunday/Mothers' Day



“God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son”

CAFOD prayer for mothers and children

God our Father, grant that all your children may know what it is to feel loved and cherished. We give thanks for mothers throughout the world who give everything for their children despite the challenges they face. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Sat 9 th	10.30am	EBC	Saturday of Lent 3
	SECOND COLLECTION: LENTEN ALMS		Fourth Sunday of Lent
	6.00pm	Bob Moffatt	
Sun 10 th	9.30am	For the Parish	
Mon 11 th	No Mass today		Monday of Lent 4
Tue 12 th	No Mass today		Tuesday of Lent 4
Wed 13 th	No Mass today		Wednesday of Lent 4
	6.00pm	Lent Reflection	
Thu 14 th	9.30am	Vocations	Thursday of Lent 4
Fri 15 th	9.30am	Holy Souls	Friday of Lent 4
	5.00pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	
	5.30pm	Stations of the Cross followed by Benediction	
Sat 16 th	10.30am	Holy Father's intentions	Saturday of Lent 4
	6.00pm	For the Parish	Fifth Sunday of Lent
Sun 17 th	9.30am	Mary Schofield	
	11.00am	Baptism: Daisy Elizabeth Edwards	

First Saturday of the Month: Confessions at 10.00am, Anointing of the sick during 10.30am Mass

This week		Reader		Eucharistic Minister		Bookshop
Sat 9 th		G Kellett		J Hothersall		Not open
Sun 10 th		K Slater		L Rigbye		Not open
Bidding prayers	L Russell	Children's Liturgy	J Grogan, C Snape	Collection counters	B Kellett & M Russell	
Next week		Reader		Eucharistic Minister		Bookshop
Sat 16 th		L Lomax		L Gardner		Not open
Sun 17 th		C Snape		S Schofield		Not open
Bidding prayers	J & K Slater	Children's Liturgy	L Rigbye, J Kitchen	Collection counters	J & K Slater	

Last weekend: attendance: 94, collection: £305.25 – thank you!

Readings: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23, Ephesians 2:4-10, John 3:14-21.

One of our monks who lived to a grand old age – in the most mournful of tones, always began his homilies by reminding us of what dreadful sinners we all are, not just us monks, but the whole human race and how we need, therefore, to repent.

St John says in one of his letters *If we say we are without sin, we deceive ourselves.*

In our second reading, the letter to the Ephesians tells them, and therefore you and me, that *God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life in Christ.*

To be dead through our sins may have various interpretations but if it means isolation from the love of God, then could there be anything worse, because it would also mean being isolated from all human love and affection.

As they continue to gaze into the galaxies, some atheist cosmologists and astrophysicists are re-evaluating the probability of ever finding *life out there* and the concomitant and terrifying realization that *we may be alone* after all is dawning upon them: for with that hope gone, what would be the point of all our loves, our endeavours, our science as well as our loves... if it all comes to nothing – as if the discovery of aliens would resolve the mystery of existence.

Yet, at least for the atheist, those fears, if true, will come to an end with the rest of existence, but if what the letter to the Ephesians says about sin is true, then the sinner is in for an eternity without love which is a living death... hell imposed, not by God but by our free choice.

The consequences of sin then, are serious and not to be brushed aside just because we cannot imagine a loving God who would allow us to make such a choice, for that is just wishful thinking and goes against the biblical and spiritual testimonies of the church over the ages. Moreover, such wishful thinking is tantamount to making a *god* in our own fallen image which is the terrible sin of idolatry enshrined in the first of the *Ten Commandments*.

Today is Laetare or *Rejoice* Sunday inspired by the first word of the *Entrance Antiphon*. But after such a gloomy picture of the consequences of sin, what is there to rejoice about?

We rejoice that like those exiled from Jerusalem (1st reading & Resp. Psalm) and from God's love through sin, their time of exile and mourning is over so *exult and be satisfied at her consoling breast* for not only did God never abandon them, he opens his arms to them with the love of a mother... what a comforting thought!

We rejoice because we have a loving, generous and merciful God who, through the death of his Son on the cross, has brought us back to life with him from the sin and death that would have separated us from him with the nightmarish consequences we have just been reflecting upon.

And we rejoice because Jesus himself tells us that all we have to do to be saved from sin and death, and to have eternal life, is to *repent* and believe in him.

The monk was, of course, right: we are sinners, but we are also repentant and redeemed sinners. Because, through his cross and resurrection, Christ has opened the way for us to follow.

He doesn't force us to follow, he **invites** us to follow, thus honouring his gift of our freedom to choose.

So, on this Laetare Sunday, let us not waste time looking among the stars for our hope, but to the *Son of Man* lifted up as Moses lifted the serpent in the desert... let us look upon the eternal life-giving power of the cross and to the one who gave his life upon it, in place of ours.

