

SUNDAY PLUS

Challenge to hope

There's always hope

By Mary Bell

Look in any newspaper: watch any news broadcast. What are they full of? Stories of disaster, hopelessness, all the catastrophes you could think of. The pilgrimage of our lives is a journey of ups and downs no matter who we are.

Yet it is the chief message of God's Good News that there is no place to which the mercy of God does not extend, whatever the difficulties in which we find ourselves, as the prophet Jonah discovered at the bottom of the sea.

Jesus' words to Peter, "Do not be afraid", are our assurance: he will be there to guide us. We must have hope in God to help us.

Sometimes people lose all hope when life turns against them and they think that God has abandoned them. However, others, in the most trying circumstances, do not despair. I think of a lovely, lively friend who, when terminally ill, was devastated that she could no longer swallow Holy Communion but she put her trust in Jesus. Look around the church at the



possibly grey or white hair of those keeping the faith, despite their age and infirmity. Peter is such a good example: he always expresses the normal reactions of the ordinary person. After hesitating before letting down his nets he apologises to Jesus for his lack of faith. But Jesus recruits him all the same to spread his word. So, we too, imperfect as we are, are called to be apostles. We are to spread the Good News that there is always hope

Following many years in the classroom, retired teacher and Head of RE, Mary Bell now has time to enjoy the beauties of the natural world around her.

The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus... With Christ joy is constantly born anew.

Pope Francis

Transforming hope

By James Gallogly

Why do something if you know it will fail? Madness, eh? Jesus challenges Simon to put out his nets in unfavourable conditions. Despite his local knowledge, Simon trusts. As a prison chaplain I constantly fish in apparently fruitless waters. It is a challenge to hope, but one that is full of surprises. The reality that God can provide a harvest of fish or of

peaceful relationships is awesome. Yet just as Simon is left in wonder, so too are men of violence.

Through exposure to the word of God, human trust and some valuable pro-social modelling, a new way of living becomes possible. The acknowledgement that it is, "the grace of God that is within me" is a staggering thing to hear. It is a reassuring re-enforcement of my desire to trust in God. It helps to keep me positive as I continue to look for hope in murky waters.

James Gallogly is a lay Catholic chaplain in a UK prison.

Jubilee 2025 Reconciliation

Jubilee, pilgrimage and reconciliation go together. Humanly speaking, travelling with someone means that we get to know each other better. We don't make our friends simply by reading about them in a book or on social media. We spend time with them, talk to them and learn what makes them "tick". It's the same in our relationship with God. We could read the Bible all day, every day, but we only know and love God through experiencing and enjoying his

company, conversation and love. The Jubilee pilgrimage, even if physically we stay between our home and workplace, is a journey deep into our heart, where God is found. Reconciliation is nothing other than clearing out the clutter so that God can occupy, not just a part, but the whole of our heart. The sacrament of reconciliation helps the decluttering and healing processes – which is why it plays such an important part in the Jubilee celebration.

Forgiving Lord, I sometimes find it difficult to say "I'm sorry" and "I forgive you". Help me to follow your example of forgiveness and compassion. Amen.

Today: Isaiah 6:1-8
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11

Monday: Genesis 1:1-19
Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday: Genesis 1:20-24
Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday: Genesis 2:4-9, 15-17
Mark 7:14-23

Thursday: Genesis 2:18-25
Mark 7:24-30

Friday: Genesis 3:1-8
Mark 7:31-37

Saturday: Genesis 3:9-24
Mark 8:1-10

Next Sunday: Jeremiah 17:5-8
1 Corinthians 15:12, 16-20
Luke 6:17, 20-26

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www.stmaryandstjohnfisherparish.co.uk



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The Presentation of the Lord & 5th Sunday of Ordinary Time

2nd - 15th February 2025

Mass Times and 'offered for' dedications

Two weeks commencing 2nd February 2025

Sunday 2nd	Saturday 1st	4pm SJF –Parish & Sick & Infirm Clergy 9.30am SJF - <i>Thanksgiving</i> 11am StM - <i>Bill Lister</i>
Monday 3rd	Requiem Mass	10.30am SJF - Dr Joan Hill
Tuesday 4th	No Mass	
Wednesday 5th	Mass	9.30am StM - <i>Barry Hall</i>
Thursday 6th	Mass	9.30am SJF - <i>Barry Hall</i>
Friday 7th	Mass	9.30am StM - <i>Thomas Lally</i>
Saturday 8th	Mass	4pm SJF - <i>Parish</i>
Sunday 9th	Masses	9.30am SJF - <i>Thomas Lally</i> 11am StM - <i>Adriana Paldino</i>
Monday 10th	Mass	9.30am StM - <i>Patrick Dunne</i>
Tuesday 11th	No Mass	
Wednesday 12th	Mass	9.30am StM - <i>Barry Hall</i>
	Final Mass at	7pm SJF—Celebrated by Bishop
Thursday 13th	No Mass	
Friday 14th	Mass	9.30am StM - <i>Agnes Richmond</i>
Saturday 15th	Mass	4pm StM - <i>Forgotten Souls</i>

