

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH



Our Lady & St John's
Carlisle Road
Blackwood, ML11 9RZ

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

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St Mary's
Raploch Road
Larkhall, ML9 1AN

SECOND SUNDAY OF THE SEASON OF LENT 25TH FEBRUARY 2024

THE VALUE OF FASTING

We might wonder what value and meaning there are for us Christians in depriving ourselves of something that in itself is good and useful for our bodily sustenance. The sacred Scriptures and the entire Christian tradition teach that fasting is a great help to avoid sin and all that leads to it. For this reason, the history of salvation is replete with occasions that invite fasting.

In the very first pages of sacred Scripture, the Lord commands man to abstain from partaking of the prohibited fruit: "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die". Commenting on the divine injunction, St Basil observes that "fasting was ordained in Paradise" and that "the first commandment in this sense was delivered to Adam". He thus concludes: "You shall not eat is a law of fasting and abstinence".



Since all of us are weighed down by sin and its consequences, fasting is proposed to us as an instrument to restore friendship with God. Such was the case with Ezra in the bible, who in preparation for the journey from exile back to the promised land, called upon the assembled people to fast so that "we might humble ourselves before God". The Almighty heard their prayer and assured them of his favour and protection. In the same way, the people of Nineveh, responding to Jonah's call to repentance, proclaimed a fast as a sign of their sincerity saying, "Who knows, God may turn his fierce anger, so that we will not perish?". In this instance too, God saw their works and spared them.

In the New Testament, Jesus brings to light the profound motive for fasting, condemning the attitude of the Pharisees, who scrupulously observed the prescriptions of the law but whose hearts were far from God. True fasting, as the divine master repeated elsewhere, is rather to do with the will of the heavenly Father, who "sees all that is done in secret, and will reward you". He himself sets the example, answering Satan at the end of the forty days spent in the desert that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God". The true fast is directed to eating the "true food", which is to do the Father's will. If, therefore, Adam disobeyed the Lord's command "of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat", the believer, through fasting, intends to submit himself humbly to God, trusting in his goodness and mercy.

The practice of fasting is very present in the first Christian community, the Church fathers, too, speak of the force of fasting to bridle sin, especially the sins of the "old Adam", and open in the heart of the believer a path to God. Moreover, fasting is a practice that is encountered frequently and recommended by the saints of every age. St Peter Chrysologus (380-450AD) writes: "Fasting is the soul of prayer, mercy is the lifeblood of fasting. So if you pray, fast; if you fast, show mercy; if you want your petition to be heard, hear the petition of others. If you do not close your ears to others, you open God's ears to yourself".

THIS WEEK IN OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH

Sunday 25th February

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



Monday 26th February

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

Tuesday 27th February

- 8.30am Brief Mass for Tuesday of the Second 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 Second Week of Lent (Our Lady & St John's)

Wednesday 28th February

- 8.30am Brief Mass for Wednesday of the Second 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 Second 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 Second Week of Lent (Our Lady & St John's)

Thursday 29th 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 Thursday of the Second Week of Lent (Our Lady & St John's)

Friday 1st March

- 9.30am Stations of the Cross led by the children of St Mary's (St Mary's)
10.00am Holy Mass for Friday of the First Week of Lent (St Mary's)
11.00am World Day of Prayer Service (St Mary's)



Saturday 2nd March

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

SICK & RETIRED PRIESTS

This weekend the annual collection to help with the care of the sick and retired priests of the Diocese of Motherwell will be taken up at all Masses. The contributions you make will help the diocese to continue funding the nursing homes and other costs related to our retired priests.

BUILDING FUND COLLECTION

Last week the Building Fund Collection was taken up to help alleviate the costs incurred by the damage to the roof at St Mary's as well as the repairs to the fence and collapsed pipe in Our Lady & St John's. Your generosity brought in £1,129.00. Many thanks. A donation of £1,000.00 was made by a parishioner, a very generous donation. To the donor, our sincerest thanks.

SCIAF WEE BOXES

There are still a number of SCIAF Wee Box packs at the back of the church, please take one as you leave the church this weekend, if you haven't already got one and place the box in your homes, classrooms or workplaces and return to the church by Holy Thursday evening.

