

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH



Our Lady & St John's
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Saint Mary Immaculate Larkhall & Our Lady & Saint John's Blackwood

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St Mary's
Raploch Road
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**FIRST SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF LENT
18TH FEBRUARY 2024**

OUR LENTEN JOURNEY

Conversion is first and foremost a grace, a gift that opens the heart to God's infinite goodness. He himself anticipates with his grace our desire for conversion and accompanies our efforts for full adherence to his saving will. Therefore, to convert is to let oneself be won over by Jesus and "to return" with him to the Father.

Conversion thus entails placing oneself humbly at the school of Jesus and walking meekly in his footsteps. In this regard, the words with which he himself points out the conditions for being his true disciples are enlightening. After affirming "Whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the sake of the gospel will save it," he adds, "For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his own life?" To what extent does a life that is totally spent in achieving success, longing for prestige, and seeking commodities, to the point of excluding God from one's horizon, truly lead to happiness? Can true happiness exist when God is left out of consideration?



Experience shows that we are not happy because our material expectations and needs are satisfied. In fact, the only joy that fills the human heart is that which comes from God; indeed, we stand in need of infinite joy. Neither daily concerns nor life's difficulties succeed in extinguishing the joy that is born from friendship with God. Jesus' invitation to take up one's cross and follow him may at first sight seem harsh and contrary to what we hope for, mortifying our desire for personal fulfilment. At a closer look, however, we discover that it is not like this: The witness of the saints shows that in the cross of Christ, in the love that is given, in renouncing the possession of oneself, one finds that deep serenity which is the source of generous dedication to our brothers and sisters, especially to the poor and the needy, and this also gives us joy.

The Lenten journey of conversion on which we have set out, together with the entire Church, thus becomes a favourable opportunity, "the acceptable time" for renewing our abandonment in the hands of God and for putting into practice what Jesus continues to repeat to us: "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me". This is how one ventures forth on the path of love and true happiness.

In the face of moral evil, God's attitude is to oppose sin and save the sinner. God does not want the death of the sinner but wants the sinner to convert and to live. God sent his Son into the world to set men and women free from the domination of Satan, "the origin and cause of every sin." God sent him in our mortal flesh but the devil opposed this definitive and universal plan of salvation with all his might, as it shown in particular in the gospel of this weekend, the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. In fact, entering this liturgical season of Lent mean continuously taking Christ's side against sin, facing - both as individuals and as Church - the spiritual fight against the spirit of evil each time.

Let us therefore invoke the maternal help of Mary Most Holy for the Lenten journey that has just begun so that it may be rich in fruits of conversion.

THIS WEEK IN OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH

Sunday 18th February

- 10.00am Holy Mass for the First Sunday of Lent (St Mary's)
12noon Holy Mass for the First Sunday of Lent (Our Lady & St John's)
5.00pm Holy Mass for the First Sunday of Lent (Our Lady & St John's)



Monday 19th February

- 11.30am Stations of the Cross (St Mary's)
12noon Holy Mass for Monday of the First Week of Lent (St Mary's)
6.30pm Stations of the Cross (St Mary's)
7.00pm Holy Mass for Monday of the First Week of Lent (St Mary's)

Tuesday 20th February

- 8.30am Brief Mass for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent (Our Lady & St John's)
9.00am Stations of the Cross (Our Lady & St John's)
9.30am Holy Mass for Tuesday of the First Week of Lent (Our Lady & St John's)
6.30pm First Confessions (Our Lady & St John's)

Wednesday 21st February

- 8.30am Brief Mass for Wednesday of the First Week of Lent (St Mary's)
8.45am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 9.55am (St Mary's)
9.30am Confessions until 9.50am (St Mary's)
10.00am Holy Mass for Wednesday of the First Week of Lent (St Mary's)
6.00pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 6.55pm (Our Lady & St John's)
6.30pm Confessions until 6.50pm (Our Lady & St John's)
7.00pm Holy Mass for Wednesday of the First Week of Lent (Our Lady & St John's)