Reflections

Be merry, really merry.

The life of a true Christian should be perpetual jubilee, a prelude to the festivals of eternity. (St. Theophane Venard)

With prayers,

Fr Raphael.

There will be a **SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND** for Lenten Alms.

Please note there are **NO MASSES ON TUESDAY OR WEDNESDAY** this week.

This is a **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME** meeting **this Thursday** at 6.00pm.

The **CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY** collection has so far raised over £260, which will be put to good use improving the lot of some of our neighbours in the developing world. A very generous response – thank you!

CAFOD BIG LENT WALK: It's not too late to sign up for this, and aim to cover 200km as an individual or a team during the course of Lent. You can sign up at <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/about>. Alternatively, maybe sponsor Christine and Keith Snape via <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/christine-and-keiths-big-lent-walk> or in good old-fashioned cash!

The **CHILDREN'S BOOK BAGS** have been updated for Lent to help them learn more about this important time and more resources will be added as the season progresses. Please ensure that all resources are returned to the bags and the bags put back on the pegs at the end of Mass. Thank you.

NATIONAL NOVENA TO ST JOSEPH – 10th-18th MARCH: Each year Mill Hill Missionaries prepare for the feast of St Joseph with a special Novena of prayers and Masses. We are invited to join them by praying the Novena and/or sending your petitions which will be placed at the altar at St Joseph's, Mill Hill, and remembered during the Masses. A few copies of Novena prayers and petition slips are available at the back of church. There is more information at: www.millhillmissionaries.com/novena. The Novena Masses will be available to view via the Mill Hill website.

PLEASE PRAY for those who are sick or housebound including Fr Laurence Mayne and Bill Warbrick, and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time.

LENT: On **WEDNESDAYS** we have an hour's quiet prayer & reflection from 6.00pm in the Parish Room and on **FRIDAYS** there is Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 5.00pm, Stations of the Cross at 5.30pm, followed by Benediction.

REGISTRATION FOR CONFIRMATION is open until **THIS FRIDAY 15th March**. For more details, please go to <https://www.liverpoolcalled.co.uk/confirmation>.

DURING LENT WE ARE ASKED TO PRAY FOR: Candidates for the Sacraments; Women; The Needy and Hungry of the World; Penitents and Wanderers.

100 CLUB: The winner for week 13 is number 37, Edmund Noblett. The next block of 10 weeks has started so **SUBS ARE DUE** unless you've already paid for the full year.

PRIMARY SCHOOL PTFA EASTER BINGO: Friday 22nd March at Gregson Green Community Centre. Doors open 6.00pm, eyes down 6.30pm. Bingo, raffle, bar, refreshments. Adults £1, children 50p.

HOSPITAL CHAPLAINS: If you or someone you know would like a visit from the Catholic Chaplain while in hospital, please ring 01257 262713 (for Chorley hospital) or 01772 719604 (for Preston). For St Catherine's Hospice, contact Brownedge St Mary's on 01772 335168.

TEA AND COFFEE are served after Mass on Sunday mornings. Please come along – you'll be very welcome.

In the unlikely event of the need to evacuate church for any reason, the **ASSEMBLY POINT** is in Chapel Fold, by the statue of St Joseph.

The **KEY FOR THE TOILETS** is available at the back of church during Mass.

Can **PARKING** in front of the church be left for those who need it, please?

If you're the last one out of church after a weekend Mass, could you please check that the lights are turned off and doors closed? Thank you.

Bidding Prayers for the 4th Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday)

Priest: God sent his Son into the world so that through him we might be saved. We ask him to listen our prayers.

Reader: For Pope Francis – we join with his prayers in response to his plea for peace in Ukraine and the Middle East. Lord in Your Mercy...

For Christians everywhere – we live in a world where anger, contempt and cruelty can so often be seen to prevail. Help all Christians to show compassion and service in their daily lives. Lord in Your Mercy...

For new parents and grandparents – that they are able to show their children and grandchildren the joy that comes through the love and mercy of God. Lord in Your Mercy...

For all those in our Parish who are struggling financially, spiritually or emotionally. Give them strength to face the future. Lord in Your Mercy...

For ourselves – sometimes we may feel let down, bitter or angry. Help us to find ways to forgive, let go and move on to something better. Lord in Your Mercy...

On this Laetare Sunday we rejoice in the gleam of light that speaks of the joy waiting for us at the end of Lent, joining together in prayer as we say... Hail Mary...

We take a moment's silence for our own prayers.

Priest: Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life. We make these prayers through Jesus Christ, Our Lord.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Priest: As we thank God for the gift of his Son in Holy Communion, let us remember those of our Parish who are sick or housebound.

All: May the body and blood of your Son, which we now send to them through our Eucharistic Ministers, bring them consolation and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Our Lord. Amen.