

St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

LAETARE SUNDAY
(FOURTH OF LENT)

NEWSLETTER

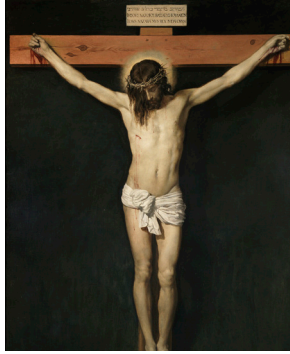
The Sign of the Cross

Pope Benedict XVI once wrote, *“The most basic Christian gesture in prayer is and always will be the sign of the cross.”* The cross is the instrument of our salvation. And Our Lord says to Nicodemus in today’s Gospel, *“The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in Him”* (John 3: 14-15). It is the cross Our Lord is referring to here. Everyone who looks upon the crucified One with faith and love will be saved.

The sign of the cross is a very powerful **sacramental**, and also a prayer which was used from the earliest days of the Church. It was most commonly made with the thumb of the right hand on the forehead. They also traced the cross on food, oil and water. There is also the triple Cross which we make at the beginning of the Gospel at Mass with the thumb on the forehead, the lips and the breast. But the sign of the cross we most commonly make is putting an open right hand to the forehead, the breast, the left and then the right shoulder. The five fingers symbolise the five wounds in Our Lord’s hands, feet and side.

The early Christians found great power in the sign of the cross. Martyrs signed themselves with it as they went to their death. St John Chrysostom said, *“Never cross the threshold of your houses without saying, ‘I renounce Satan and devote myself to JESUS Christ’ accompanying these words with the sign of the cross.”* And St Ambrose said, *“We should make the sign of the cross at each action of the day.”*

The **Emperor Constantine**, despite the fact of being a pagan, and seeking to overthrow his enemies, called upon the true God for a sign of victory. God answered his prayer and gave him a sign of a **flaming cross in the sky** along with words written underneath: *“In hoc signo vinces”*. *“In this sign you will conquer.”* Immediately, he had all his soldiers make a cross and made it the banner of his huge army. Then the following night he had a similar vision in a dream – again, a flaming cross. The next morning he woke up and asked all the soldiers to paint red crosses on their shields. Then he went off to battle, which turned out to be the most important battle in the history of the world, and he won. It was the **Battle of Milvian**



St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

97 Ashby Road
Loughborough LE11 3AB
01509 262123
office@
stmarysloughborough.org.uk

Served by the Rosminians

Parish Priest

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

On attachment

Fr David Jones, OLW

Safeguarding Rep

Jane Monaghan

01509 262123

Parish Catholic Schools

St Mary’s Primary

Hastings Street
Loughborough LE11 5AX
01509 212621
office@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk
Headteacher: Miss P Jordan

De Lisle College

Thorpe Hill
Loughborough LE11 4SQ
01509 268739
enquiries@delisle.leics.sch.uk
Headteacher: Mr C Maher

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St John Chrysostom

Please pray for those who are sick

for those who have recently died

Mario Mancini

Ann Folkes

Yoland Dejoux

May they rest in peace

and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time

Suzanne Burdett

Americo Lallo

Eva Guarasci

Elsie Walmsley

Lucy Antill

Polikarp Ereminowicz

John Saunders

Ray Wainwright

Fr Eddie Murphy IC

PLEASE NOTE

Due to government regulations regarding personal data (UK-GDPR), we are not able to publish name details of Mass intentions for the living in this online version of the newsletter.

MASS INTENTIONS AT ST MARY'S

Sat 9th Vigil Mass
6.00pm John Saunders (RIP, Anniversary)

Sun 10th Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday)
9.00am Giovanni & Carmela Brunetti (RIP)
11.15am For the Parish
2.30pm *Baptism*
4.00pm Italian Mass

Mon 11th Lenten Feria
9.15am Intention for the living

Tues 12th Lenten Feria
9.15am Patricia Newby (RIP)

Weds 13th Lenten Feria
6.30pm Intention for the living (Latin)

Thurs 14th Lenten Feria
9.15am Alan Offiler-Russell (RIP)

Fri 15th Lenten Feria
6.00-6.25pm *Confessions*
6.30pm Civic Service Supporters
7.10pm *Stations of the Cross*

Sat 16th Lenten Feria
10.00am Ray Wainwright (RIP, Anniv) **NO PUBLIC MASS**
10.30am *Private prayer with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*
-12.30pm *with Confessions 10.30-11.30am & Benediction 12.20pm*
2.30pm *Baptism*
6.00pm **Vigil Mass:** For the Parish
(Ratcliffe College students attending)

Sun 17th Fifth Sunday of Lent
9.00am Anna Tran Thi Luat (RIP)
11.15am John McEnery (RIP)
4.00pm Italian Mass

Rosary: Mon, Tues, Thurs after 9.15am Mass; Wed, Fri at 6.00pm; First Saturday of each month after 10.00am Mass

This week at St Mary's

Mon 11th First Confession Class - 4.15pm in the hall

Weds 13th UCM - 2.00pm in the hall

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Bridge in October 312 AD. And when Constantine entered Rome as victor, he made Christianity legal, he ended the official persecution, and eventually he would make Catholicism the official religion of the Roman Empire.

