

SUNDAY PLUS

Searching for hope

Come as you are



By Sr Janet Fearn FMDM

How and why did our conversation turn to ancestry? My late friend was directly descended from the legendary highwayman, Dick Turpin (1705-1739). In those pre-computer and online fact-checking days, was my great-great-grandfather the judge who found him guilty of the capital crime of horse theft? In Turpin's time, our families wouldn't have mixed or shared their escapades and court cases. As it happens, I now know that my ancestor was born seventy-two years after Turpin, who must surely have kept some activities secret for fear of the legal consequences. If they could have met, Turpin and my great-great-grandfather couldn't have relaxed and been themselves: one was a fugitive from justice and the other obliged to implement it.

Jesus attracted society's "little" people, including the despised tax collectors and sinners. The so-called "great and the good" often stayed at a distance, showing themselves uncontaminated by crime, sin and unimportance. Yet their criticism revealed something important: people weren't afraid that Jesus would reject them. Regardless of their past and present circumstances, "the crowds" instinctively saw someone whose interests didn't depend upon celebrity status, but on his face-to-face encounters with the outcasts, the overlooked, the abandoned and the "lost". People anywhere and everywhere could find Jesus, confident of his welcome and acceptance and with no need to "put on a show".

Today, as we celebrate the Jubilee of the Missionaries of Mercy, we remember that God knows who we are and isn't looking for a good performance. Jesus says to each of us, "Come as you are. That's how I love you."

Sr Janet Fearn is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

Don't be afraid, go to [God], he is waiting for you, he will take care of everything. We hear many offers from the world around us; but let us take up God's offer instead: his is a caress of love. For God, we are not numbers, we are important, indeed we are the most important thing to him; even if we are sinners, we are what is closest to his heart.

Pope Francis

Don't give up

By Paul Higginson

Today's Gospel illustrates a universal and neglected truth. We often grow in wisdom not from our spiritual success stories, but through our sinfulness, failure and suffering. The prodigal son creates a totally new loving relationship with his father after his disastrous life choices have led him to a dead end. The last shall be first – there is hope for us all.

Life for many of us is difficult and we can be tempted to give up or turn from the spiritual path. But Jesus tells us in this parable that the Father is waiting at the bedroom window, hoping for our return. What happens when God sees us? Pause awhile and consider Jesus' explanation, which tells us exactly who God is: "While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He ran to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him tenderly."

Paul Higginson is a retired teacher and author of *Doing Christianity: how religion is about what you do, not what you believe.*

Lord, Father of our human family... may our hearts be open to all the peoples and nations of the earth. May we recognise the goodness and beauty that you have sown in each of us, and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects, and shared dreams.  Amen.

Fratelli Tutti, 287

Today: Joshua 5:9a-12 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 Luke 15:1-3, 11-32	Monday: Isaiah 65:17-21 John 4:43-54	Tuesday: Ezekiel 47:1-9, 12 John 5:1-3, 5-16	Wednesday: Isaiah 49:8-15 John 5:17-30	Thursday: Exodus 32:7-14 John 5:31-47	Friday: Wisdom 2:1a, 12-22 John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30	Saturday: Jeremiah 11:18-20 John 7:40-52	Next Sunday: Isaiah 43:16-21 Philippians 3:8-14 John 8:1-11
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4th Sunday of Lent
30th March 2025



The Word This Week

Lenten Prayer



The grace of forty days

Time to make the desert journey and renew our way to life.

Time for testing and for changing. Time to trust the word of God.

Time to recognise holy presence and share Cyrene's work.

Time for forgiveness and for healing and to repent our broken lives.

Time to build God's dwelling with us and proclaim full life for all.

Time to watch and wait with Jesus and to prepare the upper room.

Time to turn our lives again to God and to transform our world with love.

Amen.

Prayer: Pat Pierce/CAFOD

As today we hear the familiar para-ble of the Prodigal Son (or the Forgiving Father), the message is Reconciliation - the making new of relationships, the healing of past wrongs and the opening of ourselves to the "new creation". This is just as the Is-raelites opened themselves to the New Cre-ation of the Promised Land, when under Joshua they ended their sojourn in the wilderness after forty years of hardship, and began to eat of the produce of the country. It is all God's work: it is God who calls us back, and God who welcomes us into the Promised Land of his mercy when we re-turn. So today, let us think not so much of sin and offences, as the new creation God offers us, if we but turn back to him and embrace him as our Father.

