The Catholic Parishes of Buntingford and Old Hall Green & Puckeridge

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http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/buntingford **http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/oldhallgreen**

The Fourth Sunday of Lent 30th March 2025

Parochial Administrator: Fr John Cunningham **Parish Deacon**: Rev Deacon Paul O'Connor

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Three and a half weeks into this forty-day journey through Lent, we may have become lost. Perhaps we have returned to our normal habits, chafing under the disciplines of fasting, prayers, and almsgiving. Perhaps we've slipped and found ourselves rationalizing our failures. The story of the prodigal son, which we hear today, reminds us that no matter what we have done or failed to do, God stands always ready to welcome us back. No matter how far we have strayed, rejoice! For we are never too far gone to return to God.

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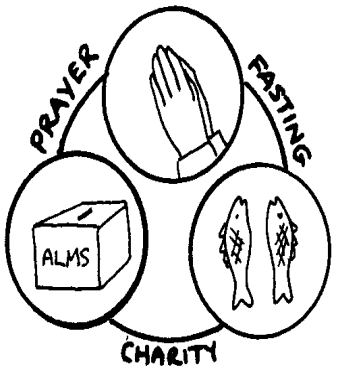
MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Buntingford

Sunday 30th March	**The Fourth Sunday of Lent**	9.15am John & Isabell Totis - Int.
Tuesday 1st April		7.30pm Brigit Rothwell - Int.
Sunday 6th April	**The Fifth Sunday of Lent**	9.15am Marian Brzozowski RIP

Puckeridge

Sunday 30th March	**The Fourth Sunday of Lent**	11.00am People of the Parish
Thursday 3rd April		12.30pm
Sunday 6th April	**The Fifth Sunday of Lent**	11.00am People of the Parish



Stations of the Cross. Each Friday at 5.00pm at St Richard's in Buntingford we will pray the Stations of the Cross. Please join us at least once during Lent.

Prayer Intentions. During Lent, we are asked to pray for: Europe; Candidates for the Sacraments; Women; The Needy and Hungry of the World; Penitents and Wanderers

For those who are ill: Colin Horgan, **For those whose anniversaries occur at this time:** Marian Brzozowski,

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Thank you for last week's offertory collection, which came to £75.80 at Puckeridge; and at Buntingford **£110.29; and for your regular standing orders.**

Confessions. Fr John will be available for confessions after the evening Mass at St Richard's each Tuesday during Lent.

Pope Francis. At this time of writing, Pope Francis has returned to the Vatican to recover from his recent illness. Please keep him in your own personal prayers this week.

Hymn Books. We are close to our target of £800 to cover the cost a set of new hymn books. Donations are still welcome along with details of those to whom you wish the hymn book dedicated.

A New Sound System for St Thomas' Church in Puckeridge. A number of people have asked about having some a loudspeaker system installed in the Church in Puckeridge, and some have offered to make a donation towards the cost. We have made enquiries, and have received a quotation from a company that has worked on a number of the Churches in the Diocese. The cost of supplying and installing four speakers, a loop system for people who use hearing aids, and the necessary microphones and amplifier will be just over £7,000. (They will have to be very careful to avoid disturbing any of the asbestos). Envelopes (and Gift Aid Forms for those who are tax payers) are available on the table at the back of the Church.

Lent Groups. The Lent Groups will continue. One meets on a Wednesday evening in Benson Hall, and the other in the Church in Puckeridge at 6.00pm on a Thursday. They are following a programme called 'We Dare to Hope' which will give us an opportunity to meet other parishioners and learn about our faith.

Happy Mother's Day. Thank you to all the mothers and grandmothers for everything you have done, and are still doing, to support your children. Enjoy this special day!

