

25<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Second Sunday of Lent (Year B)

## THE ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH OF MERTHYR TYDFIL

*Worshipping together*

Website – [www.merthyrcc.co.uk](http://www.merthyrcc.co.uk)

St Aloysius, Chestnut Way, Gurnos, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 9SB  
St Illtyd's, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydfil CF48 3BT

St Benedict's, Merthyr Vale CF48 4RF  
St Mary's Pontmorlais West, Merthyr Tydfil CF47 8RG

**Parish Priest:** CANON BARRY ENGLISH 01685 723336 Email – [merthyr@rcadc.org](mailto:merthyr@rcadc.org)

**Deacons:** Rev. DAVID O'KEEFE 01685 375761

Rev. GARTH TASKER 07939 310176

**Response to the Psalm:** I will walk in the presence of the Lord  
In the land of the living.

**Gospel Acclamation :**

Glory and Praise to you, O Christ!

From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard:

'This is my Son, Beloved. Listen to him!'

Glory and praise to you, O Christ.

## MASS TIMES

**Saturday 24th February**

**4.30 pm St Benedict's**

**6.30 pm St Aloysius**

Edward Kaler (Anniv); Lorraine Keohane;

**Sunday 25th February**

**9.30 am St Illtyd's**

**11.30 am St Mary's**

**Monday 26th February**

**10.00 am St Illtyd's**

**Tuesday 27th February**

**9.30 am St Aloysius**

**12.00 ST ILLTYD'S**

**Wednesday 28th February**

**10.00 am St Mary's**

**Thursday 29th February**

**10.00 am St Mary's**

**5.00 pm St Mary's**

**Friday 1 March**

**9.00 am St Illtyd's**

**10.30 am St Mary's**

**Saturday 2nd March**

**4.30 pm St Benedict's**

**6.30 pm St Aloysius**

**Sunday 3rd March**

**9.30 am St Illtyd's**

**11.30 am St Mary's**

Louise Hopkins; Ron Morgan;

**Please remember in your prayers:** Peggy Vaughan, Tony Crawford, Oliver McAleer, Pat O'Brien, Nicholas Santos, Beryl & David Keefe, Ed Rees, Margaret Banfield, Steven Denton Thomas, Teresa Jones, Lisa Morgan Jones, Thomas Fitton, Mark Esposito, Eileen Robinson

**Requiescat in pace:**

Teresa Collins, Karl Baynham, Anne O'Brien; Anthony Hughes; Ken Hodgson; Danny Griffiths; Peter Love, Dennis Dowling; Audrey Morgan; Denis Evans; Sister Anna (Sister of St Joseph); Bernard McCormack.

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they Rest in peace.

**2<sup>ND</sup> COLLECTION WEEKEND 24/25 FEBRUARY - CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY**

**St Illtyd's Lottery 18<sup>th</sup> February**

Numbers: 3, 4, 6, 9

No Winner

Next Draw :25<sup>th</sup> February £1505

**St Mary's Lottery 18<sup>th</sup> February**

Numbers :1, 3, 12, 14

No Winner: Lucky Dip

Next Draw 25<sup>th</sup> February £5200

**Vigil –Second Sunday of Lent**

Bill Hughes; Claire Price;

Bernard & Mary Corcoran, Joan and Dinny O'Leary (Anniv); Eileen Jones (Anniv);

**Second Sunday of Lent**

Kitty Walsh; Jeannette Herbert; Jenesio Rivera; Ben Seng Chan;

Ron Morgan; Griff Quinn; Connie Green; Roy Price; Michelle Mullin;

Bill Hughes; John Reddy;

**St Gregory of Narek, Abbot, Doctor**

St Aloysius School Mass

**REQUIEM MASS – PETER JAMES LOVE**

People of the Parish

Denise & Terrance O'Neill;

**Syro Marabar Mass**

**St David, Bishop, Patron Saint of Wales**

Margaret Murphy; People of the Parish;

Women's World Day of Prayer

**Vigil – Third Sunday of Lent**

Bill Hughes; Claire Price;

Bernard & Mary Corcoran

**Third Sunday of Lent**

Vincent Davies; Dorothy John; Mary Murphy (B'Day); Tommy Murphy;(anniv)

John Gill; Ray and Iris Hewett; Cliff, Bess and Carl Preece; Clive and Jason Watkins;

### **Easter Raffle**

Easter Raffle sheets are available. The main prize will be an Easter Hamper plus many other prizes. Donations of prizes will also be very welcome.

### **Wintry weather at St Aloysius**

We are looking for volunteers to assist with spreading salt and grit prior to Mass at St Aloysius Church during periods of wintry weather. Also to tidy up the grounds around the Church.

