

19th MARCH 2023

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT, YEAR A

“Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?” ‘Neither he nor his parents sinned,’ Jesus answered ‘he was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him’.”

John 9:1-2

Immaculate Conception Church

(Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth, Reg Charity No: 1199568)

Within the Pastoral Area of Southampton East
346 Portswood Road, Southampton, SO17 3SB
Tel: (023) 8055 5470

Website: www.immaculateconception.church

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Parish Priest: Fr Anthony Chiatu

Parish Deacon: Dcn Gerard Dailly

Hospital Chaplaincy: (023 8120 8517)

University Chaplain: Sr Emelliana Silva (07426 000213)

Safeguarding Officer: Pat Saunders

Parish Secretary: Rachel Brady (023 8055 5470)

Confessions: After 10 am Mass on Saturdays

Hall Bookings: contact the parish secretary

ALL MASSES ADVERTISED BELOW ARE AVAILABLE TO JOIN LIVE, ONLINE AT
www.churchservices.tv/portswoodchur

Date	Solemnities & Feast days	Times & Liturgies		Mass Intentions
Sun 19 Mar	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	-- Maureen Slevin RIP
Mon 20 Mar	St Joseph	-	No Mass	
Tues 21 Mar	of the 4 th week of Lent	9.30 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic Adoration Mass	Mena Judge & John McDermott RIP
Wed 22 Mar	of the 4 th week of Lent	10.00 am	Mass	-
Thur 23 Mar	of the 4 th week of Lent	10.00 am	Mass	-
Fri 24 Mar	of the 4 th week of Lent	10.45 am 11.30 am	Stations of the Cross Mass	Felix de Mello RIP
Sat 25 Mar	The Annunciation of the Lord	10.00 pm	Mass	
Sun 26 Mar	FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Denis Philpot RIP Charles Robertson RIP



READINGS FOR THIS SUNDAY

1st Reading: 1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13

Psalm: 23

2nd Reading: Ephesians 5:8-14

Gospel: John 9:1-41

TEA AND COFFEE AFTER MASSES

Please join us in the hall on **Sundays** after the 10.30 am Mass for tea and coffee. **And also after Mass on TUESDAYS** –A friendly welcome awaits you.



HAPPY MOTHERING SUNDAY!

Wishing all mothers a very happy day!

CAFOD'S BIG LENT WALK

NEXT SATURDAY, 25TH March, 10.00 am

Together with other Southampton Catholic parishes, starting from St.Boniface Church hall, walking to the Common and back to St.Boniface for approx 11.45.

Followed by Hot Cross Bus, Tea and Coffee.

ALL ARE WELCOME,

CHURCH BIG CLEAN – NEXT SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Saturday 25th March

Could you offer an hour or two to help out? There will be a number of different jobs to do. Please sign up on the list available in the church porch before or after Masses. This will help us assign people to task.

YOUR HELP WILL BE MUCH APPRECIATED. THANK YOU!

LENT SOUP LUNCHES

Every Friday during Lent, 12 noon – 2 pm

Come and join us in the hall for lunch on Fridays during Lent. A selection of delicious homemade soups and fresh bread plus tea and coffee. No entry fee but each week a different charity will be collecting donations. The charities we are supporting are as follows:



17 March - Parish SVP group

24 March – Aid to the Church in need

31 March – Amber (local charity)

Please come along and support us. If you need a lift, please contact the parish office.

Immaculate Conception Easter Art Competition for young artists

Have you entered yet?
Pick up a leaflet in the porch today and get creative!

Everyone who enters will receive a prize for their entry!



PARISH OFFICE OPEN NEXT WEEK

Tuesday – Friday, 9.30 am – 2.00 pm

The Holy Drama of Grace

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him. [John 9:35-38](#)

This is the conclusion to the story of the healing of the man born blind. It is the fifth of seven signs (miracles) in John's Gospel that point to the divinity of our Lord. This healing especially confirmed Jesus' teaching from the previous chapter: "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" ([John 8:12](#)). Jesus was the Light Who came to dispel all darkness, and now He illustrates this fact by opening the eyes of the blind man. This story is quite long and detailed. The details it includes makes it much more than a miracle. It is also a dramatic story revealing both the consequences of rejecting Jesus, as well as the blessings received by one who turns to Jesus in faith.