Good Friday Celebration of the Lord's Passion by, and for, Yong People, Children and Families. There will be an adapted Celebration of the Lord's Passion at St Thomas' Church in Puckeridge at 10.00am on Good Friday morning. It will be led by the younger elements of our Parishes. There will be an adapted Way of the Cross followed by an adapted version of the Solemn Intercessions, and then the Veneration of the Cross. The Liturgy will conclude with the traditional Collection for the Upkeep of the Holy Places. – The Christian Shrines in the Holy Land.
We need volunteers from among our younger people to help with the Readings and to lead the Prayers and the Veneration.

Flowers. If you would like to help with the Easter flowers, please let us know and join us on Holy Saturday 19th April at 9.00 am. You will be especially welcome if you have knowledge and experience to share.

Mass for Bereaved Parents. This Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Paul McAleenan at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 5th April at 2.00pm.

Refreshments after Mass. There will be refreshments in Benson Hall after the 9.15am Mass as usual. We look forward to seeing you there. You are especially welcome if you are visiting our parish this weekend.

Parishioners Details Forms. If you are new to the Parish, or have not done so already, please take one light green form per household from the porch to complete and hand in to Deacon Paul.

BASH. This local group of volunteers offer lifts to local people who need help getting to medical or dental appointments. If you would like to help, please contact Val on 07787 183288.

Mass Intentions. If you would like a Mass Offered, please write the details on an envelope along with your Offering, and hand it in at the Sacristy after Mass so that we can arrange a suitable date for you.

Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for Matrimony. The Cardinal invites couples in the Diocese celebrating in 2025 their **5th, 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th, and 60th (and any year over 60)** wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage. The Mass is on Saturday 17th May at 2.30pm in the Cathedral. Please give your parish these details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, number of years married, postal address, email (or phone number, if no email).

CAFOD Big Lent Walk. Fr Tony is doing the Lent Walk for CAFOD this year and would be glad if you could sponsor him. Donations can be made through his fundraising page at
https://parishes.walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/fr-tonys-fundraising-page2025

Dates and Times and Places for your Diary - The Easter Triduum

Maundy Thursday	The Mass of the Lord's Supper	St Richard's	6.00pm
Good Friday	Celebration of the Lord's Passion for Children	St Thomas'	10.00am
	The Celebration of the Lord's Passion	St Richard's	3.00pm
Holy Saturday	The Easter Vigil	St Richard's	8.00pm
Easter Sunday	Mass	St Richard's	9.15am
	Mass	St Thomas's	11.00am

PARTY MOOD ?

When the prodigal son came home they held a party to celebrate the fact that he was part of the fold once more. But there was an empty seat at the party; the older brother refused to come and take part.

The liturgy, and especially the Mass, is the continuation of that party and festivity. At the eucharist we celebrate the fact that in Jesus Christ we have been redeemed and forgiven, that we are already experiencing a share in the eternal life that God has promised us and that one day we will enjoy seeing God face to face in the never-ending celebration of bliss and happiness in heaven. In the meantime we eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus Christ that was given up and shed for us so that sins may be forgiven.

As you sit in your pew in church, are there any empty seats? It would be surprising if there weren't! Most churches struggle to fill their seats except at the great feasts of the year.

Who belongs in those seats? It's tempting to say that they are older brothers' seats, people who have had some sort of gripe with the church and have decided to give Sunday worship a wide berth. To an extent this is true. We are a fallible group of people and we're quite capable of failing each other at crucial times, and of even putting off people to the extent that they no longer darken our doors. What would happen if we reached out to family and neighbours, to friends who feel that the Church has failed them? Is it worth taking the risk of inviting them to the feast, or should we just write them off as a dead loss? Would it shock us if they said yes?

And what about the person who's sitting in your seat? Yes, you. Are you the life and soul of the party or are you something of a party-pooper? We never find out whether the father finally managed to get the older brother to enter into the spirit. He could have just gone and sat there with a long face. Just turning up isn't enough. Are you glad to be able to celebrate with your whole being, singing and praying, giving thanks for the forgiveness that God has lavished upon you through no merit of your own? Or should we put the fatted calf on the back burner?

