

**Fourth Sunday of Lent**

**REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS!**

30<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Missal Page 174 (127 Sunday 8:30am)

Who is listening to the Parable of the Prodigal Son? First, the tax collectors and sinners who are 'outside' the law. Second, the scribes and Pharisees who are 'inside' the law. And here they all are, gathered at the feet of Jesus. What will he teach them?

The Pharisees and scribes are described as 'grumblers'. They are very confused that Jesus is welcoming and accepting people whose bad behaviour has put them outside the law. Is He approving and sanctioning their behaviour? But Jesus doesn't see the world the way they see it. He shares a meal with the lost daughters and sons, and has conversations with other lost daughters and sons. Whatever He is doing He is seeking out the lost. In today's Parable, a father welcomes two lost sons. The youngest, symbol of the 'sinners', the eldest, symbol of the Pharisees. Jesus has diagnosed the same sickness in all of them - their failure to rejoice. The story that unfolds is an invitation to a celebration that just has to happen.



This Parable is so rich it is hard to know where to mine it first. Should we gaze upon an unusual father who keeps nothing for himself, who behaves rather oddly throughout the story? What will he do with a younger son who is lost in sin and an older son who is lost in self-righteousness? How will he change their mindset to party mode? Or should we focus on the son who went away? Who severs his connection to family and community. Who squanders resources he never worked for. Who becomes a pig. Who, like so many others, takes the gifts of God but does not deepen their connection with the Giver? Who end up running on empty and alone? Who live like slaves in exile instead of the life of a beloved child at home? Who resign themselves to being treated as a hired hand? Who talk themselves into the loss of love? Or should we focus on the Son who stayed in the fields? The hard worker whose foot never taps to the sound of music? Who is suspicious and angry and refuses, even though he did take his own half of the dough, to accept the invitation to dance? Who stayed at home, not as a Beloved Son but with the calculating mind of a slave? Who lives with smouldering resentment which erupts in a tirade against his father about how unfair he has been?

The lost son makes the first move and it is all that he needs to do. The father has been waiting for this moment and his compassion covers the distance between them instantly. Arriving, this same compassion erupts in kisses and embraces. It is a tsunami of tenderness. It is a picture of overwhelming love and reconciliation. People have to turn back to God but they don't have to crawl back. Compassion meets them more than halfway and tears up the script of unworthiness. What happens when a broken sinner meets a wildly joyous father?

The other lost son has chosen the identity of a hired hand, with all the dullness that enforced employment brings. If he had chosen to live in the house and as a free and vibrant worker in the vineyard, he would now be singing and dancing to the music the father has written. What would his life had been if he had not turned it into drudgery? What if he had rested in the joy the Father always brings? Celebration is the natural overflow of divine love. If only he would take his cup and drink.

I can never pray this Parable without being moved to tears of joy by it. I know in this I am not alone. Tears flow on the border between time and eternity, the Sacred and the profane. And this story is truly one with the power to make tears because it shows what God is like in conversation. It is a story of how we can so easily separate ourselves from the love that does not fail. It is the story of how we obsess about the mistakes we have made and cling ever more tightly to our brokenness, even though God is not doing that at all. It is a story of the tragedy of those who sit just outside the gates of God's heart like beggars waiting for a reward, while God is saying, come in and have it all.

For the Father, and for His Beloved Son, Grace is Grace is Grace is Grace.

When the punishment and reward mindset meets the indiscriminate host it shouts, 'Not Fair'. Perhaps we all have an instinctive understanding of the older brother because he is so much like us. The Gospel is an invitation to Rejoice, Rejoice, Rejoice! But we can only be joyful when we have let go of the mindset that keeps us imprisoned in misery. When we break free of our attachment to old sins (our own and those of others) and when we can break free from the belief that we are working for rewards, will we hear the music, the chink of the glasses and know that we are home!



## GIVE Campaign Update #066



**\*THE NEXT THREE WEEKENDS\*** will have second collections for our flower power team, to help give them the resources they need to make our church look beautiful for Spring. You can make an offering through all the usual methods, including Dona.