Mass Times W/C 30th March 2025		
Sunday 30th	Vigil 29th	4pm StM - <i>Sarah Teresa Smith (LD)</i> 11am StM - <i>Parish</i>
Monday 31st	Mass	9.30StM - <i>Laurence Byrne (A)</i>
Tuesday 1st April	No Mass	No mass
Wednesday 2nd	Mass	9.30am StM <i>Sick and infirm clergy</i>
Thursday 3rd	Requiem Mass	10.30am StM— <i>Catherine Kirkham</i>
	Exposition Mass	6pm— <i>StM</i> <i>6.30pm StM—John Hardman (A)</i>
Friday 4th	Requiem Mass	<i>10.30am STM—Adriana Robinson</i>
Saturday 5th	Mass	4pm StM— <i>Anne Fleming (A)</i>
Sunday 6th	Mass	11am StM <i>Parish</i>
Saturday & Sunday	Sacrament of Reconciliation	Available 30 minutes prior to the start of Mass

Altar Prayer Candles W/C 30th March 2025	
The Sanctuary	Val
Sacred Heart	
Our Lady	Niamh Scanlon

Happy Mother's Day

Prayer of Blessing of Mothers on Mother's Day

Loving God,
as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children,
as you watch over your Church.
Bless these women,
that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers.
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, their sons and daughters,
May honor them always
with a spirit of profound respect.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Mass Offerings

Forgotten Souls Tom Lally (LD)

Eric Timothy Bowler (A) Mary Stokes (BM)
Joan Berry (A); Christopher James (A); Niamh Scanlon (A); Tom Lally (LD); Trudy Mitchell (RIP); Bridget Lally (RIP); *(Please obtain permission from any living*

Recent deaths in our Parish

Catherine Kirkham Our condolences go to her family and friends. Her Requiem Mass is on Thursday 3rd April at 10.30am at St Mary's. May she rest in peace.

Adriana Robinson Our condolences go to her family and friends. Her Requiem Mass will be on Friday 4th April at 10.30am at St Mary's. May she rest in peace.

Mothers Day Blessings -

To all mothers and those who care for others as mothers, following the example of our Blessed Mother Mary. Enjoy your special day!

Red Mission Boxes

Any Parishioners who have a red mission box please bring them in to be emptied. The Mill Hill Fathers rely on the money raised from these boxes to finance their missionary work overseas and very much appreciate your support and generosity. Thank you, Paula & Dorothy



Confirmation Programme 2025. If your child is currently in Year 8 or above and wishes to receive this Sacrament then we would like to invite you, along with them, to a short introductory meeting on **Thursday 3rd April, 7:30pm**, in the hall at **St Mary's, Denton**. This is to complete the necessary forms to enrol your child on the programme and lay out the timetable for the following weeks.

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S	Q	U	A	N	D	E	R	E	D	R	H	U	Y	M
I	R	T	T	T	E	Y	T	D	S	A	U	W	P	U
O	K	E	E	N	D	E	Y	N	L	B	N	O	L	S
N	R	J	P	R	O	D	I	G	A	L	G	R	E	A
S	A	N	D	A	L	S	J	Y	V	E	E	T	A	J
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F	A	T	T	E	D	N	M	U	S	I	C	Y	O	U
S	O	N	S	P	I	G	S	R	O	B	E	F	B	H
A	I	M	P	R	F	D	H	C	E	B	X	S	S	L
Parable			Prodigal			sons								
Father			property			divided								
traveled			distant			country								
squandered			dissolute			pigs								
hunger			heaven			worthy								
compassion			kissed			slaves								
robe			ring			sandals								
fatted			calf			celebrate								
elder			music			dancing								
angry			plead			disobeyed								

Salford Diocese Information

Mass for People who are Sick and People with Caring Responsibilities

A special Mass to mark the Jubilee for People who are Sick and People with Caring Responsibilities will be taking place on Saturday 5 April. The Mass, celebrated by Bishop John, will also include an opportunity for the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick. Mass begins at 2pm at Salford Cathedral's Temporary Church. All are welcome to attend.

Diocesan Youth Ministry Pilgrimages

Our diocesan youth ministry team is organising two fantastic pilgrimage opportunities, led by Bishop John, for young people in Years 7, 8, and 9. The first pilgrimage will take place on Saturday 3 May with a pilgrimage to Walsingham, in conjunction with our main diocesan pilgrimage. The second is a pilgrimage to The Holy Island of Lindisfarne, taking place between 20-22 June. Find out more and register at <https://dioceseofsalford.org.uk/youth/ministry/prayer-and-pilgrimage>

Job Vacancies in the Diocese

Maintenance Operative

Appointment Type: Full-time, permanent
Working Hours: 35 hours per week (we would consider someone who was available part time)
Location: Across the Diocese
Salary: £22,932 - £27,646 per annum, dependent on experience.
Find out more and apply at <https://dioceseofsalford.org.uk/news/vacancies>

Scriptures Evening.

Please be advised that the next date for the Scriptures Evening has been changed to **Thursday 16th April**.

Gardening at St John Fisher Church

Access to the garden at St John Fisher church, will be available from 9.30am to 11.30am on Tuesday 1st April 2025, for anyone who wishes to come along and help themselves to the plants.

Thank you from Caritas Salford

Thank you to everyone who has already supported our diocesan charity, Caritas Diocese of Salford, during this year's Lent campaign. Services have continued to increase, and all of your prayers, kindness and generosity make a huge difference to the lives of people in our parish communities. To find out more about ways Caritas helps local people or to make a donation or support in another ways this Lent or beyond, visit www.caritassalford.org.uk