Thursday 22nd February

- 9.00am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 9.25am (Our Lady & St John's)
9.00am Confessions until 9.20am (Our Lady & St John's)
9.30am Holy Mass for the Feast of the Chair of St Peter (Our Lady & St John's)
12.30pm Auchloch Mass for the Feast of the Chair of St Peter (Our Lady & St John's)

Friday 23rd February

- 9.30am Stations of the Cross (St Mary's)
10.00am Holy Mass for Friday of the First Week of Lent (St Mary's)
12noon Requiem Mass for Janet Wedlock (Our Lady & St John's)



Saturday 24th February

- 4.00pm Confessions until 4.45pm (St Mary's)
5.00pm Vigil Mass for the Second Sunday of Lent (St Mary's)

SECOND COLLECTION NEXT WEEKEND FOR SICK & RETIRED PRIESTS

FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK

22nd February - Feast of the Chair of St Peter - The Chair of St Peter the Apostle is a feast which emphasises the teaching authority of the Pope. The chair or cathedra is the place from where each bishop teaches his people, and gives us the word 'cathedral'. The Pope presides over the whole Church and teaches us the Faith which unites us with each other.

BUILDING FUND COLLECTION

A Building Fund Collection will be taken up at all Masses today. This is to help with the cost of the work done on the roof of St Mary's, the fencing repairs for Our Lady & St John's and the cost of the work which has been carried out on the collapsed drain at Our Lady & St John's which has cost £7,500.00 to repair and replace. Please give as generously as you can to this collection. Anything you can give will be very gratefully received.

SCIAF WEE BOXES

Prayer, fasting and almsgiving are the three pillars of our Lenten journey. Each year we are called upon to help SCIAF (Scottish Catholic International Aid Fund) in their efforts to assist the poorest people in our world and support them to build better lives. The SCIAF packs can be found at the back of the church, please take the pack home and fill up the SCIAF boxes and return to the church for Holy Thursday.

PARISH FINANCES

Collection & Donations:	£870.00
Standing Orders:	£400.00
Total:	£1,270.00

Many thanks for your very generous support

To set up a Standing Order for your collection:

Account Name - **Our Lady of Fatima Parish**
Account No - **00499758** Sort Code - **800877**

Giftaid forms available at back of the church.

**Collection this week, if divided by 340 adults,
works out at a contribution of £3.73 per person.**

PASTORAL REPORT

When the Financial Report is given to the parish, it is customary that a Pastoral Report is included or follow shortly after. The Pastoral Report for 2023 is available at the back of the church this weekend in order to provide a recap of all that we achieved as a parish over the course of the last year. It is an opportunity for us to thank God for the many blessings which we received as a parish community and also to highlight the liturgical, sacramental, spiritual and social aspects of our parish.

HIRE OF THE PARISH HALL

The Parish Hall is available for private functions, community events, regular lets and fundraising events. Please consider having your parties and functions in the Parish Hall to support the parish. If you would like to find out more information regarding the Hall and bookings, then please contact the Hall through email: **BlackwoodHallBookings@outlook.com** or speak to Suzanne.



JUSTICE & PEACE

Back at the beginning of the year, Fr Wyllie suggested setting up a Justice & Peace Group in our parish. This group would focus on the injustices in our world today, helping raise awareness and support for these various causes, and also helping us to spiritually support these people and situations in the life of the parish. Fr Wyllie has been in contact with Justice & Peace, and a representative will speak at all the Masses in our parish on the weekend of 9th/10th March to give us a flavour and insight into the work they do and also to encourage parishioners to set up a Justice & Peace Group in our parish.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Parish Hall Team are looking for volunteers to help with shopping for bar stock. If you drive and would be able to help out on occasion then please speak with Fr Wyllie or Suzanne Sherry. It would be good to have a few people volunteer so that the workload would be shared rather than left to one or two individuals. As this is for the Parish Hall it would be good to have parishioners from Larkhall and Blackwood involved, so please give of your time if you can help.