We begin with the detail that this man has been blind since birth. It was a common misconception at that time that such a birth defect might have been caused by the sins of the parents. In part, this came from a misreading of [Exodus 20:5-6](#) in which God said that He inflicts punishment "on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation." Jesus makes it clear that this was not the case; this man's blindness was a result of the natural disorder experienced by humanity as a result of original sin. If humanity had never been cast out of the Garden of Eden, disease and natural disorders would have never existed. For this reason, we should understand that we are all "blind" in the sense of being born into the state of original sin and are, therefore, in need of the grace of spiritual sight.

The healing of this man is done purely on Jesus' initiative. This shows that God's healing action in our lives is always His initiative. But Jesus clearly offered this man healing because He knew the man would eventually come to faith in Him, which is the far more important healing that took place in this story.

After the man is healed, a very interesting drama unfolds. The Pharisees hear of the healing and begin to interrogate the man. Afterwards, they also interrogate the man's parents and then the man for a second time. Throughout their interrogations, two things happen. First, the Pharisees slowly become more agitated, more irrational and end by completely rejecting both this miraculous sign and Jesus Himself. The man, however, begins with what appears to be a bit of ignorance about Jesus, but as he is interrogated and challenged to explain his healing, he deepens and clarifies his convictions, ending in the deepest faith when he cries out to Jesus, "I do believe, Lord." Then we are told that the man worshiped Jesus.

The dramatic unfolding of this story teaches us that when we are given the grace of God by hearing His holy Word spoken and witnessing His mighty hand at work, we must make a choice. Either we will respond in faith and slowly be drawn deeper into that faith, or we will rationalize it away

and reject God's saving action in our lives. It is not possible to simply remain indifferent to the Gospel when we hear it spoken or when we see its effects changing us or others.

Reflect, today, upon the two paths this sign from Heaven had on those present to this miracle. You, too, are present to this miracle through your reading of it. How will you respond? Will you imitate the Pharisees and discount the deep spiritual truths this action conveys? Or will you open yourself to the transforming power of this healing? Commit yourself to the path of this blind man. Say to our Lord, "I do believe, Lord." Apply those words to every action of Jesus in your life and allow that faith to lead you into worship of Him Who is the Light of the World.

A reflection for the Fourth Sunday of Lent, Year A
My Catholic Life, www.mycatholic.life.com

SECOND COLLECTIONS:-

TODAY SUNDAY 19th March 2023 – Clergy Assistance

This collection helps to fund the invaluable work involved in the Support of our Clergy: welfare, ongoing formation, personal support, from the early days of ordination through to retirement.

There are seventy diocesan priests in active ministry, plus forty-seven priests from religious orders, the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham and from overseas. We have forty-two diocesan priests in retirement. All these priests with dedication and care serve our parishes, chaplaincies, schools, outreach and mission - *bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church*. Thank you for your generosity, your prayers and your support for our priests.

NEXT SUNDAY 25th March 2023 – Flowers for Easter

Any donations can be made in cash or by cheque via the collection baskets in the church or using our card payment machine in the church porch.

The Parish Bank Account details are:

Name: CDP, Immaculate Conception Church,
Sort Code: 30-93-04, Account No: 00887995

RECENTLY DIED



Maria Farrao RIP Mother of Jonathan Farrao, Died on 12th March. **Maria's funeral will be held in the church on Wednesday 29th March at 12 noon**, followed by a burial at South Stoneham Cemetery. A gathering will be held in the hall afterwards to which any parishioners are invited. Please remember Jonathan and his family in your prayers. May she rest in peace.

*****Every Wednesday during March*****

LECTIO DIVINA LENTEN COURSE

"Turn to the Lord with all your heart"

7 pm – 8 pm, In the parish hall

Each session will last around an hour and include a short input, some helpful background information and tips, and a time of prayer. We would love for you to join us. Just turn up, but if you would like more information please contact Issy and Dom from the Verbum Dei community on verbumdei.soton@gmail.com

CHRISM MASS

St John's Catholic Cathedral, Portsmouth

Tuesday 4th April, 11 am.

