

Fifth Sunday of Lent
THE POWER OF FORGIVING

6th April 2025

Missal Page 179 (133 Sunday 10:30am)

According to one tradition, the Divine Glory once resided in the Temple in Jerusalem. But the sins of the people were so awful that God departed, leaping from the Temple to the Garden of Olives and then up to heaven. Now God is back. Jesus, the bearer of Divine Glory is returning to the Temple by the same path. It is early - a new day - so we can expect something new. What will happen when divine glory encounters sin once more?

St. John sets the scene, "All the people came to Him..." This teaching is for all people and for all time because they need it. Jesus is seated and is about to teach but there is an interruption. This teaching will be a masterclass in relationships, taught relationally. The lost tribe of the scribes and Pharisees are at it again. Clearly the Parable of the Prodigal didn't have the desired effect. A woman (who was clearly committing adultery all by herself) is 'caught', 'brought' and 'made to stand there'. This is what the Pharisees do really well - holding people in their sin. Notice too how they make full use of a favourite tool of the self-righteous - the stare. It is used to demote a person to an object, to hold them in the sin and to close off the flow of time and the newness it might bring. Their real agenda is to trap Jesus, to hold Him. But in their haste they have unwittingly given Him the raw material of His response.

'Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground'. (v.9). It doesn't matter what He wrote, but that He wrote twice with his finger, on the earth, and that twice He bent down and straightened up. The One who writes with His finger is close to God (Ex:31:18) like Moses, who having witnessed the sins of his community goes back up the mountain to plead for them. When Moses asks if he can see the divine glory, God accepts but hides him in the cleft of a rock. Then God tells him to cut two more tablets with these words. "I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablet which you broke". As the Glory of God passes by, Moses is treated to the beautiful words of Exodus 34, 6-8. You can read it for yourself! So God writes a second time, God frees what people can only hold.

For Jesus, the Pharisees and Scribes have not truly understood the law of Moses. The true interpretation is that God always writes twice. What happens between the first and second writing? An understanding that there are no people who are without sin and that they live only because of God's infinite mercy. If all live by Grace, who can throw the first stone? The need to ask for forgiveness for myself takes precedence over the need to condemn another? Jesus alternative to the holding stare of the Pharisees and their followers is to hold up a mirror and then bend down again. He will not use their staring strategy. He gives them the self-knowledge they need to change. The divine glory does not have to return to heaven as it has found another way to heal the sins of the earth.

Jesus writes with his finger as a sign that God is speaking. He writes twice as a sign that God is forgiving. He writes on the earth as a sign that this teaching is for all peoples of all times. He refuses to stare as a sign that sins are not held. And when they got what He was trying to say what did they do? Did they let go of vengeance in favour of forgiveness? Did they give up judgement in favour of friendship? No! They walked away, preferring to live in isolation - one by one - than in the joy of the community. They remained alone and unconnected. A tragedy which proves that the longer we choose to live as judge, jury and executioner of the weak, the harder it is to see the truth and power of the alternative.

But Jesus keeps faith with her. He stands and looks without staring. And just as those who walked away needed to see their distorted self in order to repent and have life, she needs to see her true self reflected in His gaze so that she can 'see and believe'. He calls her 'Woman' - a title of honour - and points her to her true self. He asks her, 'Has no-one condemned you?' This is the first and only time she speaks and her answer is powerful. "No-one, Lord". The suffocating neck brace of condemnation has evaporated. When she calls Jesus 'Lord' she knows He speaks from the heart of God. She knows she must now Go! But she also knows that as she goes she must walk without sin.

The Divine Glory has returned. Sin will not drive it away. He has written the truth twice upon the earth and built a new Temple of forgiveness in the precincts of the old. The woman is free to take her first steps into the future that is coming. The question is, are we?



GIVE Campaign Update #067



THANK YOU to all the Confirmation candidates that brought an easter egg as part of our initiative to provide eggs to less fortunate families- we gathered over 15 eggs from you alone!

THE NEXT TWO 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.

Note: Traditionally, there are **NO** flowers in Church during Lent, so please refrain from bringing your own from home.

THE PARISH PRIEST EASTER OFFERING over the Easter weekend is one of the two annual collections specifically for the parish priest. If you wish, an offering can be placed in an envelope saying 'Easter gift for parish priest/Father Danny'. The Dona system has already been set-up for anybody who wishes to give a cashless donation, under 'Easter Offering'. This will be available from this weekend until Sunday the 27th April.