PARISH LENTEN PROGRAMME

During this Season of Lent each of us is asked to find time to spend with the Lord in prayer, reflection, fasting and also helping those who need our practical and spiritual help. The Parish Mass Schedule on page 2 gives all the times of the various opportunities for Masses, adoration and other devotions over the next week, so please try and be a part of our Lenten Masses, Services, Liturgies and other programmed events over the forty day of this season of repentance and conversion.

CONSIDERING A VOCATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD?

It is important that any man who is considering a vocation to the Priesthood in the Diocese of Motherwell makes himself known in the first instance to his Parish Priest. The contact details will then be forwarded to the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Charles O'Farrell. If anyone wishes to receive further information about discerning their vocation, contact can be made with Fr O'Farrell at frofarrell@rcdom.org.uk We should all pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood each day, that the Lord will send us good and holy priests.

MASS ATTENDANCE LAST WEEK IN OUR LADY & ST JOHN'S

12noon - 82

5.00pm - 47

Total - 129

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

SICK - Pat Whalin, Douglas Russell, Declan McDonald, Gary Biggar, Paul McMurray, Annette Thomson, Janet McIntosh

RIP - Janet Wedlock (*Requiem Mass - Friday at 12noon*), Michael Simpson (*Receiving 3rd March 6.30pm; Requiem Mass 4th March 12noon*), Peter Murphy, Kathleen Duffy (Shotts), Henry Mullen

MONTHS MINDS & ANNIVERSARIES - Very Reverend Kieran Canon O'Farrell, Guy Mitchell



Please remember to have your dead loved ones prayed for on their anniversary

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION & READERS

Could all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Readers pick up a letter from Fr Wyllie after Mass today in the sacristy.

FIRST CONFESSIONS

The First Confessions for the boys and girls of St John's will take place this Tuesday at 6.30pm. Please keep the young people in your prayers as they prepare to receive God's mercy and love in the beautiful Sacrament of God's mercy and forgiveness.

AUCHLOCHAN MASS

The monthly Auchlochan Mass will take place this coming Thursday at 12.30pm in Our Lady & St John's. Everyone is more than welcome to come along but please let Betty McGonagle know in advance. New volunteers are always welcome too.

PROJECT WELLSRING WORKING GROUP

Last week we launched the new Project Wellspring renewal programme and Fr Wyllie is keen to keep up the momentum of this new project. Parishioners received the results of the Project Wellspring Questionnaire which was given to parishioners back in the autumn. The next step is to set up a new Project Wellspring Working Group to plan a path ahead for us as a parish. It would be great to get some new people involved in this group, so please contact Fr Wyllie if you would be willing and able to be a part of the Project Wellspring Working Group. Once this team has been set up there will be a 'Parish Conversation' when the whole parish will be invited to gather in order to discuss the five areas which we are hoping to focus on in this time of renewal:

Liturgy

Adult Formation

Youth Formation

Poverty Relief

Education

PARISH SAFEGUARDING

The Catholic Church in Scotland is totally committed to the standards and procedures laid out by the Bishops' Conference of Scotland, as set out in their document "In God's Image". Elma Rooney has been the Safeguarding Co-ordinator for St Mary's for a good number of years and has decided to stand down from this role, we thank Elma for all her work and commitment in this area of parish life. Fr Wyllie is delighted to announce that Angela Douglas will take over this role in the next few weeks. Thanks to Angela for agreeing to take on this important task.

PARISH PILGRIMAGE TO FATIMA & LISBON

The pilgrims intending on travelling with the Parish Pilgrimage to Fatima & Lisbon (2nd July-9th July) are asked to make a second deposit of £150 toward the cost of the trip by **Friday 1st March**, either to Fr Wyllie or directly to ALBA Tours. The final balance will be due 10 weeks before departure, on or before 24th April. A meeting will take place with Anne Marie Cairns over the next month or so to go over the details of the pilgrimage and any questions you may have.