A special liturgy in Holy week during which the oils are blessed for use in the sacraments during the year and brought back to each parish.

It is one of the main diocesan events held in the Cathedral each year and all are invited to attend this great celebration.

WHAT IS A DEACON? – Continued...

The third focus of a deacon's ministry – Charity

1. of the Word – proclaiming, preaching and teaching,
2. of the Altar – in Liturgy
3. **of Charity – in care of the poor and needy, in activating the Social Teaching of the Church**

Service of Charity

As a living icon of Christ the Servant, the service of charity is the most characteristic of the deacon's three-fold ministry. In the early Church he was often responsible to his bishop for the practical ordering of the Church's service of those in need.

"In every case it is important that deacons fully exercise their ministry, in preaching, in the liturgy and in charity to the extent that circumstances permit. They should not be relegated to marginal duties, be made merely to act as substitutes, not discharge duties normally entrusted to non-ordained members of the faithful."

The ministry of charity is likely to be most extensive part of a deacon's work and will vary greatly depending upon local needs, the gifts of individual deacons, and the directives of the bishop or parish priest.

THANK YOU, FROM MIKE DRAIN

Dear Friends

Many thanks for the great response to the appeal for Cuddly Toys, men's tee shirts and socks. These have been safely delivered to Ukraine and are bringing joyful relief to many children and Ukraine Army recruits.

It's better to do something positive than just watch helplessly, as the war drags on, so ever since this dreadful war began I've been involved with the various Response projects, which sprung up to help our neighbours. To be most effective I decided to join Ukraine Relief in Bournemouth. The team there is called Army of Hope and Love. Only Love can stop the war and only Love in action can deliver Hope and we must keep Hope alive. In one year, it has now delivered over 3,000 tons of vital Humanitarian Relief Supplies.

During the next couple of months, I will be stepping back to concentrate on other things but will briefly keep you in touch with what each response project is doing, from our lovely City of Southampton to Ukraine.

Therefore, from the recipients in Ukraine, many thanks for your generosity.

Mike

HOMES FOR UKRAINE

Saint John of God Hospitaller Services (SJOG) and [Caritas Social Action Network \(CSAN\)](#) are working together to provide a matching, training and support pathway for guests from Ukraine and hosts in the UK willing to provide much-needed support.

We will be holding two webinars for UK residents interested in hosting a Ukrainian guest or family under the Homes for Ukraine scheme:

- **Wednesday, March 22, at 6 pm**
<https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/homes4ukraine/>
- **Wednesday, March 29, at 7 pm.**
<https://fb.me/e/N9EtGqhe>

At SJOG Homes for Ukraine, we provide online training for hosts and guests, transfer from the Polish-Ukrainian border, a welcome box for Ukrainian guests upon arrival, a multilingual team to support the needs of both parties, and thoroughly developed resources for both hosts and guests to help navigate the process. Additionally, we ensure support from local communities to make the experience as seamless and fulfilling as possible.



STELLA MARIS

CHOCOLATE EASTER EGG APPEAL

Can you help us give an Easter egg to Seafarers this Easter? Stella Maris Chaplains and Volunteer Ship Visitors will be visiting ships in our Southern ports during Holy

Week and after Easter and will be bringing this great celebration to many hundreds of seafarers who remain confined to their ships at this time, without the prospect of taking shore leave or visiting a church. Together with faith materials, we would like to offer Easter Eggs and chocolates, the international symbol of celebration of this Solemnity of Solemnities and would greatly appreciate the support of your parish in our Stella Maris Easter Egg appeal. Can you help us by donating Easter eggs and chocolates? Please leave any donations in the box in the church porch.

Thank you!