If you wish to help please get in touch by email. [Merthyr@rcadc.org](mailto:Merthyr@rcadc.org)

### **Pro –Life Amendment**

Support an amendment to reduce our abortion time limit from 24 weeks to 22 weeks. Research indicates that a significant number of babies born at 22 or 23 weeks can now survive outside the womb, leaving a contradiction in our abortion law. **Take action:** Collect a postcard today from the back of the church and post it to your MP urgently in support of this amendment! If you have any questions about the amendment or would like help with supporting and promoting the campaign, please do not hesitate to get in touch. On behalf of the team at Right To Life UK, we hope you and your parish have a blessed Lent.

### **Retrouvaille – A life line for Married Couples**

Retrouvaille is a programme to support couples who have difficulties in their marriage. It brings a positive focus, new hope and helps nourish and grow your marriage. For confidential information about Retrouvaille or to register for the next programme which commences with a weekend in Welyn Garden City on 14-16 June call or text 07887296983 or 07973380443 or email [retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com](mailto:retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com) or visit [www.retrouvaille.org.uk](http://www.retrouvaille.org.uk)

### **Come and See Weekends- Holy Cross Abbey**

We are Cistercian Nuns at Holy Cross Abbey, Whitland, Pembrokeshire, We are inviting single Catholic Women aged 25 – 45 who are discerning a vocation, to experience our monastic life during one of the following weekends:- Friday 24<sup>th</sup> May – Monday 27<sup>th</sup> May or Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August to Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024. For enquiries and/ or registration, please e mail us at [comeandsee@hca.org.uk](mailto:comeandsee@hca.org.uk)

### **Pilgrimage to Patmos**

There are still a few places left on our pilgrimage in June. The setting of a vision of Jesus by the Apostle John which led to him writing the book of Revelation, this tiny island in the Greek Aegean sea is a unique blend of natural beauty and the hum of ancient piety. Voted as ‘Europe’s most idyllic place to live’, the story of Patmos will be brought to life by this pilgrimage. We will spend time discovering the rituals, art and culture of the richly fascinating Greek Orthodox church. Reflections on scripture and contemplative prayer time in flower-filled courtyards overlooking turquoise waters will be a way of drawing near to God while Mass, led by the retreat priest, will take place daily in various locations, from the beach to the breathtaking highest point on the Island, Mount Elijah. Based at the charming Skala Hotel, with its seawater pool and harbourfront location, the pilgrimage promises to be a fun, relaxing and enriching experience in this special place. Contact Deacon Garth for more details and to book a place.

### **St Patrick’s Day Fundraiser**

A St Patrick’s day fundraiser will be held on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> March at 7.00 pm at Father Carroll Centre, with music, bar and a good craic. Tickets cost £10.00 and will include Irish Stew and freshly baked bread (Vegetarian option available). All proceeds for the Restoration funds of St Mary’s and St Illtyd’s. Tickets available from Jane Shankland on 07899953898

### **“Walk with Me, Lent 2024”**

This pocket-size booklet of prayers and reflections for Lent 2024 is now available. Archbishop Mark O’Toole has written a forward to the booklet and recommends it as an aid to prayer. In his introduction we read, “This year we celebrate Lent within the context of the Year of Prayer, a year of preparation for the Jubilee Year, entitled **Pilgrims of Hope** We are asked to make the Lord’s Prayer a particular focus, deepening our understanding of and devotion to it. This is what we do with Walk with Me journey through Lent”. Archbishop Mark continues, “The Lord’s Prayer reminds us of that wonderful truth that we are children of God, loved by our Father in Heaven and thus we enter in Jesus’ own relationship with his Father. God is our Father who loves us more than we can imagine, and who comes to search for us lost sheep and draws us back to Him through the Death and Resurrection of His Son....What better way of living Lent than by truly entering into this prayer more deeply”. Booklets are £1.00 each. Why not give a copy to a friend, relative or work colleague?

### **Mass Intentions**

Please could all Mass Intentions be handed in **AT LEAST** one week before requested date.

## **PRAYER FOR UKRAINE AND THE WORLD**

Mary, Our Lady of Kyiv, Mother of God, we ask you to intercede for the people of Ukraine and the World, for their governments, and all who suffer because of war. Be with them as you stood beside your Son, Suffering on the Cross at Calvary. Give them strength and courage through faith, hope and justice. May we, in our turn, support them through prayer and generosity that human lives may be saved, that the injured may be healed that the dead may rest in peace, that there will be peace after war. AMEN

