

1ST - 22ND  
FEBRUARY 2026



# Proclaim! Parish Newsletter!

SAVE THE DATE

- 4/2 6.30pm The Youth Club Yrs 5,6 & 7 (Parish Hall)
- 6/2 6pm - FHC Group 2 -Session #7 (Upper Parish Room-Presbytery)
- 7/2 9.30am - FHC Group 1- Session #8 (Cassidy Centre)
- 8/2 Altar Servers -Junior Acolytes Group 5pm Presbytery
- 11/2 6.30pm The Seekers (Parish Hall)
- 15/2 Altar Servers - MC's & Senior Acolytes Group 5pm Presbytery
- 18/2 ASH WEDNESDAY - ASHES DISTRIBUTED AT THE 10AM & 7PM MASSES AT ST MARY'S
- 25/2 6.30pm The Youth Club Yrs 5,6 & 7 (Parish Hall)
- 4/3 6.30pm The Seekers (Parish Hall)



Donations for our  
Roof fund will be  
gratefully  
accepted  
Including via this  
QR Code

Visit our  
WEBSITE

## A Call Beyond Our Comfort Zone

When Jesus proclaimed the Beatitudes, He did not speak to a select or perfect group. He spoke to the poor in spirit, the meek, the merciful, the peacemakers – to all who were open enough to listen. The Beatitudes are not simply beautiful words to admire; they are a way of life that gently but firmly challenges us to look beyond ourselves. In our parish community, it is easy to feel at home among familiar faces, shared traditions, and common experiences. These are gifts to cherish. Yet the Beatitudes quietly ask us an important question: Are we ready to reach out to those who are not part of our community? To those who feel unseen, uncertain, or even unwelcome?

"Blessed are the merciful." Mercy begins when we notice others. "Blessed are the peacemakers." Peace grows when we cross boundaries of difference, fear, or indifference.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit." Humility opens our hearts to learn from those whose lives may look very different from our own.

Living the Beatitudes means allowing our faith to stretch us – beyond comfort, beyond habit, beyond the familiar walls of our parish. It invites us to listen before we speak, to welcome before we judge, and to love before we ask anything in return.

As we reflect on the Beatitudes, may we ask ourselves honestly: Who is missing? And how might Christ be calling us to reach out, one small step at a time?

Because the Kingdom of God grows wherever hearts are open – and doors are left wide.



[brightonstmary.com](http://brightonstmary.com)

# Dispelling the Myths... Ash Wednesday



## What is Ash Wednesday?

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent—and a wonderful opportunity to make yourself 100% available to God!

How available to God are you? 50%? 75%? 96.4%? No matter what your answer, Ash Wednesday is the perfect time to decide that you will spend this Lent increasing that number.

On Ash Wednesday, you can get your forehead blessed with ashes at Mass. These ashes are a reminder that we need to repent. But what does it mean for us to repent, here and now, more than two thousand years later? It means the same as it did to the people walking around the dusty pathways in their sandals, trying to inch closer to Jesus as he passed through their town or village. Repent means “to turn back to God.” We all find ourselves needing to turn back to God many times a day, in ways small and large. It is not a matter of guilt and it is not a shameful thing. It is simply that we are a better version of ourselves when we return to his side!

## Why Ashes?

The ashes are a symbol of penance and reconciliation. The ashes are the burnt palms used on Palm Sunday of the previous year. These palms are burned in the Easter fire, lit on the Saturday night that marks the transition from Holy Saturday to Easter Sunday.

## Why so Public?

We don't receive the ashes as a sign of penance. Yes, the ashes are received on a day of fasting, and therefore are associated with fasting. However, the ashes are a reminder to us that we will one day die, and that we must repent. When we receive the ashes, the words we hear either remind us that we will turn to dust or urge us to turn away from sin. Therefore, by publicly wearing ashes, we are not trying to draw attention to our fasting. Rather, we are reminding ourselves and the world around us of the importance of turning away from sin and of the fact that this life does not last forever. We cannot live as though we will never die.

## Is Ash Wednesday a Holy Day of Obligation?

Contrary to popular belief, Ash Wednesday is not a Holy Day of Obligation. Even though you're not required to attend Mass, Ash Wednesday is a wonderful opportunity to rearrange your priorities and feed your soul before one of the most important seasons of the entire year!

## Can you eat meat on Ash Wednesday?

No. Unless you have a medical exemption, Ash Wednesday is a day of Abstinence for Catholics.

Avoiding meat can be difficult, but it's a powerful way to be disciplined about your priorities. When you make little sacrifices a part of your everyday spirituality, amazing things happen!

