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Newsletter

The First Sunday of Lent

February 26th 2023

My dear parishioners,

What a memorable Ash Wednesday we celebrated together as so many of us, including our school communities, received the sign of the cross on our foreheads with the ash that has been made from burning last year's palm crosses. In this most ancient of ways, each one of us heard also the invitation, "*Turn away from sin and be faithful to the gospel,*" and so began the great forty-day spiritual pilgrimage that we know as Lent.

Of course, as members of the church, we are familiar with the number forty: our older brothers and sisters of the Old Testament needed forty years in the desert to grow through their trials and mistakes into the People of God ready for the Promised Land. Jesus spent forty days in the desert in fasting and prayer to prepare himself for the redemptive mission which lay ahead. In today's Gospel we witness Jesus face the temptations that could prevent him carrying out his mission. And now we are given our forty days to look again with love at our own lives to see what keeps us from being free to serve God and people the way we would like. Lent is a time to come back to God, to our true selves and indeed to one another with all our heart. True repentance is born from love and is fulfilled in love.

Father O'Brien

I offer here the times of the liturgy in the days ahead:

Monday February 27th: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help at 7pm;

Tuesday February 28th: Requiem Mass for Mr. Ronald Wilson at 10am

Reception of Mr. Wilson on Monday at 6.15pm

Wednesday, March 1st: Requiem for Mrs. Helen Hall at 12 noon

Reception of Mrs Hall on Tuesday at 6.15pm

Thursday, March 2nd: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Stations of the Cross at 9.40am

On Thursday evening at 6.30pm the families of children celebrating sacraments this year will gather in St. Mary's Church.

Saturday March 5th

Mass at St. Paul's at 4pm

Mass at St. Mary's at 5.30pm

Sunday March 6th:

Mass at St. Paul's at 9.15am

Mass at St. Mary's at 10.30am

Holy Water is once again available in the fonts if you would like to bless yourself on entering and leaving the church.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: several requests have been made to restore the times of adoration in the side chapel; the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed after the Requiem on Tuesday until 2.30pm if enough people sign the sheet at the back of the church pledging to pray before the Sacrament for 30 minutes.

Bishop Toal has written a Pastoral Letter to the people of Motherwell Diocese encouraging us to make a sacramental confession during Lent; the text can be found on the Diocesan webpage.

Special Collections during Lent: Bishop Toal has asked every parish to take up a collection next Sunday to support the Sick and Retired Priests Fund, and then on the Fourth Sunday of Lent we will have the collection for SCIAF; in these challenging times please feel free to put what you would normally give in the Offertory into the Second Collection instead.

A message from the Catholic Men's Society: our next meeting will take place on Monday, 27th February after the 10am Mass in the parish meeting room; we will discuss our various roles in the life of the church. The CMS are encouraging us to pray the Rosary to Our Lady of Peace for an end to the conflict in Ukraine, and to pray to St. Olga, patroness of Ukraine and St. Andrew, patron of Scotland and Russia.

CREDO, the parish prayer group, meets this Tuesday at 1pm in the parish meeting room; afterwards, around 2.30pm, participants enjoy some tea and cake together.

Faith sharing is about quiet and respectful listening and a celebration of how God is at work in my life and in the lives of the other members of the group.

New members are most welcome.

Coffee Morning Next Sunday to mark Fairtrade Fortnight (27 Feb-12 March); please come around to the hall after the 10.30 am Mass; proceeds will go to support the Hamilton Foodbank; some fairly traded crafts for sale and Fairtrade Easter Eggs.

Please remember in your prayers:

Recently Deceased: Ronnie Wilson, Helen Hall, Anna McMurray, Joe Lowe, Eileen Young, David Paton, James Neilan, Mary Cartledge, Denise Firth

Special Remembrance:

Eilidh McHugh, Sheena Bogan, Robert Bogan, Kathleen Tiernan, Jane Feenie, Liza Johnson, Ellen and Dan Gallacher, and all our deceased relatives and friends and the benefactors of St. Mary's and St. Paul's, *requiescant in pace.*