

St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

NEWSLETTER

The gift of grace increases as the struggle increases



On this **First Sunday of Lent**, the Church presents us with two powerful scenes: **Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden** (Genesis 2:7-9;3:1-7) and **Our Lord in the desert** (Matthew 4:1-11), where both were **tempted by the devil**. The first shows how humanity fell, and the second shows how humanity is restored.

In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve had everything. They were in friendship with God, they had no suffering and there was no death. But then the serpent asked them a subtle question: *“Did God actually say ...?”* This question planted doubt, and Adam and Eve began to think that God was limiting their freedom. **They believed the serpent’s lie**, and then chose their own will over God’s, thinking that their disobedience would make them like God, and ultimately more free. But there is no freedom in sin. **True freedom is the ability to choose what is right and good**. If someone says, **“I’m free to lose my temper, free to lie, and free to act on every impulse,”** that’s not freedom. It’s **slavery**. Sin gradually enslaves us to habits that harm us and weaken us. It wounds our relationship with God and with others. It promises happiness, but leads to emptiness and ultimately our destruction.

Then in the Gospel, JESUS had been fasting **forty days and forty nights in the desert**, and the devil tempted Him three times: to turn stones into bread, to test God’s protection, and to gain worldly power without the Cross. And all of this boils down to the same question: **“Can you really trust the Father?”** Adam did not, whereas JESUS did, and whereas Adam disobeyed, JESUS obeyed. That is why JESUS is called the **Second Adam**, because He succeeded where the first Adam failed.

People sometimes say, **“Of course JESUS resisted the temptations because He’s God. Therefore it was easy.”** Yes, JESUS is fully God, but He is also fully man, which means He

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

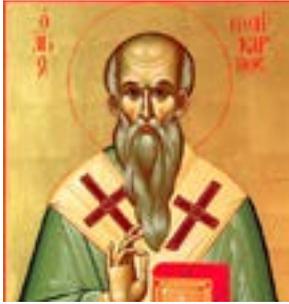
St Mary’s Primary

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

Continued on page 3



St Polycarp

Please pray for those who are sick

for those who have recently died:

Felice Zollino
Edward Moson
May they rest in peace

and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time:

Les Prentice
Ann Folkes
Linás Linkevicius
Zbigniew Czybaj
Jan Wisniewski
Eva & Sophia Clery-Rigard
Margaret Jackson
Vivienne Ashleigh
Salem Issa

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 21st Vigil Mass
6.00pm For the Parish

Sun 22nd First Sunday of Lent
9.00am Pepito Cabarubias (RIP)
11.15am Andy Newbold (RIP)
4.00pm Italian Mass

Mon 23rd Lenten Feria (Commem St Polycarp)
9.15am Karen Williams (RIP)

Tues 24th Lenten Feria
9.15am Eileen Phillips (RIP)

Weds 25th Ember Wednesday
6.30pm David White (RIP) (Latin)

Thurs 26th Lenten Feria
9.15am Mary Simonds (RIP)

Fri 27th Lenten Feria (Commem Ss Margaret Clitherow...)
6.00-6.25pm *Confessions*
6.30pm Maggi Warner (RIP)
7.10pm *Stations of the Cross*

Sat 28th Lenten Feria
10.30am *Private prayer with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*
-12.30pm *with Confessions 10.30-11.30am & Benediction 12.20pm*
2.00pm *Baptism*
6.00pm **Vigil Mass:** For the Parish

Sun 1st Second Sunday of Lent
9.00am For the Parish
11.15am Anna Maria Mrowiec (RIP)
2.30pm *Baptism*
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 23rd First Confession Class - 4.15pm in the parish hall
Tues 24th Bible Study - 7.00pm in the parish library
Weds 25th UCM - 2.00pm in the parish hall
Thurs 26th RCIA - 7.00pm in the parish library
Sat 28th SPUC branch meeting - 10.00am in the parish hall

Continued from front page

experienced hunger, tiredness, fear and pain just as we do. **So His temptations were real.** He felt the full force of them except He never gave in. However, JESUS came not only to give us a good example. **He came to give us grace.** Grace is God's own life shared with us. It is real **supernatural help**, which strengthens us to see clearly and choose what is right, and reject what is evil. It heals the damage caused by sin and slowly transforms us. **Grace comes to us primarily through the Sacraments.** We first receive grace into our souls at **Baptism.** **Confession** restores it if we lose it through mortal sin, and in **Holy Communion**, we receive grace Himself, in the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of JESUS Christ.

