



Holy Trinity Catholic Church

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Holy Trinity is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham Trust

Sunday 22nd February 2026 – the First Sunday of Lent

Readings: Year A

Dear Friends,

Did you know that our word for this period of 40 (actually 46) days comes not from Latin or Greek but from Old English? “*Lencten*” was the word for Spring, that time of the year when the days... lengthen.

We began our Lent in a very strong fashion on Ash Wednesday, with a full St. Teresa's at 9:15am, despite the cold, and an equally full Holy Trinity at 7 pm... despite the driving sleet! However, everyone starts a race strongly, and often finishes strongly too. It is the bit in the middle that sorts out the winners and losers! Let's hope and pray that we can maintain a steady pace that will see us through to the end: Easter, and the Resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Today, the First Sunday, we read of Temptations, both in the Old Testament reading and the Gospel. This is not of course a coincidence. In the Garden of Eden, the serpent, aka the devil, twists and turns to convince Eve that she will be in a much better state if she does the one thing she has been told not to do: eat the fruit of the Tree of Good and Evil. Please note there is nothing specifically about an apple!

Eve falls for this smooth patter and Adam weakly collaborates. The result is a cosmic catastrophe as they are banished from their idyll and told that life from now onwards will be hard and full of pain. This story is not a scientific account but an attempt to explain why things are not right either in ourselves or the world. Referring to Adam and Eve, St. Paul in our second reading from his letter to the Roman church writes:

“For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.”

This links to the Gospel where again Temptations are the focus. However, the Tempter is defeated as Jesus faces up to more half-truths and weasel words. Three times the Son of God is circled by Satan who cannot break His obedience to the Father and eventually Jesus is left alone... for the time being. In this season of purification and renewal, we can take an honest look at ourselves and ask: Am I like Adam and Eve, or Jesus? How do I react to temptation, which may be doing me harm or dragging me down? If we want to be victorious in this struggle against the negative and the harmful, we have to

turn to the Son of God for faith and strength to resist and overcome. And however many times we fail and fall... get up and keep on keeping on, trusting in the grace of God. That is why the Eucharist is totally central to the Christian life as here we can gain nourishment and strength for our personal battles. And Reconciliation (Confession) is another great channel of grace.

P.S. This next week I hope to be in Rome on a sort of half-pilgrimage half-holiday and I will be remembering both my flocks in the great churches of the Eternal City. Holy Mass will be celebrated on Tuesday and Thursday at the usual times, at Holy Trinity, courtesy of Fr. Paul to whom I am very grateful. Next Sunday will be 1st March, traditionally St David's day, but apologies to all the Welsh as we keep the Second Sunday of Lent this year.

God bless everyone and let's hope Spring is truly in the air soon!

Fr. Clive

Parish Notices

A statement from Friends of the Holy Land: "We would like to thank all parishioners for £1160.00 raised for Christians in the Holy Land, at a time when they are most vulnerable. Please continue to remember our work in your prayers, giving our brothers and sisters strength to continue."

Masses/Rosary this week: Tuesday, Thursday 9:15am Mass. Friday Holy Rosary for Peace 9:15am. **On a Wednesday during Lent,** Holy Trinity will be open from 7:30-9pm for silent prayer before the tabernacle.

Look ahead: 40hrs Devotion for Vocations at St. John's Banbury 19th-21st March. Poster at the back of church.

Funerals in March:

- ✠ Tuesday 10th March, Requiem Mass 11am @ Holy Trinity for *Ann Gross*;
- ✠ Thursday 12th March, Funeral Service 1pm @ St. Mary's, Chipping Norton for *Aidan Hughes*;
- ✠ Tuesday 17th March, Requiem Mass 1pm @ Holy Trinity for *Andrew Bradley*;
Eternal rest Grant unto them, O Lord.

Lourdes Petitions – One of our parishioners, *Julie Hart*, volunteers at the baths in Lourdes, twice a year; a powerful experience for which she is very grateful. She would like to share this privilege by offering to place a petition at the grotto or to light a candle, on behalf of anyone in the parish, the next time she next goes on pilgrimage, in May. Please contact Julie by emailing her at juliehart1@hotmail.co.uk.

Oxford Pro-Life Drinks on Saturday 28th February, 7.30pm @ The Royal Oak (Woodstock Rd, OX2 6HT). Come along to relax with like-minded people and keep connected with the pro-life community in Oxford. New comers are especially welcome! Just turn up, and why not bring a friend? Visit <https://oxfordprolife.org.uk/> for more info.

Please continue to pray for our sick, housebound and frail parishioners of both our Parishes.
In addition to your own daily prayers please remember: All those who mourn the loss of loved ones. The repose of the souls of those who have died. People whose anniversaries occur at this time.

The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the National and Archdiocese policies and procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representatives are **Tammy Lawson** and **Sharnalee Foster** (sg.stteresaoflisieux.charlbury@rcaob.org.uk). Alternatively, the Diocesan Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 0121 230 6240 or at safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk if you have any concerns.