## **2023 -2024 Year of Prayer**

### **Pope Francis' Catechesis on Prayer, arranged for each liturgical week**

#### **Second Sunday of Lent – 25th February 2024**

In today's readings we see Jesus showing himself in glory to his friends in the event of his Transfiguration. Through this experience they would be strengthened for future ministry. The desire to be present in God's company lies deep within us all. The prayer of contemplation deepens our awareness of God and allows him to be present with us. This contemplation is the topic of today's catechesis, which was first given by Pope Francis on Wednesday, 5 May 2021. Contemplative Prayer Dear Brothers and Sisters, Good morning! Let us continue the catechesis on prayer and in this catechesis, I would like to reflect on contemplative prayer. The contemplative dimension of the human being — which is not yet contemplative prayer — is a bit like the "salt" of life: it gives flavour, it seasons our day. We can contemplate by gazing at the sun that rises in the morning, or at the trees that deck themselves out in spring green; we can contemplate by listening to music or to the sounds of the birds, reading a book, gazing at a work of art or at that masterpiece that is the human face.... When Carlo Maria Martini was sent to be Bishop of Milan, he entitled his first Pastoral Letter The contemplative dimension of life: the truth is that those who live in a large city, where everything — we might say — is artificial and where everything is functional, risk losing the capacity to contemplate. First of all, to contemplate is not a way of doing, but a way of being. To be contemplative. And being contemplative does not depend on the eyes, but on the heart. And here prayer enters into play as an act of faith and love, as the "breath" of our relationship with God. Prayer purifies the heart, and, with it, it also sharpens our gaze, allowing it to grasp reality from another point of view. The Catechism describes this transformation of the heart, which prayer effects, by citing a famous testimony of the Holy Curé of Ars who said this:

"Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. 'I look at him and he looks at me': this is what a certain peasant of Ars in the time of his holy curé used to say while praying before the tabernacle.... The light of the countenance of Jesus illumines the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth and his compassion for all men" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2715). Everything comes from this: from a heart that feels that it is looked on with love. Then reality is contemplated with different eyes. "I look at him and he looks at me!". It is like this: loving contemplation, typical of the most intimate prayer, does not need many words. A gaze is enough. It is enough to be convinced that our life is surrounded by an immense and faithful love that nothing can ever separate us from. Jesus was a master of this gaze. His life never lacked the time, space, silence, the loving communion that allows one's existence not to be devastated by the inevitable trials, but to maintain beauty intact. His secret was his relationship with his heavenly Father. Let us think about the Transfiguration. The Gospels place this episode at the critical point of Jesus' mission when opposition and rejection were mounting all around him. Even among his disciples, many did not understand him and left him; one of the Twelve harboured traitorous thoughts. Jesus began to speak openly of the suffering and death that awaited him in Jerusalem. It is in this context that Jesus climbs up a high mountain with Peter, James and John. The Gospel of Mark says: "He was transfigured before them, and his garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them" (9:2-3). Right at the moment in which Jesus is not understood — they were going away, they were leaving him alone because they did not understand him — in this moment that he is misunderstood, just when everything seems to become blurred in a whirlwind of misunderstanding, that is where a divine light shines. It is the light of the Father's love that fills the Son's heart and transfigures his entire Person. Some spiritual masters of the past understood contemplation as opposed to action, and exalted those vocations that flee from the world and its problems to dedicate themselves entirely to prayer. In reality, in Jesus Christ, in his person and in the Gospel, there is no opposition between contemplation and action. No. In the Gospel and in Jesus there is no

contradiction. This may have come from the influence of some Neoplatonic philosopher but it surely has to do with a dualism that is not part of the Christian message. There is only one great call in the Gospel, and it is that of following Jesus on the way of love. This is the summit and it is the centre of everything. In this sense, charity and contemplation are synonymous; they say the same thing. Saint John of the Cross believed that a small act of pure love is more useful to the Church than all the other works combined. What is born of prayer and not from the presumption of our ego, what is purified by humility, even if it is a hidden and silent act of love, is the greatest miracle that a Christian can perform. And this is the path of contemplative prayer: I look at him and he looks at me. This act of love in silent dialogue with Jesus does so much good for the Church. Summary of the Holy Father's words: Dear Brothers and Sisters, in our continuing catechesis on Christian prayer, we now consider contemplative prayer. For Christians, contemplative prayer is an act of the heart by which we fix our gaze in faith upon Jesus, quietly pondering his word and his saving mysteries. As the simple farmer of Ars told Saint John Vianney: in praying before the Tabernacle, "I look at him and he looks at me". By gazing on our Lord in this way, we come to feel his loving gaze upon us and our hearts are purified. This in turn enables us to see others in the light of that truth and compassion which Jesus brings to all. Christ himself is the model for all contemplative prayer: amid the activity of his public ministry he always found time for a prayer that expressed his loving communion with the Father. At the Transfiguration, Jesus prepared the disciples for his coming passion and death by enabling them to contemplate his divine glory. Through our prayer, may we persevere in union with him on the path of love where contemplation and charity become one. For, as Saint John of the Cross, the Church's great master of contemplative prayer teaches us: one act of pure love is more useful to the Church than all the other works put together.