As you are all now aware, an announcement was made in both our Parish Churches on Sunday Morning 19 January, that unfortunately St John Fisher's Church would be closing

The Closing Mass will be held on Wednesday 12th February at 7pm, by Bishop John Arnold.

Recent deaths in our Parish

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Dr Joan Hill

Our condolences go to her family and friends.

Her Requiem Mass takes place at St John Fisher - Monday 3rd February at 10.30am May she rest in peace.

Altar Prayer Candles W/C 2nd February 2025

The Sanctuary	Sick and housebound of the Parish
Sacred Heart	Bereaved and Lonely
Our Lady	In Remembrance of Pat Healy

Mass Offerings -

William Kavanagh x 2 (A); Patricia Reeves (A); Graham Lancake x 2 (LD); Pam Slater (LD); Family Better Health; Adriana Paldino (A); Margaret Kelly (A); Dr Joan Hill (LD)

(Please obtain permission from any living beneficiary of a Mass offering before sending it in.)

All our Masses until the end of February have now been allocated.. Any Mass Intentions that are received until the start of March, will be pass to Fr Laurence to be said.

Sacrament of Reconciliation - 30 minutes prior to the start of Weekend Masses

In light of the Diocese decision to close St John Fisher Church, Bishop John will celebrate a final Mass in the church at **7pm on Wednesday 12th February**.

In line with the Diocesan vision of **Hope in the Future** the new Weekend Mass times for the Parish will be;

4pm Saturday Vigil and 11am Sunday Morning at St Mary's.

The Mass going population averages 350 people per week, St Mary's capacity is 400, therefore 2 weekend Masses are adequate.

In line with the vision of **Hope in the Future**, this also enables us to dovetail Masses with other Catholic churches within the local area. We have 3 churches all within around 2 miles of each other, St Mary's; St Joseph's Reddish and Holy Family, Denton. This has 2 advantages, the first, a wide range of choice of Masses for the Catholic Population (ie, **4pm St Mary's; 5pm St Josephs and 6.30pm Holy Family on Saturday nights and 9am St Joseph's; 10am Holy Family and 11am St Mary's on Sunday mornings**).

The second advantage is in the absence of a Priest, all Masses can be covered by the other Priests and so guarantee the Sunday Masses in each parish, which provides longer term sustainability

At St Mary's we will also introduce a **6.30pm Mass on Thursday Evenings for workers**, which will be preceded by weekly **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, from 6pm**. This means the weekday cycle of Masses will be

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9.30am and Thursday 6.30pm (with Exposition from 6pm).

The above changes will take place from the weekend of 15th/16th February

Pilgrims of Hope Jubilee in our Diocese Pope Francis has declared that the year **2025 will be a Holy Year of Jubilee for the Catholic Church**.

There are a few copies of our guide to **Celebrating The Jubilee of Hope** booklet at the back of church. Please only take one if you can't access the website copy on the diocesan website www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/jubilee-booklet

[Pilgrims of Hope Jubilee Booklet](#)



Faith in Action (FIA) Programme



Participants looking to complete their FIA award need to demonstrate that they are contributing to the Parish in various ways (Parish Hours). Support for activities at **St Mary's** is provided at an FIA meeting for **silver and gold participants every 2nd Sunday** of the month and **all FIA participants every 3rd Sunday** of the month at the end of 11:00am Mass.. A meeting for **all participants who attend Mass at St John Fisher** is scheduled to take place **after 4pm Mass on the Saturday** for the first Sunday of the month. Current meetings at St Mary's are for the organisation, preparation and participation in the FIA children's led Mass which takes place on the 4th (or last) Sunday of every month.

Introduction to the New Testament
The next of our monthly study sessions :-



Thursday 13th February -

Synoptic Gospels—Parables & Miracles!

Venue - St Mary's Church Hall
Time - 6.30pm - 7.30pm

All Welcome!