For example, suppose you have a craving for a Fizzy Drink, but you have a glass of water instead. It is the smallest thing. Nobody notices. And yet, by this simple action you strengthen your willpower and become an even better-version-of-yourself.

Or, say your soup tastes a little dull. You could add salt and pepper, but you don't. It's a little thing. It's nothing. But by saying no to yourself in small ways, it makes you even freer to say yes to the things that truly matter.

## What are the fasting rules for Ash Wednesday?

The Church requires all Catholics from ages 18\*-59 to fast on Ash Wednesday(\*14-17 Abstinence). As long as you are in good health, this means that you should only eat one full meal, plus two smaller meals that do not equal a full meal. Remember avoid eating meat.

There is great wisdom in the Christian practice of fasting—even though its benefits are largely forgotten! Fasting is a spiritual exercise, and as such is primarily an action of the inner life. Authentic fasting draws us nearer to God and opens our hearts to receive his many gifts.

Fasting is also a sharp reminder that there are more important things in life than food. Authentic Christian fasting helps to release us from our attachments to the things of this world. It is often these worldly attachments that prevent us from becoming the-best-version-of-ourselves. Fasting also serves as a reminder that everything in this world is passing and thus encourages us to consider life beyond death.

Go without food for several hours and you quickly realize how truly weak, fragile, and dependent we are. This knowledge of self strips away arrogance and fosters a loving acknowledgment of our utter dependence on God. Ash Wednesday is a powerful day to rediscover the power of fasting in your life!

## Make It Personal

Ash Wednesday is the perfect time to decide if you want to have the kind of Lent that's easy to forget...or the kind that changes your life. Do you want a renewed commitment to prayer? More discipline in a specific area of your life? A stronger marriage? More peace? This Ash Wednesday, set aside 15 minutes to set your intentions for the season of Lent!

## Keep in your prayers.....



## Please Join us in Pray for the Sick

Maureen Ashing, William Barrett, Tom Cullimore, Liz Humphries, Mary Ives, Peter Knott, Mary Neeson, Simone R, Liz Regan, Chris Rodrigues, Anthony Welham, Tracey Weller and all who carry their own crosses.

## Death Anniversaries

Phyllis Berry, Margaret Turner, Pamela Walsh, Mary Teresa Larratt, Barbara Winton, Eileen Rabbets, Ena Andrews, Barry Wells, Margaret Howell, Ella McLean, Maxine Ainscough, Paul Smyth, Anne Claydon, Mary Hayhurst, John Grist, Pierrette Atallah, Reginald Canneaux, Alfred Smith, Peter Tinsley & Jean Witts

(Names are listed for 25 years inline with the foundation mass format - Taken from our Parish Registers)

## FINANCE MATTERS - Saint Mary

11th - 25 January 2026

1st Collection: £1565.11 Gift Aid: £309.50

Sunday Tea & Coffee - Youth Ministry: £256.20

Roof Fund : £966.58

If you would like to financially support us we would be truly grateful. Cheques Should be made Payable to: St Mary's Church. If you would like to gift aid a donation - please include a letter stating this & that the donation is for Parish Refurbishment.

**Remember the Dona machines are available for card donations as well.**

Bank A/c -RCD A&B St Marys Brighton -  
Sort code 40-05-20 - A/c No: 41076434

# What's on in our churches?

## ST MARY'S MEN'S GROUP

A fortnightly rhythm of walking, talking, and brotherhood

### Fortnightly on Thursdays

Looking for a place to connect, share, and grow with other men?

Join us for six sessions designed around activity, conversation, and faith.

#### WHAT TO EXPECT

- Walks, food, and hands-on projects
- Honest conversations in a relaxed setting
- Short reflections
- Brotherhood and encouragement

#### UPCOMING THEMES

- Stress & Pressure
- Fatherhood & Role Models
- Work & Purpose
- Friendship & Brotherhood
- Health (Body & Mind)
- Legacy

#### WHEN & WHERE

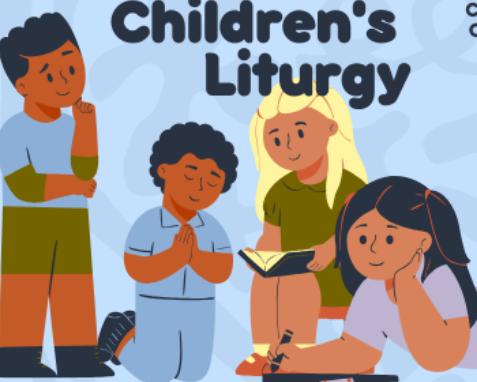
St Mary's Parish  
(various local venues)

To sign up, message Craig  
Walker (07809 198069)  
or email St Mary's

## CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP

Join Celia and her ecumenical team for Christian meditation every Monday at 7pm in person or online. - For more info please call Celia: 01273 555967

## Children's Liturgy



Join us after the Sunday 10am Mass for Tea, Coffee, Conversation & sometimes Cake!



