



ST MATTHEW CATHOLIC CHURCH, WEST NORWOOD-

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15 MARCH 2026

Parish Newsletter

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (A)

TODAY'S MASS READING: Parish Mass Book, from page 165

1stReading(1Sam.16:1b,6-7,10-13a)**2ndReading**(Eph.5:8-14)**Gospel** (Jn.9:1-41)

Readings Next Sunday: 1st Reading (Ez.37:12-14). 2nd Reading (Rom8:8-11). Gospel (Jn11:1-45)

Today the Church celebrates the Fourth Sunday of Lent, often called **Laetare Sunday**, a Sunday of joy in the middle of our Lenten journey. The word *Laetare* means "Rejoice." Even in this season of penance and reflection, the Church reminds us that Lent ultimately leads us to light, healing, and new life. The readings today revolve around the theme of seeing and not seeing. In the first reading, the prophet Samuel is sent to the house of Jesse to anoint a new king. One by one Jesse's sons pass before him. The strong and impressive sons seem like the obvious choices. But God corrects Samuel with these words: "*Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.*" Human beings often judge by what they see on the outside, that is status, strength, beauty, or influence. But God sees deeper. God sees the heart. God sees beyond the physical. He rules both the physical and spiritual. That is why the youngest and least expected, David the shepherd boy, is chosen to be king. This reminds us that God's way of seeing is very different from ours. Sometimes we judge others too quickly, and sometimes we even underestimate what God can do through people who seem ordinary. In the Gospel, we hear the powerful story of the man born blind. Jesus heals him by making mud, placing it on his eyes, and sending him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The man returns able to see. Yet the real focus of the story is not only physical blindness but spiritual blindness. The man who was blind gradually comes to recognize who Jesus truly is. At first he simply calls him "*the man called Jesus.*" Later he says Jesus is "*a prophet.*" Finally he declares with faith, "Lord, I believe," and he worships him. Meanwhile, the Pharisees who can physically see refuse to believe what has happened. They become more and more closed to the truth. In the end, the man who was blind can now see clearly, while those who think they see remain spiritually blind. This Gospel speaks directly to us during Lent. There are many kinds of blindness in our lives. Sometimes pride blinds us so that we think we already know everything. Sometimes prejudice blinds us so that we judge people unfairly. Sometimes sin blinds us so that we cannot clearly see what is right and what is wrong. Often we move through life without truly seeing. We may fail to notice the suffering of people around us. We may fail to see our own weaknesses. We may even fail to recognize the ways God is working quietly in our lives. Lent is a time when we ask Jesus to open our eyes. In the second reading, St Paul tells us: "*Once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.*" Through Christ we are called to move from darkness into light, from confusion into truth, from sin into new life. When Christ opens our eyes, we begin to see differently. We begin to see people with compassion. We become more aware of God's presence in our daily lives. We begin to walk in goodness, righteousness, and truth. At the end of the Gospel, Jesus asks the healed man, "*Do you believe in the Son of Man?*" The man responds with humility and faith: "Lord, I believe." That simple response is also the prayer we are invited to make today. As we continue our Lenten journey toward Easter, may we ask the Lord to open the eyes of our hearts, so that we may truly see, believe, and walk in the light of Christ. Amen.

Parish Priest: Fr Celestine Ekwueme

Email: celestineekwueme@rcaos.org.uk

PARISH INFORMATION AND FAITH NEWS

Pope's March prayer intention: For disarmament and peace. Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

PARISH NOTICES



As we celebrate Mother's Day, we pause to honour the women who have given us life, love, and unwavering faith. Whether they are with us or have gone before us in-

to eternal life, mothers hold a sacred place in our hearts. In their daily sacrifices, quiet strength, and generous love, we see a reflection of God's own care and compassion

Bishop Paul Hendricks warmly invites you to join him on this year's SOUTHWARK DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES: 21st to 28th August 26. A pilgrimage is a great opportunity to refresh and renew our relationship with the Lord Jesus, with the help of Our Lady's prayers. I have also found it a blessing to be able to accompany and to be inspired by other pilgrims, some of whom are sick, elderly or disabled. Details for booking travel and accommodation can be found at <https://www.tangney-tours.com/diocese-pilgrimages/diocese-ca/> We also ask pilgrims to complete a form with details, including medical requirements (if any) at <https://www.catholicassociation.co.uk/join2026> For more information, please contact Canon Edward Perera (edwardperera@rcaos.org.uk) or Deacon John Fogarty (johnfogarty@rcaos.org.uk) or myself, Bishop Paul Hendricks (paulhendricks@rcaos.org.uk)

Worldwide Marriage Encounter For the past 50 years Worldwide Marriage Encounter has been offering marriage enrichment retreats all around the world. Focused on couples who want to enrich their relationship and gain a deeper understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage, the retreat offers a unique experience. It's a chance to explore your relationship at a deeper, more intimate level, regardless of how long you have been together. Thousands of couples in the UK have benefited

