

St Mary's Lanark

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

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Parish Priest

Fr John-Paul McShane

frmcshane@rcdom.org.uk



St Mary's Clubrooms Bookings: 07300857616

Saint Vincent de Paul Helpline: 07565396878

3rd Sunday of Advent

14th December 2025

Confession: Fear or Faith

The Sacrament of Confession, also known as Reconciliation or Penance, stands at the heart of the Christian journey toward healing and spiritual renewal. Yet for many, approaching the confessional is a moment filled with tension: a mixture of fear, humility, and hope. This blend of emotions is not a flaw in the spiritual life but a reflection of the deep human desire to be both known and forgiven.

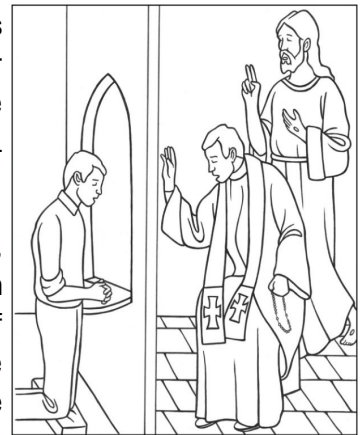
Fear often arises from vulnerability. To confess is to unveil our weaknesses, failures, and moments of selfishness—things we often hide even from ourselves. Some worry about being judged, others fear confronting the truth of their actions, and still others feel overwhelmed by shame. These feelings are understandable. Confession invites honesty, and honesty can be uncomfortable. But fear, when acknowledged, can become an entry point to grace rather than a barrier. It reminds us that we are stepping into something sacred, something that demands courage.

Faith, however, reframes the experience. Confession is not a courtroom but a place of encounter. It is here that the Christian believes God meets the sinner with mercy, not condemnation. The priest, acting as a representative of Christ and the Church, listens not to catalogue faults but to proclaim forgiveness and to guide the soul toward reconciliation. Faith assures us that the sacrament is less about dwelling on sin and more about rediscovering relationship—returning home, like the prodigal son, to a father who runs to embrace his child.

When fear and faith meet within the confessional, they create a space for transformation. Fear draws us to humility, preventing complacency. Faith lifts us into confidence, refusing despair. The sacrament works through both: fear keeps us honest; faith keeps us hopeful.

Those who regularly practice confession often discover that, over time, the balance shifts. What once felt intimidating becomes a source of profound peace. The fear of judgment gives way to the relief of being unburdened, and the act of confession becomes an expression of trust—trust that God's mercy is greater than our mistakes, and that spiritual growth is possible.

Ultimately, confession is a sacrament of love. It acknowledges human weakness while celebrating divine compassion. In the delicate balance between fear and faith, the believer discovers something deeper: the courage to face the truth, and the grace to begin again.



Fr John-Paul

Weekly Parish Schedule

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

Sunday 14th December *St Mary's Church will close after the 5pm Mass*

- 10.30am** Holy Mass for the 3rd Sunday of Advent (St Mary's)
- 12noon** Holy Mass for the 3rd Sunday of Advent (Holy Trinity)
- 5.00pm** Holy Mass for the 3rd Sunday of Advent (St Mary's)

Monday 15th December *St Mary's Church will be opened Monday - Friday from 8am until 3pm*

- 9.00am** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 9.25am
- 9.00am** **Confessions until 9.25am**
- 9.10am** Recitation of the Holy Rosary
- 9.30am** Holy Mass & Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Tuesday 16th December

- 10.00am** Holy Mass (St Catherine's)
- 11.30am** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 11.55am
- 11.30am** **Confessions until 11.55am**
- 11.40am** Recitation of the Holy Rosary
- 12noon** Angelus & Holy Mass
- 2.00pm** **Requiem Mass for the Repose of the Soul of Greta Reilly (Family Only)**
- 6.30pm** **Theology of Tap Christmas Narrative (Our Lady & St John's Blackwood ML11 9RZ)**

Wednesday 17th December

- 9.00am** **Confessions until 9.25am**
- 9.10am** Recitation of the Holy Rosary
- 9.30am** Holy Mass
- 10.15am** **Advent Prayer Circle (St Catherine's)**

Thursday 18th December

- 9.00am** **Confessions until 9.25am**
- 9.10am** Recitation of the Holy Rosary
- 9.30am** Holy Mass
- 7.30pm** **St Mary's Choir Weekly Rehearsal (St Mary's Clubrooms)**

Friday 19th December

- 9.00am** **Confessions until 9.25am**
- 9.10am** Recitation of the Holy Rosary
- 9.30am** Holy Mass

Saturday 20th December *St Mary's Church will open at 8am and close after the 5pm Mass*

- 9.00am** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 9.25am
- 9.00am** **Confessions until 9.25am**
- 9.30am** Holy Mass
- 4.30pm** **Confessions until 4.50pm**
- 4.30am** Recitation of the Holy Rosary
- 5.00pm** **Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent (St Mary's)**
- 5.30pm** **Confessions until 6pm**

Sunday 21st December *St Mary's Church will close after the 5pm Mass*

- 9.45am** **Confessions until 10.15am**
- 10.30am** Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent (St Mary's)
- 11.15am** **Coffee Morning & Christmas Raffle (St Mary's Clubrooms)**
- 12noon** Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent (Holy Trinity)
- 5.00pm** Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent (St Mary's)
- 5.30pm** **Confessions until 6pm**



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 given to Fr John-Paul in plenty time.

