

PASTORAL: Committee is led by Shirley.

Hospital Chaplaincy: If you or a family member is in hospital and would like a visit by a Priest or Eucharistic Minister, please inform the parish office.

Baptism: A parent of the child to be baptised must be baptised, **attend Sunday Mass regularly** and undertake the preparation meetings. Please see Fr after Mass to discuss your request. You will be required to attend a preparation course before confirming any date for baptism so please bear this in mind in preparing for the child's baptism.

Marriage: Please contact Fr Mathew initially to discuss your request for marriage. This must be done before Fr can agree any dates with you as you may be required to attend preparation classes.

Mass Intentions: If you would like to have a Mass celebrated for a particular intention: on behalf of a family member, a friend, a deceased loved one, to remember a birthday or anniversary, envelopes are available at the back of church.

Communion to the Sick and the Housebound: Please speak to Fr if you know of anyone who is unable to come to Mass and would like to receive Communion.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION: Sue Perkins: stgerard.bham@rcaob.org.uk.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: Hayley Macilwraith-hs.stgerard.bham@rcaob.org.uk.

YOUTH: To be appointed: yth.stgerard.bham@rcaob.org.uk.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY LEADERS AND HELPERS: Sue, Grace, Will, Annie, Sarita, Faith and Cynthia.

FINANCE/PREMISES: Committee: Fr, Sue Perkins, Sue Byrne and Frank.

SAFEGUARDING: The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the National and Archdioceses policies and procedures at all times. Our **Parish Safeguarding Officer** is Hayley Macilwraith who can be contacted on sg.stgerard.bham@rcaob.org.uk or alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding team on 0121 230 6240 if you have any concerns.

ALTAR SERVERS CHAPERONE LEAD: Hayley Macilwraith

SOCIAL: Committee: Beaulah, Sarita, Bernie, Rosaline and Sue



St Gerard's Catholic Primary School

*'We Live, Love and Learn Together with
Jesus'*

Twitter: @StGerardsBham **School website:**

www.stgerard.bham.sch.uk

***The Lord who loves you and holds you in the palm of His hand wants to
bless you today-in amazing, humbling and breathtaking ways.***

2024-Year of Prayer: *"May it be an intense year of prayer in which hearts are opened to receive the outpouring of God's grace" Pope Francis.*

Pope Francis has named this year a Year of Prayer, in preparation for the Jubilee Year of 2025. It is a good time to look at how the way we understand and practice prayer and to view it in light of the Scriptures and the Liturgy of the Church. Every Lent is a time when we are called to a deeper life of prayer. This year should be more than any other! We begin every Lent with the great Gospel of Ash Wednesday (14th February 2024), taken from St Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, where one of the three elements of a spiritual life is listed as prayer. Prayer is not seen in isolation, and we can never see it as a simple "add on" in our lives. Prayer is an integral part of our lives as Catholic Christians, and it has to go hand in hand with penance, and also the life of charity to others. If prayer is not linked to fasting, and does not bear fruit in charity to others, then it is no longer a living reality. Our Lord shows us the way. On the First Sunday of Lent (18th February 2024), the Gospel reading is always the Temptation of the Lord in the desert. This year we hear from St Mark's Gospel the most concise version of this event. What did the Lord do for forty days? He prayed and he fasted. Where is the charity? He went out into the desert so that he would be prepared to commit himself to his saving ministry of preaching and healing which he was about to embark upon. The Lord himself shows us that prayer and fasting bears fruit in charity, and that we need these to be our focus during this sacred season, in this Year of Prayer.

Christian prayer is not just something that brings us into a relationship with God; it is our relationship with God. Christian prayer is essentially not just my relationship with God. It is something much more sublime and mystical. It is Jesus Christ's relationship with the Father, made present in me. The Gospel on the Second Sunday of Lent (25th February 2024) is the Transfiguration. We are invited to unite ourselves to the three disciples who are invited to witness their special moment. We, like them, are called to bow down in adoration before our Lord. It is, however, not just the Lord who is transfigured. We are transfigured too! We become what we worship. We are drawn into the person of Jesus. We are called to let his spiritual life become our spiritual life; his Heart becomes our heart. We become children of God together with him. Our lives are transformed. Prayer really changes us. Real prayer, in the Holy Spirit, in the person of Jesus Christ, changes us from within. It requires that we be like the seed that falls into the ground and dies. Our earthly desires and our purely physical life dies, as we live to Christ in the Spirit. The harvest of prayer is holiness and a life lived in union with God forever.