Archbishop John's Lenten reflection: The distressing majesty of the cross. Archbishop John is calling on all in the Archdiocese to join him in prayer and contemplation before the crucified Lord during Lent. Archbishop John said: "I want us to do more than stumble on our Lenten journey. I want us, together, to really contemplate and meditate on the distressing majesty of the cross so that we really can take in what it means for us and our relationship with our God, the Lord Jesus Christ". You can watch his full message at rcaos.org.uk/lent2026

We Need Your Help: Each year, the Catholic Association Pilgrimage (CA) is responsible for coordinating the welcome and care of our 'assisted pilgrims' - those on our annual pilgrimage to Lourdes who have particular care and support needs. The CA is appealing for parishioners who might want to come to Lourdes as an assisted pilgrim, or as a volunteer helper in order to help provide the support that our assisted pilgrims need. All are welcome and all have an important contribution to make to the community that we form during our pilgrimage week. For more information visit: catholicassociation.co.uk or see posters at the rear of Church.

Parish Secretary Role: The parish will be recruiting a Part-Time Parish Secretary to assist with general administration, correspondence, record-keeping, and support for parish activities. Further details will be shared in due course. Parishioners who may be interested are encouraged to contact the parish office. Please keep this in your prayers

Pray the Romero Rosary at St George's Cathedral. Join Archbishop John Wilson and the Cathedral clergy in praying the rosary every Friday at 5pm throughout Lent. This is a beautiful opportunity to draw closer to the Lord Jesus in prayer Lenten season. Find out more at: rcaos.org.uk/romerorosary

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**PARISH MINISTRY**

Saturday 14	Vigil, 4th Sunday of Lent
6:30pm	Monica Higgins RIP
Sunday 15	4th Sunday of Lent
9am	Clara D'Sa RIP
11am	Alice Gleeson RIP
Monday 16	Feria
9:30am	No Mass
Tuesday 17	St Patrick, Memorial.
9am	No Adoration
9:30am	No Mass
Wednesday 18	Feria
9:30am	Bridie Hanley; w/being
Thursday 19	St Joseph, Spouse of BVM
11am	Holy Souls
Friday 20	Feria
9:30am	Private Intention
Saturday 21	Vigil, 4th Sunday of Lent
6:30pm	Peter Blaquiere RIP
Sunday 22	4th Sunday of Lent
9am	Francis Saldanha RIP
11am	Private Intention

READERS:

154th/15th 21st/22nd

6:30pm	Ann Doe	Preetha
9am	Ariel/Elisa	Elsa
11am	Sinead/Jessica	Anne-Lise/Isabella Ramos
Eucharistic Ministers		
6:30pm	Annabel	Jenny
9am	Lawrence	Zena
11am	Kereine	Patience

Church Cleaning:

Justine/Juliana Catherine/Noelie/Hugo

CYCLE OF PRAYER - Intentions for Lent:

Candidates for the Sacraments (especially on the Sundays)

The Needy and Hungry of the World (especially on Lent Fast Day, first Friday of lent)

Penitents and Wanderers

Women (especially on Women's World Day of Prayer - First Friday in March)

WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS THOSE WHO HAVE RECENTLY DIED IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY , AND THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH OCCUR AROUND THIS TIME, MAY THEY REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

HOSPITAL CONTACTS: If you or a member of your family are admitted to our local hospitals, do please let the hospital's Catholic chaplain know.

St George's Hospital: 02087253069 / 02086721255)

Kings Hospital: If outside hospital—02032993522. inside the hospital call extension 33522

Croydon University Hospital: 02084013105

St Thomas' Hospital: 02071881187/02071881186

Guy's Hospital: 02071881185/02071889576



Year A
4th Sunday of Lent

PARISH SCHEDULES

Sunday Mass Times :

6:30pm (Sat), 9am and 11am

Week Day Mass Times:

Tuesday ; 7pm

Wednesday & Friday; 9:30am

Thursday; 11am @ British Home

First Fridays; 12noon.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Tuesdays; 6:00pm

Baptisms, Marriage, Funerals: Contact the Parish Office.

Youth Club:

4:30pm Every 3rd Saturday

RCIA: Contact Parish Office

RECONCILIATION/CONFESSIONS

Saturdays: 5:30pm to 6:15pm and on call.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS

Open Office: Fridays 10am to 12:30pm and 2:30pm to 4:30pm.

Other days with appointment, please.

UCM:

12noon Every First Friday

CHOIR REHEARSALS:

Wednesdays; 7:30pm @ the Church.

DIVINE MERCY GROUP

Sundays; after 11am mass @ the Divine Mercy Altar

We are grateful for all you do to support the parish.

Setting up a Standing Order is the most efficient way to make a donation to the parish without incurring fees. You can use the following details for one-off donation or to set up a Standing Order or Direct Debit. NatWest Bank: Account Name: RCAS Norwood West, Sort Code: 60-23-19; Account Number: 44115369. Thank You!