Coffee Morning/Christmas Raffle

The next coffee morning will take place on **Sunday 21st December** after 10.30 Mass. The Christmas Raffle Draw will also take place at this event.

Raffle tickets will be available from weekend 15th/16th November.

Thank you for your continued support!!

Theology of Tap - Christmas Narrative

Fr Andrew Robinson, who we know so well from supplying at St Mary's, is giving a talk on the Christmas Narrative in Our Lady and St John's, Blackwood (ML11 9RZ), on **Tuesday 16th December at 6.30pm**. All are invited to attend, and this will be the perfect way to ease ourselves into Christmas and allow the Scriptures to speak to us afresh.

Papal & Parish Flags

We are delighted to display in the narthex our new Papal and Parish Flags! The flags will be housed on the sanctuary once Advent is over.

The Papal Flag was donated by the Sharkey family, in memory of Andrew Sharkey. We thank Siobhan, Andrew and Benjamin for their kindness, and very soon a plaque will be fixed to the base in remembrance of Andrew.

It is quite fitting that the Papal Flag is in memory of Andrew to represent his great commitment to his faith and leadership as a Husband, Father and Catholic Head Teacher, and also his unwavering dedication to the Scouts Movement as Vice President and former Chief Commissioner of Scotland.

St Mary's Bell Tower Update

Work in the bell tower is progressing at a steady pace. As one would expect, dealing with a building over 100 years old is never easy, but we are very lucky to have good builders on site who have managed to overcome a few obstacles.

To date, the beams have been stripped of surface rust, existing paint and inspected. They will be treated and repainted. All loose debris/concrete has been removed from the beams and further inspections are ongoing for the installation of supporting brackets.

The same process will be carried out on the bell cradle and further direction will be given by the architect before the new internal floor is fitted.

Christmas Confession Times

As we prepare our hearts for the joy of Christmas, now is the perfect time to step into the quiet peace of confession. In this sacrament, we encounter God's mercy, renew our spirit, and make room for God's grace.

No matter how long it has been, Christ welcomes us with open arms. Let this Advent be a moment of healing, hope, and a fresh start—come and experience the gift of reconciliation before Christmas.

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve 5pm Mass: The Children's Choir will lead the music for this Mass—and we hope a special guest will find time to visit us at the end of Mass.

Christmas Eve 8pm: The Choir of St Mary's will lead this Solemn Mass with more traditional carols and hymns.

Christmas Day Masses: Both the 10.30am and 12.15pm Masses will be accompanied by the parish choirs.

Christmas Mass Times 2025

Wednesday 24th December - Christmas Eve

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| 5.00pm | Vigil Mass of Christmas (Children's Choir) |
| 7.30pm | Carol Service (The Choir of St Mary's) |
| 8.00pm | Midnight Mass of Christmas |

Thursday 25th December - Christmas Day

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|---------|--------------------------------------|
| 10.30am | Day Mass of Christmas |
| 12.15pm | Day Mass of Christmas (Holy Trinity) |





Please Pray For The Following



Recently Dead: Greta Reilly Langvout Court, Biggar

Fr Paddy Gaffney CSSp; Kathleen McComish (Largs); Eileen Heffernan (Co Tipperary); Larry McGuire;

Months Minds & Anniversaries: James & Mary McCrossan; John Maxfield; Andrew Sharkey;

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

John 3:16

Christmas Remembrance Masses: If you would like Holy Mass offered for your beloved dead and their names recorded in the Christmas Bulletin, please hand in their names before **MONDAY 22ND DECEMBER**. Names can be handed into the sacristy, posted through the chapel house door or placed in the basket with your weekly collection, but please write on the envelope **CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCE**, and please print the names clearly to avoid typing errors.

Liturgical Calendar

Monday 15th December, St John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor of the Church - Born in 1542 at Fontiveros (Spain); died on this day in Ubeda. A Carmelite priest who joined Saint Teresa of Jesus in the work of Carmelite reform and, despite opposition and imprisonment, organised the discalced Carmelites. Noted for his mystical writings, which combine theology and poetry to describe the spiritual journey through darkness to union with God.

300 Club: November Winners

Week 2nd Nov: **184** Week 9th Nov: **216** Week 16th Nov: **160**

Week 23rd Nov: **287** Week 30th Nov: **107**

St Mary's Lanark 80-12-97 10246763

If your phone number has changed please email Kathleen to update your contact details.
This is important so we can let you know if you are the lucky winner!! stmarylanark@rcdom.org.uk

Parish Weekly Finances

Offertory Collection & Donations: £ 1,511.00

Standing Orders: £ 184.50

Votives: £ 145.00

Stall: £ 195.00

St Marys Mission RCDM

80-17-02 00265809

Thank you *for your*
continued generosity

St Mary's Ministry Rota

Readers:

13th/14th December

5.00pm F. Chung
10.30am M. McCusker
5.00pm N. Donnelly

27th/28th December

5.00pm T. Coia
10.30am J. Angus
5.00pm S. Casserly

20th/21st December

5.00pm R. McConnell
10.30am J. Russell
5.00pm M. Davis

3rd/4th January

5.00pm F. Chung
10.30am A. Servers
5.00pm S. Casserly

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:

13th/14th December

5.00pm K. Bryce
A. McGowan
10.30am V. Hilland
M. Thompson
B. Farrell

27th/28th December

5.00pm F. McBride
R. Sinton
10.30am K. Lawrence
J. McFarlane
J. Russell

20th/21st December

5.00pm M. Keenan
C. Callaghan
10.30am C. Duddy
I. Maxfield
M. Russell