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH STALL

Our stalls have a selection of cards for First Confession, Confirmation and First Holy Communion, why not have a look after Mass this weekend. All cards are priced at £1.00 and all proceeds from the stall goes to helping the parish. You will also find First Communion giftbags, First Communion Missals and Baptism and Wedding cards too.

PARISH FINANCES

Collection & Donations:	£896.00
Standing Orders:	£320.00
Building Fund Collection:	£1,129.00
Donation to the Building Fund:	£1,000.00
Stall:	£85.00
Total:	£3,430.00

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

Fr Wyllie encourages any parishioner who pays UK Tax on their wages or on their other income (pensions etc) to join the Giftaid scheme. This costs you nothing more than your collection offering, either through the Giftaid envelopes or through a standing order. For example, if you give £10.00 each week to the parish, we would receive 25p for every pound you donate, at no extra cost to yourself. Your weekly £10.00 would help the parish receive £130.00 from the UK Government.

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 CONFIRMATIONS

Bishop Toal will visit our parish on Thursday 7th March to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation on our young people at a special Mass in St Mary's at 7.00pm. As the boys and girls prepare to receive this sacrament we keep them, together with their parents, families and sponsors, very much in our prayers. It has been wonderful to see so many of our confirmandi attending Mass with their parents/carers and families over the past few weeks, it is our prayer and our hope that they will continue to join us for Mass each weekend.

SACRAMENT OF FIRST CONFESSION

Congratulations to the boys and girls from Our Lady & St John's who received the Sacrament of First Confession last Tuesday evening. They were a credit to their parish, their parents and their school.

This coming Wednesday, 28th February, the boys and girls of St Mary's will receive the Sacrament of First Confession in the school. We keep the young people in our prayers as they prepare to celebrate the great and beautiful sacrament of God's mercy and forgiveness.

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

12noon - 96

5.00pm - 46

Total - 142

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

SICK - Pat Whalin, Douglas Russell, Declan McDonald, Gary Biggar, Paul McMurray, Annette Thomson, Janet McIntosh, Margaret Craig, Kathleen Brannigan, Anne O'Neil (Belfast)

RIP - Michael Simpson (*Receiving 3rd March 6.30pm; Requiem Mass 4th March 12noon*), Paul Murphy, John Taylor, Anne Taylor, Anne Cassidy, Michael Quigley (Wishaw), Denis O'Neil (New Zealand), Shiela Strachan, Tommy Smillie (Newmains), May Gourlay (Helensburgh), Sharon Reid, Marie McTaggart

MONTHS MINDS & ANNIVERSARIES - John Brennan, Freda Davies, William Lynch, John Corr, Mary Corr, Jennifer Cochran, William Tait



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



EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION & READERS

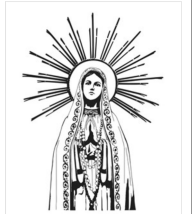
Could all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and Readers, if they have not already done so, pick up a letter from Fr Wyllie after Mass today in the sacristy.

PROJECT WELLSRING WORKING GROUP

The next step in our renewal programme 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. Fr Wyllie is delighted to announce that the members of this team are: **Fr Wyllie, June Walker, Marie Beacom, Jonathan Lyons, Harvey Perrie and Sylvia Brown**. This group will meet for the first time on Tuesday 12th March at 6.30pm in the Parish House at Larkhall. This initial meeting will aim to begin setting out a plan of renewal for our parish.

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.



ECUMENICAL WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

The World Day of Prayer service will take place in **St Mary's on Friday 1st March at 11.00am**. All parishioners are very welcome to attend this service of prayer with Christians from our area.

CATECHESIS GROUP

Fr Wyllie called a meeting last year of those who would be willing to help catechise our young people, particularly those who are preparing to receive the sacraments. If you would be willing to be involved then please contact Fr Wyllie over the next few weeks so that we can prepare a catechesis programme for the young people who will receive the sacraments in 2025.

CHURCH WORKERS' SOCIAL

The annual Church Workers' Social will take place in the Parish Hall on Friday 12th April. All those who perform ministries at Mass, are members of the various groups and teams within the parish, who work in the church, houses or hall are very warmly invited to come along. A menu will be available from next weekend and all those who intend on coming along are asked to fill out their choices and get them back to Fr Wyllie by Sunday 24th March.