

Weekly Message from Fr William for the Second Sunday of Lent 2023

Dear People of St Mary's, I shared some reflections on 'almsgiving' last Sunday, one of the three traditional Lenten practices. Lent is a season when we might decide to be particularly intentional in charitable giving, like in response to the CAFOD appeal last Sunday. You can give to CAFOD at any time via their website. And if you kept the CAFOD family fast day on Friday you could even donate any savings you may have made.

Your ongoing financial support of the parish also has an obvious charitable dimension. You are giving to the community. Your continued donations to the weekly collection, and to the monthly Building Loan Fund, support the life and the work of the community. Without this the parish would cease to exist.

Most of the weekly collection comes in from you now by Standing Order, which is particularly helpful. It provides for the parish a steady and predictable level of financial support. The parish now has one of the highest uptakes of Standing Order across the diocese. This also places us in a strong position should another lockdown be necessary at some point in the future. It's also simplest for you once you've set up, and simplest for the parish in terms of administration. To set up a Standing Order, click the DONATE button on the parish website for more information, or fill in a Standing Order form from the Atrium, or ask me for guidance.

If you prefer to pay as you go, then the DONA machine in the atrium is a good option for cash free giving for your weekly donation or for your monthly Building Loan Fund donation. Or you can go onto the parish website (the address is displayed on the wall before mass) and click DONATE for other cash free ways of giving.

The text giving facility is now being withdrawn, both for your weekly donation and for your monthly donation to the Building Loan Fund. (Some charities like CAFOD will continue to offer this option.) Thank you those who supported this mode of giving. If you were donating by text giving you might now consider switching to a Standing Order or to one of the other ways of giving, including for the Building Loan Fund.

Giving by cash is another option, and I take the opportunity to say a big thank you to our volunteers who make this possible – those who put the buckets out, and then lock the cash away in the safe after mass, those who come in during the week to count it, record it, and then take it up to the bank or PO to deposit it, and those who register it in our accounts.

However you choose to give, thank you for your ongoing financial support of the parish.

After careful consideration I have decided not to return to passing a plate round during mass, or having collectors standing at the doors on the way out.



Second Sunday of Lent 5th March 2023