

Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday — 29th March and 5th April 2026

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

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Sunday Masses

Saturday	5.00pm	St Benedict's (NO MASS 4th APRIL)
Sunday	10.00am	Abbey Church
Sunday	11.00am	St Benedict's

Palm Sunday Acclaiming the triumphal entry of Jesus into the Holy City, we already look ahead to Good Friday in the reading of the Passion. On this year's Palm Sunday we are given St Matthew's dramatic 'Year A' version (a favourite from many points of view) with its detailed citation of prophecy: Jesus was to enter Jerusalem 'humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden' (the new translation is less confusing than some of the earlier English versions!) St John's Passion, which we hear on Good Friday, is usually experienced as the most deeply tragic of the four Gospel versions, with its focus upon themes of Judgement and divine Passion. St Matthew heightens the drama with details such as the suicide of Judas, the confession of Pilate's wife and the earthquake on Good Friday. As we listen, we acclaim the wondrous mercy of God which Jesus is able to reveal, perhaps to its fullest known extent

Holy Thursday 'If I have washed your feet .. you also ought to wash one another's feet':- For the Mass of the Lord's Supper in **St Benedict's at 7 pm**, there are two lists at the back of church. Please sign the first one to volunteer for the feet-washing (one foot each, to be washed by Fr Martin). At the end of Mass, like the disciples in Gethsemane, we can 'watch with Jesus' at the Altar of Repose in the Baptistery (**approx. 8 – 10 pm**): please sign the second list indicating your preferred half-hour (or longer if wished) at the back of church. Compline can be said or sung at 10 pm if you'd like to stay

Good Friday Those who keep the Hour of Mercy on Fridays (3 – 4 pm) will be in the **Abbey Church** for the **Liturgy of the Passion at 3 pm**. This is the first day of a Novena of Prayer with those who will celebrate the Divine Mercy on the Sunday after Easter. Also on Good Friday: **Stations of the Cross in St Benedict's at 12 noon**

Catechumens We continue to pray for our catechumens, Matthew and Rowan, who will be received into the Church with the Easter Sacraments at the **Easter Vigil** in the **Abbey Church** on **Saturday (April 4th)** starting at **8 pm** with the Blessing of the Easter Candle, followed by the Vigil Readings, Baptismal Liturgy and Mass in the Holy Night

Memorial Acclamation

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

Weekday Masses

Tuesday 31st March — Tuesday of Holy Week	9.30am	Holy Ghost
Stations of the Cross	10.00am	
Thursday 2nd April — Mass of the Lord's Supper -Watching until 10pm	7.00pm	St Benedict's
Friday 3rd April - Good Friday— Stations of the Cross	12 noon	St Benedict's
Liturgy of the Passion	3.00pm	Abbey Church
Saturday 4th April — Stations of the Cross	12 noon	St Benedict's
Holy Night Vigil	8.00pm	Abbey Church

Tuesday 7th April — Easter Tuesday	9.30am	Holy Ghost
Thursday 9th April— Easter Thursday	6.00pm	St Benedict's
Rosary	6.30pm	
Friday 10th April - Easter Friday	9.30am	Holy Ghost
Saturday 11th April—Easter Saturday	9.30am	St Benedict's

Sacrament of Reconciliation Fr Martin will be available in St Benedict's on **Good Friday** between 11 a m and midday – or please leave a message on 01761 751615 to arrange an alternative time

Easter Flowers Donations can be placed in the basket on the table at the back of St Benedict's – or please donate in person to Marybell or to Fr Martin

Divine Mercy There will be a special celebration of the Divine Mercy in St Benedict's on **Sunday 12th April at 3 pm**, concluding with Adoration and Benediction and followed by tea in the Parish Hall

Pro-Life 'Commissioned' – the National Men's Pro-Life Conference – will take place on **Saturday April 18th** at Birmingham Christian College. This interdenominational event will include talks on fatherhood, marriage, post-abortion healing, spiritual warfare and sexual responsibility for 'humility, courage and integrity' in the Christian vocation. For further info, or to book a place: <https://marchforlife.co.uk/commissioned-pro-life-mens-conference/> or contact info@marchforlife.co.uk

20th April 7pm Parish Hall—Richard Mills will give a talk on Glastonbury. This will be in three parts - the Walk; History of the Abbey; Glastonbury today. Meet in the hall at 7pm for refreshments

Parish Safeguarding— Parish Representative – Hettie McDermott is the Parish safeguarding representative and she can be contacted on mcdermotthj@outlook.com

First reading Isaiah 50:4-7

‘I hid not my face from disgrace, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.’

The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary. Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught. The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious; I turned not backwards. I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting. But the Lord GOD helps me; therefore I have not been disgraced; therefore I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be put to shame.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 22(21):8-9. 17-18a. 19-20. 23-24. R2a

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

All who see me deride me;
they curl their lips, they toss their heads:
‘He trusted in the LORD, let him save him;
let him release him, for in him he delights.’

For dogs have surrounded me;
a band of the wicked besets me.
They tear holes in my hands and my feet;
I can count every one of my bones.

They divide my clothing among them,
they cast lots for my robe.
But you, O LORD, do not stay afar off;
my strength, make haste to help me!

I will tell of your name to my kin,
and praise you in the midst of the assembly;
‘You who fear the LORD, give him praise;
all descendants of Jacob, give him glory;
revere him, all you descendants of Israel.’

second reading -Philippians 2:6-11

‘He humbled himself, therefore God has highly exalted him.’

Christ Jesus, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Gospel Acclamation -Philippians 2:8-9

Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.
Christ became for us obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.
Therefore God has highly exalted him
and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.
Praise to you, O Christ, King of eternal glory.

The Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

At that time: Jesus stood before Pontius Pilate, the governor, and the governor asked him, ‘Are you the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said, ‘You have said so.’ But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate said to him, ‘Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?’ But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted. And they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release for you: Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?’ For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up. Besides, while he was sitting on the judgement seat, his wife sent word to him, ‘Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream.’ Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release for you?’ And they said, ‘Barabbas.’ Pilate said to them, ‘Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’ They all said, ‘Let him be crucified!’ And he said, ‘Why? What evil has he done?’ But they shouted all the more, ‘Let him be crucified!’

So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, ‘I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.’ And all the people answered, ‘His blood be on us and on our children!’ Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.

Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, ‘This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.’ Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who would destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, ‘He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, “I am the Son of God.”’ And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, ‘This man is calling Elijah.’ And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, ‘Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.’ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. *All kneel for a period of silence.*

And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’