So Lent is not about being miserable and hard on ourselves. It's about trusting God, opening our hearts to His mercy and growing in grace. And the three pillars of Lent: **prayer, fasting and almsgiving**, are not punishments. They are a means of **making room for grace** by loosening our attachments to worldly things and focusing more on God.

An invitation is being made to each of us, not to rely on our own strength, but to rely on the grace God is always offering us. So go to Confession! **"Where sin abounded, grace abounded more"** (Romans 5:21). When that grace is at work in our souls, it means Christ Himself is with us. And if Christ is with us, then we can make it through the desert of Lent. We can endure the struggle and then arrive safely at the true joy of Easter.

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

79th UCM Pilgrimage to Walsingham – Tuesday 7th July 2026

A £10 deposit secures your place and covers your entrance pass. Deposits must be received by **10th May**. This deadline cannot be extended; last year the pilgrimage was cancelled due to low numbers, so sufficient bookings are needed by the deadline for it to go ahead. Bookings are open to neighbouring parishes, so places may fill quickly. There are flyers with full details and a sign-up sheet at the back of the church.

Samantha Edwards – 07936 928370

The Celebrate Trust has produced two resources for families in Lent: a Family Activity Pack for Lent and a Journey to Easter Joy game. Visit www.celebratetrust.org/shop/lent-family-pack-celebratehome-s45pm and www.celebratetrust.org/shop/lent-game-celebratehome-s45pm-39gpj to download them, and (if you can) to support Celebrate too.

The next food bank collections will be on Saturday 28th February and Saturday 21st March from 10.30 to 11.00am in the car park. Suggested items for donations are on the list on entry to the church. Thank you for your support

Jane and Bernard Monaghan

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion Renewal Day 2026: St Joseph's Catholic Church, Leicester, 28th March 2026, 10:30am to 3:30pm. Full details from Bernard Monaghan: bernard.p.monaghan@btinternet.com

Safeguarding: Parents/ Carers of Altar Servers and Young people attending Children's Liturgy. Young people under the age of 18 will soon be receiving Parental Consent and Code of Conduct forms. These are for families to sign and return to either Fr Paul, Fr David or Jane Monaghan PSR. Safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone and St Mary's endeavours to act with due diligence.

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.

Lent Evenings for Young Adults, Mondays from 23rd

February: Join Young Adults from across the diocese online to enter more deeply into prayer this Lent with Sycamore's 'Learning to Pray this Lent'. Just bring yourself, a bible, and a hot drink of your choice (unless you're fasting!). To sign up head to: www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/events/yasycamore

Lenten Reflection: Tuesday 24th March, Saint Wilfrid's Church, Coalville (LE67 3JB) and Thursday 26th March, Sacred Heart Church, Loughborough. Join Father Jonathan Cotton in a reflection through slides, music, and prayers on **The Seven Last Words of Jesus**. Both evenings begin at 7.00pm, and conclude at 8.30pm with refreshments.

From the Saints

From the Saints: "The gift of grace increases as the struggle increases."

St Rose of Lima (1586-1617)



CAFOD Family Fast Day is next Friday 27th February. Envelopes are at the back of the church, and will be collected next weekend.

Nottingham diocesan

choir: Anyone wishing to sing as part of the diocesan choir, in particular for the Chrism Mass on **Wednesday 1st April**, please fill in the online form at bit.ly/diocesanchoir

Last Week's Finance

Collection: £734 (of which £167 was G/A)

Standing orders: £894 @ 31/1 (of which £710 was G/A)

Mass Attendance:

Weekend: 600

Ash Wednesday: 701

Thank you

St Mary's bank account details for online donations

Bank: Lloyds

A/c name: St Mary of Annun Lough RCP

Sort code: 30-95-21

A/c no: 00481028

Alternatively, scan this QR code to donate securely from your phone