**\*A PARISHIONER\*** is looking for help with his garden, no more than 3 or 4 times a year, and is willing to pay if a volunteer can't be found. It will involve things like cutting back the hedge and general maintenance; it shouldn't be anything too strenuous. If your fingers are green, please let the office know! Thank you all in advance.

**\*THANK YOU\*** to everybody who helped make our FLAME 2025 adventure happen! We joined the Salesian allocation and all really enjoyed being part of the 10,000 Catholic youth from all around the UK who travelled to witness the fantastic music and declarations of faith.

Looking forward to booking for FLAME 2026!



## CAFOD's Big Lent Walk and Family Fast Day Offering

You are invited to join CAFOD's Big Lent Walk and journey together with Catholics in England, Wales and Scotland as Pilgrims of Hope in this Jubilee Year - walking 200km over 40 days during Lent. Journey to one of the churches or shrines designated as places of pilgrimage in our diocese as part of your Big Lent Walk. Every £1 you raise will support communities like Lokho's in Kenya, experiencing the worst impact of the climate crisis, to rebuild their lives in hope. Sign up

here: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/>

Please donate to our Family Fast Day parish offering and be a pilgrim of hope with CAFOD this Jubilee Year. You'll be supporting communities experiencing the impacts of war, poverty and climate change to find solutions and hope. Use the CAFOD envelope in church, donate online at [cafod.org.uk/envelope](https://cafod.org.uk/envelope) or call us on 0303 303 3030. You can also text CAFODLENT to 70085 to donate £10.



## Care Not Killing Petition

Please consider signing the Care Not Killing petition, which calls on MPs to vote against legalising assisted suicide in England and Wales.

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill would make vulnerable people - including the elderly and disabled - feel a burden on family or carers resulting in pressure to end their lives. Please sign the petition through this link: <https://carenotkilling.org.uk/petition/> or by scanning the QR code.

## Accessibility Project Work

Accessibility projects are progressing well. The outdoor ramp has been elongated, and work has begun on the disability toilet. There is a several week lead time on the delivery of the automatic doors, but once they arrive they will be installed. Thank you for your patience.

**Life in the Spirit- NOT TO BE MISSED!**

Once again we're running a programme to bring you into a deeper relationship with the Third Person of God. It runs every Thursday at 7:30pm, from 8<sup>th</sup> May until 26<sup>th</sup> June, with a break on 29<sup>th</sup> May. To register for the Life in the Spirit course, click this link <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/Ke4gfjQdSl2sAbippq19lg>, or scan the QR code.



**Bickerton House Care Home Events (RG12 2JB):**

<p><b>Canine Café</b></p> <p>The first Wednesday of each month, 2pm – 4pm</p> 	<p><b>Friendship Café</b></p> <p>The second Thursday of each month, 10:30am – 12noon</p> 	<p><b>Community Cinema</b></p> <p>The third Thursday of each month, 2:30pm – 4:30pm</p> 
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Parish Events	When?	Where?
Gospel Outreach with Music	09/04, 1:45pm-3pm	Bracknell Care Home, RG12 7DN
Cuppa & Chat (60+) ☺	01/04, 2pm-3pm	Church Hall
Children's Liturgy (please pre-book) 👧👦	06/04, 13/04	Church Hall
Soup & Roll ☺	11/04	Church Hall
Parish Prayer Group 🙏	08/04	Church Hall
RCIA 📖	Every Wednesday, 7:30pm-9pm	Church Hall

**WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY WHO ARE SICK, HOUSEBOUND OR IN HOSPITAL AND FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM**

Amanda Killestein	Angela Dossett	Ann D'Ambrosio	Ann Lynch	Ann O'Sullivan
Anne Hardy	Arthur Hardy	Audrey Lam	Bernard O'Neill	
Blanche Shap	Brenda Lynch	Bridget Riordan	Charles Hose	Claire Hose
Clarita Kokou-Tchri	Dorcas Innes-Grant	Douglas & Bernadette Hunt	Dymphna Slade	Eamon McNeill
Eddie Moore	Edmund & Kate Carroll	Inge Walker	Janet Read	Susan Tobin
Leonie Macintosh	Louis Burgisser	Lucia Saligo	Margaret Finnieston	Marie Swash
Mary King	Mary Murray	Mary Phelan	Mary Stocking	Maureen Baxter
Patricia Holmwood	Paula Sandford	Phyllis Lewis	Raf Roberts	Rico Morales
Sally Torode	Terri Landmann	Peggy McCullough		Ursula Docherty
Vilma Taborda	Vivienne Halfpenny			

