

Priest-in-Charge: **Rev. Fr Matthew King**
 Parish Secretary: **Clarinda Mansfield**
 Deacon: **Rev Dcn John Cumpsty**
 Office Hours: **Mon to Fri 9am—12pm**
 Email: **office@stmarysgosport.org.uk**
 Telephone: **(023) 9258 0119**



Safeguarding Officer: **Maureen Williams**
 Email: **safeguarding@stmarysgosport.org.uk**
 @catholicchurchingosport
 www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/parish/gosport/



ST MARY'S & ST COLUMBA'S
 The Catholic Church in Gosport

15 March 2026 - FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT - Year A

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|----|-----|--------------------|------------------------------|---|--|
| 14 | Sat | 06:00pm | <i>Vigil</i> | John Fleming INT | <p>CONFESSION TIMES Wed 6:15pm-6:45pm <i>(if Mass is celebrated)</i> Sat - 12:00nn—1:00pm</p> <p>EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION Thu - after the 7pm Mass <i>Holy half hour with Night Prayer</i></p> <p>Fri 10:00am—12:00nn <i>Rosary for the Unborn at 10am</i></p> <p>OUTREACH Thu from 1:00pm</p> |
| 15 | Sun | 08:00am 11:15am | <i>Fourth Sunday of Lent</i> | People of the Parish Zied Solomon RIP | |
| 16 | Mon | No Service | | | |
| 17 | Tue | 12:00nn | | John Hurd RIP | |
| 18 | Wed | 07:00pm | | Miss Mary Ann Cornelius RIP | |
| 19 | Thu | 07:00pm | | Holy Souls in Purgatory | |
| 20 | Fri | 12:00nn | | Private Intention | |
| 21 | Sat | 06:00pm | <i>Vigil</i> | William Cornelius RIP | |
| 22 | Sun | 08:00am 11:15am | <i>Fifth Sunday of Lent</i> | Joel Diño RIP William Walter Mansfield RIP | |

REFLECTION

“Lord, help me to see.”

This Sunday's Gospel tells the story of a man who has been blind since birth. Jesus notices him, reaches out to him, and gives him the gift of sight. But the story is about far more than eyesight. It shows us what our relationship with God the Father and God the Son looks like in real, everyday life.

God sees us before we see Him

The first thing to notice is that Jesus sees the blind man before the blind man ever sees Jesus. He notices him, stops for him, and chooses to help him. This is how God the Father looks at us. He doesn't wait for us to be perfect or knowledgeable or holy. He sees us as we are - struggling, searching, sometimes confused - and He comes toward us with compassion.

Jesus' actions in this story show us the Father's heart. God is not distant or uninterested. He wants to bring light into the parts of our lives that feel dark, heavy, or confusing. He wants us to know that we matter to Him.

Jesus leads us one step at a time

The blind man doesn't know much about Jesus at first. He simply listens to Him and does what He asks. He goes to wash in the pool, and his sight is restored. As the story goes on, he slowly begins to understand more about who Jesus really is. By the end, he meets Jesus again and says, “Lord, I believe.”

This is how faith usually grows. Most of us don't have everything figured out. We don't always understand what God is doing. But Jesus doesn't ask us to understand everything at once. He asks us to trust Him with the next step. When we do, He gives us more light, more clarity, and a deeper sense of His presence.

The only real obstacle is a closed heart

The Pharisees in the story are not physically blind, but they refuse to see what is right in front of them. They are so sure they already know everything that they can't accept anything new - not even a miracle. Their problem isn't lack of intelligence; it's lack of openness. Jesus' words to them are challenging: “If you were blind, you would have no sin. But now you say, ‘We see,’ so your sin remains.”

In simple terms, Jesus is saying: God can help anyone who admits they need help. But He cannot help someone who insists they don't. The blind man receives everything because he is open. The Pharisees receive nothing because they are closed.

A Lenten invitation for all of us

Lent is a time to let God open our eyes. Not just our physical eyes, but the eyes of our hearts. It's a time to let go of pride, stubbornness, and the idea that we already “see” everything clearly. It's a time to ask God to show us what we might be missing - about ourselves, about others, and about Him. The blind man's simple prayer becomes our own: **Lord, help me to see.”**

Den John.

TO MAKE DONATIONS:

For **BACS Transfer**: Account Name: **CDP Gosport** Account No.: **00878538** Sort Code: **30-93-04** . Make all cheques payable to **CDP Gosport**, or you may scan the QR code. Standing Order and Gift Aid forms are available in the office.

Please Gift Aid your donations if possible.



We extend our thanks to Fr David Conroy for kindly celebrating Mass in our Parish whilst Fr Matthew is away attending his course. It has been a great blessing to have Fr David minister at St Mary's.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CATECHISM SESSION

The next session will be on Saturday - March 28 in the parish hall.

CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME

The children's Confirmation programme is coordinated pastorally by Fareham covering the parishes in Gosport, Lee-on-Solent, Stubbington, Park Gate and Fareham. This Confirmation pathway called "CHOSEN" has its next session on March 27-Fri from 7 - 8.30pm at St Philip Howard Church.