Parish of St. Gerard, Castle Vale

part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham—Registered Charity No. 234216

Parish Priest: Father Mathew Pinakkattu: 07788790928 **Email:** stgerard.bham@rcaob.org.uk

Presbytery: 2 Renfrew Square, Castle Vale, Birmingham B35 6JT **T:** 0121 747 7390

W: www.stgerardschurch.co.uk



First Sunday of Lent

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Almighty God, whose Son Jesus Christ fasted forty days in the wilderness, and was tempted as we are, yet without sin: give us grace to discipline ourselves in obedience to your Spirit; and, as you know our weakness, so may we know your power to save;

Parish Mission Statement

We, the members of St Gerard's R.C. Church, are baptised in Jesus Christ, empowered by the spirit, nurtured in community, and nourished by prayer, word, and sacrament. Therefore, for the greater glory of God, we proclaim for all people the saving message of the Gospel, and joyfully share our time, talent, and resources, in works of mercy and justice, both within and beyond our parish community.

Mass Times

Sunday 18th February

First Sunday of Lent

Confession 9.30am

Mass 10.00am with Childrens

Liturgy for Ann Stokes RIP

Monday 19th February

Mass 10.00am

Tuesday 20th February

No Mass

Wednesday 21st February

Mass 10.00am

Thursday 22nd February

Mass 10.00am

Friday 23rd February

School Mass 9.00am

Stations 7.00pm

Saturday 24th February

Mass 5.00pm

Second Sunday of Lent

25th February

Confession 9.30am

Mass 10.00am with Childrens

Liturgy



Reflection: First Sunday of Lent

Last week we celebrated Ash Wednesday, the doorway into our Lenten season of renewal. In the Homily Fr discussed the 40 days that lay ahead of us: We are beginning 40 days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving which speaks in a particular way about our relationship with God and with those who are in greatest need. 40 days can seem like a long time ahead, but in the broad sweep of history, God has called people into this relationship of trust over so many years. It is good for us to consider what we might do this Lent, but it is much more to do with what God is going to do in us and through us. For us to turn back to the Lord is itself God's invitation to a share in his life, and the knowledge that if we wander from the Lord, we are not expected to find our way back. God desires our faithfulness. And whatever it is we might seek to give up for Lent or do extra this Lent, let's all aim to follow the spirit of the law, not the letter... in this respect.

The opening prayer for this Sunday's Mass talks about "growing" which takes place "through the yearly observances of holy Lent". It is not merely a question of moving forwards rather than backwards; all efforts must be aligned with that which helps us to grow as followers of Christ. In many other languages, the name for this liturgical season derives from that language's word for "Forty", summarizing this forty days of preparation for Easter. In English, however, our word "Lent" comes from an Old English word "lenten", which referred to the season of spring. In this season the daylight grows longer, so that we can see more, and the plants start growing in response to the light. Our Lenten disciplines, based on the spiritual disciplines of prayer, almsgiving, and fasting are undertaken that we may "grow in understanding of the riches hidden in Christ and by worthy conduct pursue their effects". May God bless us all as we undertake them.

"The Spirit drove Jesus out into the wilderness and he remained there for forty days, and was tempted by Satan." Jesus goes out into the wilderness for forty days. He knows what it is like to be alone in dangerous conditions. He understands what it is like to be hungry and maybe even afraid. But Jesus is never abandoned.

Recently died and those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

The sick: Kath McMullen, Margaret Ludlow, Rose Cogan, Andrew Trueman, Eileen Morrissey, Frances Irwin, George Irwin, Debbie Johnson and all the sick priests of the diocese. May the Lord grant them the healing they require.

Mass Intentions: on behalf of a family member, a friend or a deceased loved one, to remember a birthday or anniversary, envelopes are available at the back of church or email Fr Mathew.

Offertory

11th February 2024

GA	£ 43.00
NGA	£ 43.17
Pro Life	£23.30
Total	£ 109.47

Attendance:58