Salford Diocese Information

Marriage Course

The Parish of Our Lady's in Moss Side is set to hold a Marriage Course, taking place next month. The course will last four weeks, taking place on the four Sundays of February, beginning at 3pm. To find out more or register, please call the parish on 0161 226 1730.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes Bookings are now being taken for the 2025 Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. This year's pilgrimage will take place between 31st July and 6th August. For more information on how to book as a pilgrim or register as a volunteer, please visit <https://www.salfordlourdes.co.uk>

Jubilee Resources Want to learn more about our Pilgrims of Hope Jubilee? Want to find out how we're observing the Holy Year in our diocese? The Diocese of Salford's website has a range of information to accompany you this Jubilee Year, with information on our Designated Churches, upcoming pilgrimages, and a range of different resources. Explore more at <https://dioceseofsalford.org.uk/news/jubilee-2025>

SUNDAY PLUS

Messengers of hope

Life changers

By Seonaid Alder

One or more nineteenth-century Surrey workhouses forcibly separated married couples, placing the husband with the men and the wife with the women, forbidding them to meet, except for the twice-weekly services in the local Anglican church. Once the services ended, husbands and wives were again parted. When adults received vouchers for spending in local shops, shop owners protested to the local council because workhouse residents downgraded a shop's status and discouraged its use by more affluent customers.

Anna, in today's Gospel, was an elderly widow, possibly dependent on the Temple for her food and accommodation in return for working around the Temple precincts. She spent all day, every day, devoting herself to prayer and fasting, but she was possibly one of a large group of poverty-stricken widows who, if they didn't work, didn't eat. Did she have a family? We don't know. The widows received "charity" which limited its support in order to deter others from asking for help – just as would happen in the workhouse, where people often died of hunger and neglect.

Anna was regarded as a prophetess. Did this mean that she was simply a good listener who gave useful advice? We don't know. All we know for certain is that she recognised Jesus as the Messiah and blessed God, to whom she was important. We don't hear that Temple visitors paid much attention to Anna or Simeon, or else the two elderly people might have changed the world. We need to listen to messengers of hope!

Seonaid Alder is a retired secondary school teacher.



Love is more powerful, love gives life, love makes hope blossom in the wilderness.

Pope Francis

My eyes have seen the salvation

By Neil Foley

Simeon had been waiting. I can only imagine what his waiting would have been like. Long hours in prayer and fasting, with many sacrifices made at the Temple, waiting for the Lord to comfort his people - and all during a time of ancient hardship and foreign occupation. But he waited in hope, trusting in the promise of his God. He knew that God would act to redeem his people, but he

also knew that salvation would not occur according to the ways of men - the ways of power, laws and war. He knew that the sign would be rejected: that it would be through the poor, those who mourn, the meek, peacemakers, the pure in heart, that God's blessing would come. This Jubilee Year, let us be messengers of hope like Simeon, bringing the good news of salvation to all and especially to those who suffer and are rejected.

Neil Foley is from Wexford, Ireland, where he lives with his wife, Helen, and twin girls, Zélie and Martha. He works full-time as an environmental scientist but is also a lay missionary with the Redemptorists, a retreat facilitator and a spiritual writer.

Jubilee 2025

8-9 February: Jubilee of Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel

"Law enforcement — military and police — have the mission of ensuring a safe environment, so that each and every citizen can live in peace and serenity. In your families, in the various areas in which you operate, may you be instruments of reconciliation, builders of bridges and sowers of peace. Indeed, you are called not only to prevent, manage and put an end to conflicts, but also to contribute to the building of an order founded on truth, on justice, on love and on freedom..."

The affirmation of peace is not an easy task, especially because of war, which uproots hearts and augments violence and hatred. I urge you not to be discouraged. Continue on your journey of faith and open your hearts to God, the merciful Father, who never tires of forgiving us. Faced with the challenges of every day, be shining examples of Christian hope, which is the certitude of the victory of love over hate and of peace over war."

Pope Francis, Jubilee for the armed forces and law enforcement, 2016.

Lord of life, be with me on my journey towards you.
May I carry your hope and your love to everyone I meet.
Amen.

Today:
Malachi 3:1-4
Hebrews 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-40

Monday:
Hebrews 11:32-40
Mark 5:1-20

Tuesday:
Hebrews 12:1-4
Mark 5:21-43

Wednesday:
Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15
Mark 6:1-6

Thursday:
Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24
Mark 6:7-13

Friday:
Hebrews 13:1-8
Mark 6:14-29

Saturday:
Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21
Mark 6:30-34

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 6:1-8
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11

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