Sip, chat, and enjoy beverages with friends

In the Church Hall  
(under the Church)

Your Donations go to our Youth Ministry Fund

## Youth Club

For Years 5, 6 & 7



In St Mary's Church Hall

Join us for  
Games, Friends &  
Fun

Starts at 18.30  
Pick-up 19.45-  
20.00



If you  
have any  
questions about  
the club email:  
stmaryyouthclub  
@outlook.com

The Club will be open on  
February 4<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>  
March 11<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>  
April 22nd  
May 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>  
June 10<sup>th</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup>  
July 8th

## WEEKDAY PRAYERS & LECTIO DIVINA

Most Thursdays 9.45am

Monastic Morning Prayers.

Most Fridays 9- 9.45am Adoration of the  
Blessed Sacrament

The Chaplet of Divine Mercy &  
Lectio Divina on Fridays  
will resume in the Spring.

ST MARY'S  
PRESTON PARK

## SEEKERS

### Teens Club

FIND YOUR VOICE.  
FUEL YOUR PURPOSE

Young people, this is YOUR moment. Join us for an unforgettable experience filled with:

BONDS OF  
FRIENDSHIP  
REAL TALK  
SESSIONS  
FUN, GAMES &  
MORE!

DYNAMIC  
LEADERS

FORTNIGHTLY ON

WEDNESDAY'S OPENS 6.30PM

FEBRUARY 11<sup>TH</sup> - MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup> & 18<sup>TH</sup>

APRIL 15<sup>TH</sup> & 29<sup>TH</sup> - MAY 13<sup>TH</sup> -

JUNE 3<sup>RD</sup> & 17 AND JULY 1<sup>ST</sup> & 15<sup>TH</sup>

ST MARY'S CHURCH HALL 5 SURRENDEN ROAD, BN1 6PA

FREE ADMISSION



FOR MORE INFORMATION:  
ST MARYYOUTHCLUB@OUTLOOK.COM

## Fr Seb Preaches

Our priests are great preachers to children.

All children are welcome to join in the  
preaching at  
Sunday 10am Mass

8<sup>th</sup> February

1<sup>st</sup> March

29<sup>th</sup> March

19<sup>th</sup> April

3<sup>rd</sup> May

10<sup>th</sup> May

31<sup>st</sup> May

14<sup>th</sup> June

28<sup>th</sup> June



CHILDREN ARE WELCOME TO JOIN OUR  
CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD AT  
THE 10AM SUNDAY MASS

1<sup>ST</sup> FEBRUARY  
15<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY  
22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY  
8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
22<sup>ND</sup> MARCH

12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
26<sup>TH</sup> APRIL  
17<sup>TH</sup> MAY  
21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE  
5<sup>TH</sup> JULY  
12<sup>TH</sup> JULY  
19<sup>TH</sup> JULY

## Spring BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSE



BAPTISM  
PREPARATION  
COURSE

Please contact the Parish Office to book your space on  
this course no later than February 20th.

A 1:1 Meeting with the Parish Priest is also required  
Attendance at both sessions is mandatory

MARCH 6 & 27<sup>TH</sup> 2026 | 6.15 - 8 PM

Further details & Forms sent when booking  
is received



### Altar Server Training

Novice & New Servers Group

2026 Season



Wednesday's 6pm -

Church/ Presbytery

- Unless otherwise stated

March 18th

April 15th

May 13th

If you've made your First Communion and  
would like to find out more about being an  
Altar Server please speak to Fr Sebastian or  
contact the Parish Office.

GET THIS NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

email : brightonstmary@abdiocese.org.uk with the Subject line : Add me to the Newsletter

## Masses at St Mary & St Thomas More

### SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup> February -

#### 4TH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

5.15pm - 5.45pm Confessions

**Saturday Vigil Mass -6pm** - Doreen Ruane, R.I.P.

**St Thomas More - Mass 10am -**

**For the People of the Community**

10 am - Daniel Payne, R.I.P.