To add or remove a name to this list with consent, please contact the Parish Office.  
 If you or your relative is housebound, or because of illness cannot come to Mass and wish to receive Holy Communion at home, call the office on 01344 425729 or email [office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org)



We pray for the repose of the souls of Mary Barry, Leon Driscoll, Beryl Pilgrim, and Tony Andrews who passed away recently. The Requiem Mass for Mary Barry will be held here on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April, at 12:30pm.

The service for Leon Driscoll will be held at Easthampstead Park Crematorium on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April, at 12 noon.

The Requiem Mass for Beryl Pilgrim will be held here on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> April, at 1:30pm, followed by a service at Easthampstead Park Crematorium at 3pm.

*May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.*

## PARISH OF ST JOSEPH and ST MARGARET CLITHEROW, BRACKNELL

**Parish Priest:** Fr. Daniel McAvoy **Deacon:** Rev. Aidan Lynch

**Parish Administrators:** Francis Barton and Donna Mody

**Safeguarding Team:** Marion McGuire, Sarah Birch, Paula Read

07712 048695 [safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org)

**Parish Office, St. Joseph's Church, 39 Braccan Walk, Bracknell, RG12 1HA**

**Office Hours:** Monday – Tuesday 9:00-3:00pm, Wednesday – Friday 9:00-5:00pm

**Telephone:** 01344 425729

**Email:** [office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org) **Website:** <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org>

### MASS TIMES

<b>FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT</b>				
Saturday	29th	6pm	Mass	<i>Teresa Santa Bianco RIP</i>
Sunday	30th	8:30am	Mass	
		10:30am	Mass	Parish Intentions
Monday	31 <sup>st</sup>	<b>NO MASS</b>		
Tuesday	1 <sup>st</sup>	10am	Mass	<i>Judy Ollis RIP (3rd anniversary)</i>
Wednesday	2 <sup>nd</sup>	<b>NO MASS</b>		
Thursday	3 <sup>rd</sup>	12:30pm	Mass	<i>Mary Barry Requiem Mass</i>
Friday	4 <sup>th</sup>	11am	Stations of the Cross	
		12 noon	Mass	<i>Gillian Aslin Family (Alive &amp; Deceased)</i>
Saturday	5 <sup>th</sup>	10am	Mass	
		11am	Confessions	
<b>FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT</b>				
Saturday	5 <sup>th</sup>	6pm	Mass	<i>Beryl &amp; Gerald Meadows' 73rd Wedding Anniversary</i>
Sunday	6 <sup>th</sup>	8:30am	Mass	Leon Driscoll RIP
		10:30am	Mass	Parish Intentions

**ALL MASSES ARE LIVESTREAMED** <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/watch-live>

**New to our parish or not yet registered?**

<https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/parish-life/parish-registration>

#### **Pastoral Care 01344 425729**

[office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org)

Are you lonely? Are you ill and in need of prayer and/or support? Perhaps you have not had contact with the Catholic Church for a while. Whatever the reason, please do get in touch for a chat.

#### **Bereavement Support**

**07852 497 218 / 07851 200 987**

[bereavement@bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:bereavement@bracknellcatholicchurch.org)

Are you in the land of loss & would appreciate a chat with someone in our group? If so, do not hesitate to get in touch.

#### **SVP Call IN CONFIDENCE 07731**

**862 349**

If you are struggling financially and need practical assistance, the local Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) may be able to help. Do call us in confidence for a chat.

**DONATIONS TO PARISH FUNDS** Online, Bank Transfer, DD, <https://bracknellcatholicchurch.org/give/>

**BANK DETAILS:** Account Name: CDP Bracknell St Joseph Sort Code: 30-93-04; Account Number: 00875520

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO: **CDP BRACKNELL ST JOSEPH**

**JOBS AVAILABLE IN THE DIOCESE:** <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/about-us/other/jobs>

South Berkshire Pastoral Area, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registration Number: 119956