The sign of the cross is also a shield against temptations and dangers to the soul. The powers of darkness flee at the sign of the cross which is why a cross is always used in exorcisms. St Gregory of Tours said, *"Whatever may be the temptations that oppress us, we must repulse them. For this end, we should make, not carelessly, but carefully, the sign of the cross, either on our forehead or on our breast."* Our Lady of Lourdes taught **St Bernadette** how to make the sign of the cross well. At the first apparition on 11th February 1858, Bernadette took out her Rosary, but she wrote, *"My arm fell back until I was taught how to make it well."* Some years later she told another nun, when making the sign of the cross, to think of what you are doing, because it is so important to make the sign of the cross fervently.

So in these dark times in which we live where evil is spreading like wild fire, let us make the sign of the cross often, and as the saints have taught us, let us make it fervently and well.

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

Food Bank/Your Store: The next collection will be on **Saturday 16th March** between 10.30 and 11.00 am in the car park. This is the Easter collection; chocolate treats, canned foods, shampoo, shower gels, washing machine detergents will be very much appreciated. Once again thank you for your continued support. *Jane Monaghan*

The Knights of St Columba are holding their quiz in Sacred Heart Parish Hall at 7.30pm on **Saturday 16th March**, with profits going to our Youth fund, which pays for the Epiphany and Palm Sunday youth services amongst other things. Cost: £7 pp, £3 for children and students, to include a cheese supper, wine and soft drinks. To book call Will Holland on 07811 353 248.

St Mary's Primary School are taking part in the **Big Lent Walk for CAFOD**. The children and staff will be walking at lunchtimes and on walks to Queen's park over the next couple of weeks. They will be asking for sponsorship in the form of a donation from friends and family. If anyone would like to support the children and CAFOD, donations can be made using this link: <https://schools.walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/st-marys-big-lent-walk1553>. Thank you.

UCM Novena: Please join us in saying our Novena between **Friday 22nd of March - Holy Saturday 30th March**. We will be saying our UCM prayer daily. Copies are at the repository. Please take one.

The Catch Up Café will be running monthly starting **Tuesday 9th April** from 1pm - 3pm in the Parish Hall. Meet up with old friends and make new friends. **All are welcome.** Any offers of help would also be gratefully appreciated.

Dorothy Hutchings

Lent Gathering of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Saturday 16th March at Sacred Heart Church, Park Road, starting at 2pm. There will be Stations of the Cross and an opportunity for Confessions.

SPUC: There will be an EGM of SPUC Loughborough on **Monday 8th April** at 7.30pm in the Church Hall. Members and non-members welcome

Michael Murphy
Chair, SPUC Loughborough

The Vigil Mass next Saturday (16th) will be attended by students from Ratcliffe College, who will be doing the readings.

Prayer for vocations to the priesthood and religious life

Leader: Please kneel for our prayer for vocations. Let us ask God to give worthy Priests to His Holy Church and Brothers and Sisters to Religious Orders.

All: O God, we earnestly beseech You to bless this diocese with many priests, brothers and sisters, who will gladly spend their entire lives serving Your Church and making You known and loved.

Leader: Bless our families. Bless our children.

All: Choose from our homes those who are needed for Your work.

Leader: Mary, Queen of the Clergy!

All: Pray for us. Pray for our priests and religious. Obtain for us many more. Amen.

Prayer to Saint Michael

Holy Michael, the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God thrust down to hell Satan and all the wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

Grant for Reception-Year 2 at Loughborough Amherst School

As part of our commitment to connect more closely with the local community, Loughborough Amherst School has introduced the 'Rosminian Grant', a package of financial support available to families looking for a place for their child at our School in Reception, Year 1 or Year 2 from September 2024. If you would like to find out more, please contact our Registrar Ms Wyatt on 01509 638280.

There will be an enactment of the events of Holy Week by young adults of the Loughborough area parishes again this year at 7.00pm here in St Mary's on **Palm Sunday evening, 24th March**. Undergraduates and students in Years 5 to 13 willing to participate, please contact Richard Mitchell (tel: 07812-997847 or Rmitchell@constructivebusiness.com) **before Sunday evening 17th March**.

From the Saints

"The sign of the cross is the invincible armour of the Christian. Soldier of Christ; let this armour never leave you, either by day or by night, at any moment or in any place."

St Ephraim (ca 306-373)



Happy Mothers Day to all our mothers. Let us always remember to pray for our mothers who have passed on from this life. Flowers will be distributed at this weekend's Masses for children to give to their mothers.

New stock is on sale at the repository, including gifts and cards for St Patrick's Day and Easter. There are also statues, and devotional items for St Joseph, whose feast day is on **19th March**. Card payments are now accepted, as well as cash. Thank you for your support.

Exaireo have written to thank you for the generous donation of £506 collected for their cause just before Christmas.

The second collection this weekend is for Poor & Needy Parishes

Last Week's Finance

1st Collection: £783 of which £128 was gift-aided

Total CAFOD collection: £527 of which £237 was gift-aided

Standing orders: £701 @ 29/02, of which £634 was gift-aided

Attendance: 563

Thank you
