

# St Mary's Lanark

A Parish of the Diocese of Motherwell (founded 1859) Charity No - SC011041

✉ 70 Bannatyne Street, Lanark, ML11 7JS

✉ stmarylanark@rcdom.org.uk

📞 01555 662234

🌐 www.stmaryslanark.org.uk

## Parish Priest

Fr John-Paul McShane  
frmcschane@rcdom.org.uk



St Mary's Clubrooms Bookings: 07300857616

Saint Vincent de Paul Helpline: 07565396878

**3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**25th January 2026**

## Word of God Sunday

Word of God Sunday, celebrated on the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, is a precious opportunity for the Church to renew her commitment to Sacred Scripture. Instituted by Pope Francis, this day reminds us that the Word of God is at the very heart of Christian life. It is through God's Word that we come to know Christ, grow in faith, and learn how to live as His disciples in the world today.



From a pastoral perspective, Word of God Sunday speaks directly to the needs of God's people. Many believers struggle with fear, discouragement, confusion, and spiritual dryness. In these moments, the Word of God becomes a source of strength and consolation. Scripture assures us that God walks with His people, listens to their cries, and remains faithful to His promises. When the Word of God is proclaimed in the liturgy, it is not merely read as a text from the past; it is God speaking to us here and now, offering guidance, healing, and hope.

This celebration also invites pastors, catechists, and parish leaders to reflect on how Scripture is presented and received within the community. The reverent proclamation of the Word, thoughtful homilies, and moments of silence after the readings help the faithful listen more deeply. Word of God Sunday encourages parishes to foster a culture where Scripture is loved, understood, and prayed with, rather than remaining unfamiliar or intimidating.

Practically, Word of God Sunday challenges every Christian to integrate Scripture into daily life. This can begin with simple and realistic practices. Reading the Gospel of the day, reflecting briefly on a psalm, or praying with a short passage of Scripture can open our hearts to God's presence. Families can make the Bible part of their routine by sharing a reading together, especially with children, helping them grow up familiar with God's Word. Individuals can keep a Bible in a visible place at home or use a daily Scripture app as a reminder to pause and listen to God.

Word of God Sunday also calls us to become doers of the Word, not merely listeners. Scripture constantly urges us to love our neighbour, forgive those who hurt us, seek justice, and care for the poor and the vulnerable. When the Word of God shapes our attitudes and actions, it becomes a living testimony to Christ's love. In this way, Scripture moves from the page into our lives and into the world around us.

Ultimately, Word of God Sunday is not meant to be limited to a single celebration each year. It is an invitation to a lifelong journey of listening and responding to God. By opening our hearts to Sacred Scripture, we allow God's Word to form us, guide our choices, and strengthen our mission as disciples. May this celebration inspire us to treasure the Word of God, trust in its power, and allow it to be a lamp for our feet and a light for our path.

## Weekly Parish Schedule

*Daily Mass & Devotions from St Mary's are broadcast on the parish YouTube Channel.*

**Sunday 25th January** St Mary's Church will close after the 5pm Mass

**10.30am** Holy Mass for the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (St Mary's)

**12noon** Holy Mass for the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (Holy Trinity)

**5.00pm** Holy Mass for the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time (St Mary's)

**Monday 26th January** St Mary's Church will be opened Monday - Friday from 8am until 3pm

9.10am Recitation of the Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

**Tuesday 27th January**

10.00am Holy Mass (St Catherine's)

11.30am Confessions until 11.55am

11.40am Recitation of the Holy Rosary

12noon Angelus & Holy Mass

**Wednesday 28th January**

9.10am Recitation of the Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

**10.00am Church Cleaning**

**Thursday 29th January**

9.10am Recitation of the Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

**7.30pm St Mary's Choir Weekly Rehearsal (St Mary's Clubrooms)**

**Friday 30th January**

9.10am Recitation of the Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

**Saturday 31st January** St Mary's Church will open at 8am and close after the 5pm Mass

9.00am Confessions until 9.25am

9.10am Recitation of the Holy Rosary

9.30am Holy Mass

4.30pm Confessions until 4.50pm

4.30pm Recitation of the Holy Rosary

**5.00pm Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (St Mary's)**

**Sunday 1st February** St Mary's Church will close after the 5pm Mass

**10.30am** Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (St Mary's)

**11.15am** Coffee Morning (St Mary's Clubrooms)

**12noon** Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Holy Trinity)

**12.35pm** Light Bite (Holy Trinity)

**5.00pm** Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time (St Mary's)



## Please Pray For The Following

**Recently Dead:** Mamie McAvoy      Glebe Court

Mary McCulloch; Alice Hynds (Wishaw); Ronnie Watson; Raymond Cullion; Kathleen Campbell;