JOB VACANCIES WITH THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH

Current Vacancies:

- Accounts Technician – Portsmouth
- Education Administrator, CASO Portsmouth
- Carers p/t, Southampton
- Head of Fundraising, Portsmouth
- Head of Communications, Portsmouth
- Various Diocesan school vacancies

For full details and to find out how to apply, please see the job vacancy section of ENews (in the item above) or go to the following link on the Diocesan website
<https://mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/current-vacancies>

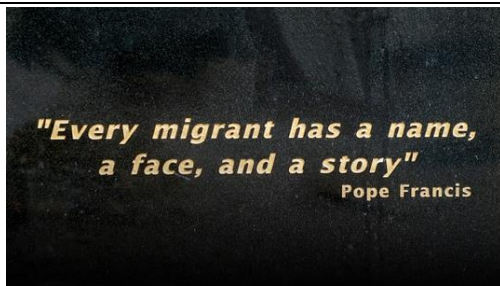
Frank Campbell invites you to the following private event at Southampton City Art Gallery:

radical/ARDENT GENTLENESS
(part of the National Gallery 'Fruits of the Spirit' project)

Saturday 25th March , 3.30 pm – 4.30 pm
(refreshments provided from 3 pm)

This event presents the project through artwork by Lizzie Jones and the reading of some of Frank's new texts which consider the relevance and necessity of seemingly extraordinary gentle actions in the world today. Further details on the porch noticeboard.

The event is free, but spaces are limited. If you would like to go, please RSVP to artgallery@southampton.gov.uk



LOVE THE STRANGER

This new document from the Department for International Affairs, presents a Catholic response to refugees and migrants.

The Illegal Migration Bill will soon come before the House of Commons seeking to make provision for the removal of those who have arrived in the UK in breach of immigration control. On behalf of the Bishops Conference, Bishop Declan Lang, Chair of the Department for International Affairs, and Bishop Paul McAleenan, Lead Bishop for Migrants and Refugees provide the foreword to 'Love the Stranger'.

“Everyone who makes a dangerous journey across the Channel to build a better life here has a name, a face, and a story. People are driven from their homes by poverty, conflict, persecution, natural disasters, or other factors that prevent their flourishing. Many have links to the UK or family members already living here. Yet, far too often, there are no safe routes open to them. While we all wish to end dangerous Channel crossings, this new legislation treats migrants and refugees as a problem to be solved rather than brothers and sisters towards whom we have responsibilities. Establishing more safe routes, and genuinely understanding people's individual circumstances are essential to meeting these. As Christians we call for the human person, made in the image and likeness of God, to be put at the heart of public policy.”

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/love-the-stranger/>

SPACES AT

ST SWITHUN WELLS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

If you would like your child to go to a Catholic Secondary school, their chances of getting in can be considerably higher if they go to a Catholic 'Feeder' primary school.

We often hear from Catholic families that they have been unsuccessful in their applications for Catholic Secondary schools in the city, even though they are practising Catholics. Children attending a Catholic feeder primary school in the city will be positioned higher on the admissions criteria than those who do not, and are hence, more likely to be offered a place.

St Swithun Wells is a wonderful Catholic Primary School in Chandler's Ford, close to Southampton and we currently have some spaces. It is an excellent option for those who may be looking to move their children into Catholic primary education.

A Catholic School is unique in its ability to offer children the chance to learn but also discern. At Swithun Wells Catholic Primary School, the children have a high-quality education which includes teaching by specialist music teachers and sports coaches. The outcomes for all children are strong and every child is treated as an individual, being nurtured to allow them to flourish. This fulfills our key scripture from Isaiah; 'I have called you by your name, you are mine.'

The school has extensive grounds which enable the children to understand and appreciate more about the gift of creation during science and geography lessons. Our children live out our Catholic values by reaching out to the local community by making and delivering cards, singing for residents in several care homes, inviting neighbours to tea parties, collecting food for the local food bank and organizing charity events.

A Catholic education is everything a child would get in a state school but so much more. The ethos of a Catholic school is special and helps children to develop, grow and live out their faith in a truly caring and supportive environment.

Where there are a number of children from specific areas, minibus transport can possibly be offered.

If you would like to visit St Swithun Wells, to discover for yourself what we can offer, please contact the admin office on 02380 266210 and arrange a tour.