CAFOD's Myanmar Earthquake Appeal

Following the devastating earthquake in Myanmar, CAFOD is responding through the Catholic Church there to support families affected by the disaster. Your donations will provide essentials like water, food, solar lights, and mosquito nets. Please give to CAFOD's Myanmar Earthquake Appeal in church, or you can donate online at cafod.org.uk/myanmar, or by calling 0303 303 3030. You can also text EARTHQUAKE to 70450 to donate £10. Thank you!



CAFOD
Just one world



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 8th May until 26th June, with a break on 29th May. To register for the Life in the Spirit course, click this link <https://us06web.zoom.us/join/Ke4gfjQdSI2sAbippql9lg>, or scan the QR code. The sessions will also be getting run in the hall for those wanting a more social variation of the programme.

There will also be a talk by Geoff Poulter on the 25th May from 7:30pm here at the church. Listening to Geoff speak passionately about the Holy Spirit will be the perfect way to prepare our hearts and minds for The Life in the Spirit Seminars.



Closer to Christ Campaign

As previously mentioned, the parish is committed to providing monies to the diocesan Closer to Christ Campaign. This is to provide funds for our priests who are in retirement, or about to retire, ongoing formation, and to assist our priests in training. To give everyone an opportunity to provide for these causes, after Easter, the last Sunday of every month there will be a second collection for the Closer to Christ Campaign. Also, the Dona cashless system will be set-up after Easter for any parishioner to give money on a weekly basis to the Closer to Christ Campaign. There is also the possibility of individuals giving one-off or regular donations via Gift Aid. These will all be available after Easter.

Gift Aid

After Easter, anybody who pays by standing order or direct debit and gives Gift Aid will need to sign a new Gift Aid mandate. This is due to the diocese changing its name and legal entity. Please contact the office to get this sorted, thank you!

Baptism Preparation Evening

If you are planning to have your child baptised soon, please book onto the next baptism preparation evening on Monday 28th April at 7:30pm. Please note that the session after won't be for a while, and baptism can only occur once you have attended this evening. Please click on the link below to book your place:

<https://stjosephandstmargaretclitherow.churchsuite.com/events/dtvtkrx>

Bickerton House Care Home Events (RG12 2JB):

| Canine Café | Friendship Café | Community Cinema |
|--|---|---|
| The first Wednesday of each month, 2pm – 4pm | The second Thursday of each month, 10:30am – 12noon | The third Thursday of each month, 2:30pm – 4:30pm |
| Parish Events | When? | Where? |
| Gospel Outreach with Music | 09/04, 1:45pm-3pm | Bracknell Care Home, RG12 7DN |
| Cuppa & Chat (60+) ☕ | 08/04, 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



We pray for the repose of the souls of Leon Driscoll, Beryl Pilgrim, and Tony Andrews who passed away recently. The service for Leon Driscoll will be held at Easthampstead Park Crematorium on Friday 11th April, at 12 noon. The Requiem Mass for Beryl Pilgrim will be held here on Wednesday 16th April, at 1:30pm, followed by a service at Easthampstead Park Crematorium at 3pm.

The Requiem Mass for Tony Andrews will be held here on Wednesday 17th April, at 2:30pm, followed by a committal at Easthampstead Park Crematorium on 24th April, at 2:30pm.

*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

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 **Website:** <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org>

MASS TIMES

| FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT | | | | |
|--|------|---------|-----------------------|---|
| Saturday | 5th | 6pm | Mass | <i>Beryl & Gerald Meadows' 73rd Wedding Anniversary</i> |
| Sunday | 6th | 8:30am | Mass | <i>Leon Driscoll RIP</i> |
| | | 10:30am | Mass | Parish Intentions |
| Monday | 7th | NO MASS | | |
| Tuesday | 8th | 10am | Mass | <i>Alvaro Dos Santos & Joana Ferreira Dos Santos RIP</i> |
| Wednesday | 9th | 10am | Mass | <i>Maureen Randles (2nd anniversary) & Maureen Marlow RIP- Eileen Perkins' sister & mum</i> |
| Thursday | 10th | 10am | Mass | <i>Margot Cockerham</i> |
| Friday | 11th | 10am | Mass | <i>Leon Driscoll RIP</i> |
| Saturday | 12th | 11am | Stations of the Cross | |
| | | 10am | Mass | |
| | | 11am | Confessions | |
| PALM SUNDAY of the Passion of the Lord | | | | |
| Saturday | 12th | 6pm | Mass | <i>Valerie Kibera RIP</i> |
| Sunday | 13th | 8:30am | Mass | Parish Intentions |
| | | 10:30am | Mass | <i>Peter McGuinness RIP</i> |

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

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

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