**Months Minds & Anniversaries:** Rose Kelly; John Donnelly; Mary Taggart; Annie Scotland; Mary Tait; Kirstin Small; Jimmy McEwan;

**Funeral Arrangements:** Mamie McAvoy      Requiem Mass: Wednesday 4th February 9.30am

## St Mary's Weddings 2026

If you have booked St Mary's for your wedding, or are intending to book St Mary's, for 2026, and if you have not done so already, please contact Fr John-Paul to arrange a meeting to begin the legal and Church paperwork which takes several months to complete.

The best form of contact is email:

[frmcschane@rcdom.org.uk](mailto:frmcschane@rcdom.org.uk)

## St Mary's Memorial Plaques

There are still some space available on the Memorial Wall for anyone who would like to purchase a plaque in memory of a loved one. Forms are available at the back of the church. The order will be placed at the end of January and this will be the last bulk order.

**Completed forms, along with payment, should be returned no later than Saturday 31st January.**

## Assisted Suicide Bill

This weekend we have an opportunity to raise our voice in support of the sanctity of life and to help protect the many people that will be adversely affected by this bill.

We heard last week that an assisted suicide law is unnecessary, unsafe and dangerous, and as Catholics we have a duty to never abandon the vulnerable and poorest in our society.

This Campaign allows us to effectively tell some of the 7 MSPs who voted for assisted suicide in our area why, as Christians, we oppose this bill and to urge them to reject this bill when the final vote is taken. I urge you to sign the letters that will be available at all Masses this weekend. It only takes a minute of your time.

A certified copy of the miraculous image of Our Lady of Guadalupe has been on display in St Mary's this week so please remember to keep praying to defeat this Bill.

## Deanery Appeal

This year our annual Deanery Appeal will support the work of the Religious Society of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, who work in a number of countries including Zambia, Uganda, Philippines & El Salvador. They work in Justice and Peace, combatting Human Trafficking, Orphans and Street Children, Skills Training - Youth and Women. The Society is heavily involved in a ladies prison in Zambia, working with women and also with children, who were in prison with their mothers. Please pray for these sisters and those whom they work amongst.

**A Second Collection will be taken up at all Masses on weekend 7th/8th February  
to support the work of Religious Society of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary.**

## Annual Accounts & Pastoral Report

Our annual accounts for year ending 31st December 2025 have now been submitted to the Diocese. Fr John-Paul will prepare his annual Pastoral Report which he hopes to share with the parish in the coming weeks. The Parish Finance & Fabric Committee will meet soon to discuss the Returns for 2025 and forecast for 2026.

## Clydesdale Foodbank Collection

Our Monthly Foodbank Collection will take place **next weekend**. Bags of groceries can be handed in to the sacristy or to a passkeeper, and any monetary donations can be placed in the collection basket in an enveloped clearly marked 'FOODBANK'.



## St Mary's Ministry Rota

### Readers:

24th/25th January		7th/8th February	
5.00pm	C. Jackson	5.00pm	T. Coia
10.30am	E. Crossan	10.30am	E. McCabe
5.00pm	S. Casserly	5.00pm	S. Casserly

31st Jan/1st Feb		14th/15th February	
5.00pm	G. Abernethy	5.00pm	F. Chung
10.30am	A. Servers	10.30am	J. Angus
5.00pm	N. Donnelly	5.00pm	M. Davis

### Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:

24th/25th January		7th/8th February	
5.00pm	M. Keenan	5.00pm	A. Dempsey
	C. Callaghan		J. McBride
31st Jan/1st Feb		14th/15th February	
10.30am	C. Duddy	10.30am	J. Littlejohn
	I. Maxfield		A. O'Neill
	J. Russell		N. Keenan
5.00pm	F. McBride	5.00pm	C. Scott
	R. Sinton		S. Callaghan
10.30am	J. Littlejohn	10.30am	V. Hilland
	A. O'Neill		M. Thompson
	N. Keenan		B. Farrell

# The Sanctity of Life

As the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill continues its passage through the Scottish Parliament, the debate over legalising assisted dying has drawn intense moral, legal and pastoral scrutiny. While advocates frame the proposal as a compassionate expansion of choice for those at the end of life, many within the Catholic Church view it as a dangerous departure from long-held teachings on the sanctity of human life.

The Bill, introduced by Liberal Democrat MSP Liam McArthur, seeks to permit assisted dying — the provision of medical assistance to a terminally ill, mentally competent adult who wishes to end their life — under tightly defined conditions. If enacted, Scotland would become the first part of the UK to introduce such a law. The legislation has already passed its first stage, and detailed scrutiny continues.

At the heart of the Catholic Church's opposition to assisted dying is its understanding of the sanctity and inherent dignity of every human life. According to traditional moral teaching, human life is a gift from God that must be protected and cherished from conception to natural death, and it is considered morally wrong to intentionally end a life, even at the person's request. This principle is rooted in longstanding Church documents and teachings opposing euthanasia and assisted suicide as 'crimes against human life'.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England, Wales and Scotland — representing Catholic leadership across Britain — has repeatedly affirmed this position, stating that both assisted suicide and euthanasia "involve the deliberate termination of human life and are therefore a violation of the sanctity of life". The Church argues that calling assisted suicide "assisted dying" is misleading because it obscures the reality that the process involves actively ending a life.

From the Catholic perspective, there are several core objections to the assisted dying proposal:

## 1. Undermining the Value of Life

Catholic leaders argue that assisting a person to die sends a harmful societal message: that life with suffering, illness or disability is less valuable. Bishop John Keenan of Paisley described the Bill as promoting "a dangerous idea that a citizen can lose their value and worth" because of illness or infirmity. The concern is that normalising assisted dying could shift cultural attitudes away from care and accompaniment toward efficiency and utility, particularly for the sick and vulnerable.

## 2. Risk to the Vulnerable

The Church and allied groups warn that even strict eligibility criteria cannot fully protect vulnerable people — such as the elderly, disabled or those experiencing mental health struggles — from subtle pressures to choose death. Critics argue that rejected amendments to tighten safeguards, such as restricting eligibility to those with only six months or less to live or mandating fully funded palliative care plans, highlight the risk that vulnerable individuals could be placed under undue pressure.

## 3. Compassion vs Assisted Death

Catholic teaching emphasises that true compassion involves accompanying people in suffering, not providing means to end their lives. Bishops have stressed the importance of enhanced palliative and hospice care as the morally appropriate response to suffering at the end of life. This approach aligns with the Church's belief that pastoral care, spiritual accompaniment, and holistic medical support reflect genuine compassion.

## 4. Slippery Slope Concerns

While the Bill's current text defines eligibility carefully, Catholic commentators often point to experiences in jurisdictions where assisted dying laws have expanded beyond their original scope. The bishops have cautioned that what starts as a limited right for terminal illness could be extended over time to include broader categories, risking harm to those not originally intended to be covered.

For Catholics, the debate isn't solely about policy details — it touches on deep moral convictions about human dignity and the role of society and the state in protecting life. The Church's stance reflects a broader culture of life philosophy, which holds that society should support the vulnerable, uphold the value of all life, and invest further in palliative care and social support rather than enabling death.

The Catholic critique of the Assisted Dying Bill in Scotland is rooted not just in religious doctrine, but in a moral outlook that views every human life as intrinsically valuable and deserving of care until natural death. As legislative debates continue, Catholic leaders are urging lawmakers to reject assisted dying and to focus on enhancing life-affirming care and supports for all who suffer. Whether this perspective will shape policy outcomes remains a central question in Scotland's ongoing public and parliamentary discourse.