

3rd Sunday of Lent — 8th March 2026

St Benedict's Parish Newsletter Stratton-on-the-Fosse

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Sunday Masses

Saturday	5.00pm	St Benedict's
Sunday	10.00am	Abbey Church
Sunday	11.00am	St Benedict's

3rd Sunday of Lent Today's Gospel – like the first reading most particularly – encourages our Lenten observance by calling attention to our different 'thirsts', which may be fulfilled in different ways. Jesus and the woman at the well are both thirsty in the midday heat; the woman (carrying the water-bucket) desires rest from labour in addition to knowledge and love of God. The disciples return to Jesus for a midday meal, during which the Lord speaks of the rich harvest at which they are labouring together - 'one sows and another reaps' - and refers to his hunger 'to do the will of Him who sent me'. In this he is aided and abetted by the woman who bears witness to him in the town ('He told me all that I ever did') 'and many more believed because of his word'. In the desert of Sinai (first reading), one thirst led to another ('Is the Lord among us or not?') until Moses struck the rock whereas, in the New Testament, we can be guided by the words of Jesus towards a 'peace with God' which St Paul describes as 'access by faith into grace' in today's second reading - intended to remind us of our Baptism

Second Collections / CAFOD Some recent collections made in St Benedict's have been acknowledged with thanks: the Christmas collection for CCS Adoption raised £203.15 and the White Flower Appeal for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children raised £388.24. Last week's Lent collection for CAFOD raised more than £400 and further donations can be entrusted to Fr Martin (or use the Dona machine) until the end of March

Scrutinies We continue to pray for Rowan Jones and Matthew Smith, who are to be received into the Church with the Easter sacraments on the night of April 4th (Easter Vigil in Downside Abbey). Within the Rites of Christian Initiation for Adults, they will be presented with the Creed during the 11 a m Mass this Sunday: this is a gesture in which we can all share, as it represents our calling to pass our Faith on to others, in the manner of Apostles! Similarly, the Scrutinies for the two catechumens or candidates are part of a Lenten discipline in which we are naturally called to share: we'll hear more about this on Sunday March 22nd

Parish Safeguarding — Parish Representative —

Hettie McDermott is the Parish safeguarding representative and she can be contacted on mcdertmotthj@outlook.com

Weekday Masses

Tuesday 10th March — 3rd week in Lent	9.30am	Holy Ghost
Stations of the Cross	10.00am	
Thursday 12th March — St Gregory	11.35am	Abbey Church
The Great Pope and Doctor	6.00pm	St Benedict's
Rosary	6.30pm	
Friday 13th March - 3rd week in Lent	9.30am	Holy Ghost
Stations of the Cross	6.30pm	St Benedict's
Saturday 14th March — 3rd week in Lent	9.30am	St Benedict's

Stations of the Cross are celebrated during Lent in St Benedict's on **Fridays at 6.30 pm** and in Holy Ghost church, Midsomer Norton, on **Tuesdays at 10 am**

First Holy Communion The course for children aged eight and over began last Sunday and continues at 11 am on Sundays **March 15th & 29th, April 19th & 26th, May 10th & 17th** and then weekly **throughout June**, leading to First Communion on **Sunday July 5th**. Please contact Mrs Angela Bennett or Fr Martin if your child would like to sign up

St Gregory the Great Fr Michael Patey will celebrate Mass in the Abbey Church at 11.35am on Thursday 12th March, attended by Downside School and Schola Cantorum. All welcome to celebrate the patron saint of the basilica and monastic community.

Reconciliation Lenten Reconciliation Services are being held with Bishop Bosco throughout the diocese on weekdays at 7 pm (e.g. at Immaculate Conception, Devizes, on March 10th; at St Joseph, Tewkesbury, on March 17th; and at Christ the King, Thornbury on March 24th). Our parish celebration will take place **between 6 and 6.30 pm on Friday March 27th** (two days before Palm Sunday), followed by Stations of the Cross as usual at 6.30 pm

Big Lent Walk As indicated on the posters sent to us by CAFOD, anyone may participate in the Big Lent Walk (with their dog or otherwise) by obtaining sponsorship and 'signing up' online. St Benedict's Primary School are also organising a local group walk on **Thursday 19th March** with a wet weather contingency date of Thursday 26th. You can use the school Just Giving page to donate - https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/st-bens-fundraising-page?utm_medium=FA&utm_source=CL ('underscore' after each 'utm') - and thus contribute to the work of CAFOD in alleviating poverty around the globe

Memorial Acclamation

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again

First reading—Exodus 17:3-7

‘Give us water to drink.’

In those days: The people thirsted for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, ‘Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?’ So Moses cried to the LORD, ‘What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me.’ And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink.’ And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarrelling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, ‘Is the LORD among us or not?’

Responsorial Psalm—Ps 95(94):1-2. 6-7b. 7c-9. R7c, 8a

O that today you would listen to his voice!

‘Harden not your hearts.’

Come, let us ring out our joy to the LORD;
hail the rock who saves us.

Let us come into his presence, giving thanks;
let us hail him with a song of praise.

O come; let us bow and bend low.

Let us kneel before the LORD who made us,
for he is our God, and we the people,
the people of his pasture, the flock of his hand.

O that today you would listen to his voice!
‘Harden not your hearts as at Meribah,
as on that day at Massah in the desert
when your forebears put me to the test;
when they tried me, though they saw my work.’

Second reading—Romans 5:1-2, 5-8

Love has been poured into our hearts through the Spirit who has been given to us.

Brothers and Sisters: Since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and hope does not put us to shame, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person — though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die — but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Gospel Acclamation—Cf. John 4:42, 15

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

Lord, you are indeed the Saviour of the world;
give me living water, so that I will not be thirsty.

Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God.

Gospel—John 4:5-42 -‘A spring of water welling up to eternal life.’

At that time: Jesus came to a town of Samaria called Sychar, near the field that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there; so Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well. It was about the sixth hour.

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give me a drink.’ (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, ‘How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?’ (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, “Give me a drink”, you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.’

Jesus said to her, ‘Go, call your husband, and come here.’ The woman answered him, ‘I have no husband.’ Jesus said to her, ‘You are right in saying, “I have no husband”; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.’ The woman said to him, ‘Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshipped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.’ The woman said to him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming — he who is called Christ. When he comes, he will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am he.’ Just then his disciples came back. They marvelled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, ‘What do you seek?’ or, ‘Why are you talking with her?’ So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?’ They went out of the town and were coming to him.

Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But he said to them, ‘I have food to eat that you do not know about.’ So the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought him something to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work. Do you not say, “There are yet four months, then comes the harvest”? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest. Already the one who reaps is receiving wages and gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you did not labour. Others have laboured, and you have entered into their labour.’

Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman’s testimony, ‘He told me all that I ever did.’ So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, ‘It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world.’