ALTAR SERVERS' TRAINING

There will be a training session for all altar servers on Saturday, the 21st of March from 2:30pm to 4:00pm.

Parents of children who have already received their First Holy Communion, and whose child would like to become an altar server, are warmly invited to bring their child to attend the training. An Altar Server application form will be available for new members.



TABELTOP SALE

St Mary's Fundraising Team is organising, once again, a tabletop sale on the 28th of March Saturday from 10am to 2pm. We are calling on our keen bakers, to kindly donate any home-baked items for our cake stall. We are also looking for volunteers to man some tables on the day. Please coordinate with Annette at ahkosche@gmx.com or contact the parish office.



THIS WEEKEND'S SECOND COLLECTION

The Clergy Assistance Fund contributes to the work of the Department for Clergy Team. The Clergy Support Team is responsible for looking after the welfare, ongoing formation and personal support of our clergy, such as the provision of spiritual direction, counselling, appraisal, ongoing formation and practical advice. It organises retreats, ministerial formation days, courses and sabbaticals. To donate, you may scan the QR code, use the parish DONA machine or visit the link: <https://tinyurl.com/fudb5jt7>



EASTER FLOWER APPEAL

Second collection for Easter Flowers will begin on the 22nd of March for two weeks. Envelopes will be available at the back of the church. If you wish to donate towards flowers to decorate the Church this coming season, there is an option on the DONA machine for this collection, too. Thank you.

BETHANY BEREAVEMENT GROUP—GOSPORT

Beginning May 12, 2026. We offer support for those experiencing the loss of a loved one. We help in providing comfort, support and friendship in a welcoming, safe space. Meetings are every second Tuesday of the month, from 1:00 - 3:00pm in St Mary's Hall. For more information, please contact Annette Hutchins at bethany.gosport@gmail.com



Would you like to talk about it with a priest?

Need to talk? Sometimes it can be hard to find time for a deeper conversation after Holy Mass. If you'd like to meet privately for one hour to discuss your faith, a personal struggle or wish to share what's on your heart, I will be available most Friday's from 15:00 to 18:00. To book a one-hour time slot, please email me a request of your preferred date and time and I'll get back to you. My email is: mking@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

- Fr Matthew King



DIOCESAN PRAYER INTENTIONS

Wednesday 11th March - of the 3rd Week of Lent

Diocesan Prayer: All who provide Children's Liturgy

Thursday 12th March - of the 3rd Week of Lent

Diocesan Prayer: Pastoral Care of the widowed, separated and divorced

Friday 13th March - of the 3rd Week of Lent

Diocesan Prayer: All who decorate our churches

LET US UNITE IN PRAYER FOR THESE INTENTIONS.

STANDING ORDER AND GIFT AID

We continue to thank all parishioners for your kind support to our parish in many ways. If you haven't yet, **please consider donating via a Standing Order, and sign up for Gift Aid.** These are vital in helping to sustain the life and mission of our parish. They provide a more stable, and 25% extra, parish income. Forms are available at the back of the church and from the Parish Office. Contactless Giving is available at the back of the Church. You can also Gift Aid your contactless donation. All you need to do is register once and all succeeding donations will be Gift Aided. Thank you!

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ARE YOU BEING CALLED TO THE PERMANENT DIACONATE?

Have you ever wondered what it's all about, but something has held you back from finding out more about it? Is there a little voice in your head, that can't be silenced? If that's YOU, why not 'Come & See' for yourself without committing to anything further? An information event will be held on **Saturday 28th March, '26** at The English Martyrs Church, Didcot, OX11 7AJ from 9am - 3pm where you'll get to hear first-hand, from those who are involved and what it's been like for them. You've got nothing to lose! If you'd like to attend, please call Pam on 07883 059 529 to book a space and to help with catering requirements. If you can't make it on the day, but would like to know more, please contact Pam, or email diaconate@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

VOCATIONS

Sat - March 21. Our Diocesan Vocations Promotion Team invites those discerning a calling to the priesthood, diaconate or religious life to join them for the next **Seeker Saturday**. Seeker Saturdays take place from 11am-3pm, at Sacred Heart Church, Fareham. PO16 ONQ. Why not sign up? If you are discerning if the Lord is calling you, then spending time with like-minded people can be really beneficial to any vocational journey. Our time together includes prayer, discussion, Mass, Adoration and lunch.

DISCERNMENT RETREATS

These are for single catholic women aged 18-35 who are open to discerning a monastic vocation. The next Retreats are Palm Sunday weekend **27th-29th March 2026, 7th-9th August & 9th-11th October at Minster Abbey, Benedictine Monastery**. For more information and to book a place, please contact Sister Walburga at ministervocations@gmail.com. The website for the Monastery is www.minsterabbeynuns.org

PILGRIMAGES

Mon - July 6th until Friday the 10th - Lourdes. The pilgrimage will start at London Heathrow Airport on Monday 6th July. To know more, please email lourdes@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or visit <https://tinyurl.com/mv639mbz> for a booking form.