12noon - Susan Cook, R.I.P

### MONDAY 2nd February

#### The Presentation of the Lord

**St Thomas More-Mass 9.30am -**

### TUESDAY 3<sup>rd</sup> February

10am Mass - Fr Jeffrey Scott, R.I.P.

### WEDNESDAY 4<sup>th</sup> February

**St Thomas More-Mass 9.30am -**

10am Mass - Sean Brendan D'Arcy, R.I.P.

4pm - Reception into the Church of Gerald Fleet

### THURSDAY 5th February

**11am Requiem Mass - Gerald Fleet, R.I.P**

### FRIDAY 6th February

9am - 10am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

10am Mass - For the Wellbeing of Nancy Files

**St Thomas More-Mass 9.30am -**

### SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> February -

#### 5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

5.15pm - 5.45pm Confessions

**Saturday Vigil Mass -6pm -**

Nellie Keane, R.I.P.

10am Mass - Health & Wellbeing of Tracey Weller

**St Thomas More - Mass 10am -**

**For the People of the Community**

12noon -

Pierrette Barbara Atallah & Amal Bamin, R.I.P.

### TUESDAY 10th February

10am Mass - Howard Pye, R.I.P.

### WEDNESDAY 11th February

**St Thomas More-Mass 9.30am -**

**NO 10am Mass -**

### THURSDAY 12th February

9.45am - Morning Prayers - Laudes

10am Mass - Special Intention - Alison Sockice

**St Thomas More : Parish Priest: Mgr. John Hull**

**Address: Braybon Ave, Brighton BN1 8HG**

**Phone: 01273 563017 Email: John.Hull@abdiocese.org.uk**

**General Enquires : brightonsttm@abdiocese.org.uk**

**www.saintthomasmorebrighton.com**

**Safeguarding Rep:Helen Costello sg1.brightonsttm@abdiocese.org.uk**

**PARISH OFFICE OPEN**



**TUESDAY- WEDNESDAY - FRIDAY 9AM TO 3PM  
PHONE/WHATSAPP: 07895 825296**



**Saint Mary : Parish Priest: Fr Sebastian Kijak**

**Address: 5 Surrenden Road, Brighton BN1 6PA**

**Phone/WhatsApp: 07895 825296**

**Email: brightonstmary@abdiocese.org.uk**

**www.brightonstmary.com**

**Safeguarding Reps:**

**Tracey McKay sg1.brightonstmary@abdiocese.org.uk**

**Siobhan Rogers sg2.brightonstmary@abdiocese.org.uk**

### FRIDAY 13th February

9am - 10am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

10am Mass - Susan Cook, R.I.P.

**St Thomas More-Mass 9.30am -**

### SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup> February

#### 6<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

5.15pm - 5.45pm Confessions

**Saturday Vigil Mass -6pm -**

The Neeson Family

**St Thomas More - Mass 10am -**

**For the People of the Community**

10am Mass - Hugh Gosney, R.I.P.

12 noon - For the Wellbeing of Nancy Files

### TUESDAY 17<sup>th</sup> February

10am Mass - **Free to Book**

### WEDNESDAY 18<sup>th</sup> February -

#### ASH WEDNESDAY

**St Thomas More-Mass 9.30am -**

**7pm -**

10am Mass - The Neeson Family

7pm - The People of the Parish

### THURSDAY 19th February

9.45am - Morning Prayers - Laudes

10am Mass - **Free to Book**

### FRIDAY 20th February

9am - 10am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

10am Mass - The Neeson Family

**St Thomas More-Mass 9.30am -**

### SUNDAY 22<sup>nd</sup> February -

#### FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

5.15pm - 5.45pm Confessions

**Saturday Vigil Mass -6pm - Free to Book**

**St Thomas More - Mass 10am -**

**For the People of the Community**

10 am - The Neeson Family

12noon - Susan Cook, R.I.P



### Why have a Mass?

There is no greater prayer, because the Mass is the perfect offering of the Son of God to his heavenly Father. In offering Mass for a specific intention, the priest prays to God that the fruits of Christ's redemptive sacrifice be applied to the requested intention, for the spiritual and temporal good of the person(s) concerned. Please book a Mass for any intention using the mass offering envelopes, via our website or by contacting the Parish Office. A Mass stipend or donation is an offering for the mass intention & contributes towards the parish priests living expenses for the year

### Mass Intentions

#### St Mary's

Dates get booked up in advance , to avoid disappointment for a specific date please contact us as soon as possible

### We're on Social Media



@stmarycatholicprestonpark



@StMarysPrestonPark



@STMARYCATHOLICPRESTONPARK