



The Newman Cluster

Parish Priest: Rev. Fr Simon Ellis

Parish Office for the Cluster

Email: christ-theking.bham@rcaob.org.uk

Tel: 0121 373 0988

Opening Hours: Mon-Fri 8.30am- 3pm

The Newman Cluster is a growing into a united Catholic community comprising the following places of worship

Christ the King ("CTK")
124 Warren Farm Road
Kingstanding
B44 0QN

Our Lady of the Assumption ("OLAM")
82 Old Oscott
Maryvale
B44 9SP

St Margaret Mary ("SMM")
59 Perry Common Road
Perry Common
B23 7AB

Other Clergy in the Cluster

Assistant Priest: Fr Leonard Cox fr.leonard.cox@rcaob.org.uk

Also in the Parish: Fr. Jude Mbonu

Parish Deacons: Rev. Mr. Gary O'Brien dcn.gary.obrien@rcaob.org.uk
and Rev. Mr. Dominic Fahey dcn.dominic.fahey@rcaob.org.uk

Convent of the Sisters Minor of St Francis
192 Hawthorn Road Kingstanding B44 8PU
Phone +44 121 3500 716

Email: smsfbirmingham@gmail.com

Welcome to Mass on the Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Today's Liturgy of the Word

First Reading: Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13 *I will leave in your midst a people humble and lowly.*

Responsorial Psalm Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 1: 26 -31 *God chose what is weak in the world.*

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia! Alleluia! Rejoice and be glad for your reward is great in heaven. Alleluia!

Gospel: Matthew 5: 1-12a *Blessed are the poor in spirit.*

LITURGIES AND EVENTS THIS WEEK: Con: Convent; CTK: Christ the King; OLAM: Maryvale; SMM: St Margaret Mary's; MPS Maryvale Primary School; MI Sacred heart Chapel at the Maryvale Institute (First Friday Mass)

Sat	31/01/26	Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Vigil Masses)	12.00 CTK	Recitation of the Rosary
			12.30 CTK	Eddie McKeown (Anniv)
			18.00 OLAM	Liam Curran (RIP)
Sun	01/02/26	Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	09:30 CTK	Bill & Kath Rice (RIP)
			11:15 SMM	Mary Teresa Doyle (RIP)
Mon	02/02/26	Feast of the Presentation of the Lord ("Candlemas")	07:30 SMM	Private Intention
			08:00 Con.	Ellen Cran (RIP)
			19.00 CTK	Private Intention
Tue	03/02/26	Feria in Ordinary Time	09.30 MPS	Jaqui Carron (RIP)
			16.00 CTK	Deacon Gary's Catechism Class
			19.00 SMM	Cluster Youth Club (11-18s): Movie Night
Wed	04/02/26	Feria in Ordinary Time	08:00 Con.	Muriel Cowan (RIP)
			08.15 SMM	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament
			09.15 SMM	Celebrant's Intention
			17.30 SMM	Sycamore: The Power of Prayer
			19.30 CTK	Meeting of the Executive Committee of the PWA
Thu	05/02/26	St. Agatha (Virgin and Martyr)	NO LITURGY TODAY	
Fri	06/02/26	St Paul Miki and his Companions (Martyrs)	09.00 CTK	Frank King (RIP)
			19.00 MI	Celebrant's Intention
Sat	07/02/26	Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Vigil Masses)	12.30 CTK	John Mitchell (Anniv.)
			15.00 OLAM	Merger Consultation Meeting at Maryvale Community Centre, Old Oscott Hill B44.9SP.
			15.00 SMM	Wedding: Gemma Murphy & Samuel Jefferson
			18.00 OLAM	Kitty Heaney (Anniv.)
Sun	08/02/26	Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	09.30 CTK	Edward Ranahan (RIP)
			11.15 SMM	Barbara King

The Sacrament of Reconciliation: A priest will be available to hear Confessions from 11.45 am on Saturdays (CTK) 5.15 pm on Saturdays (OLAM), 08.45 am on Sundays (CTK) and Wednesdays 08.15 (SMM) or by prior appointment

Fr. Simon writes: At the conclusion of the season of light, 40 days after Christmas, we celebrate the day Jesus was presented in the temple; hence: "The Presentation of the Lord". This Feast is also known as Candlemas. Candles were once frowned upon in Reformation Britain, but now they are back! They are lit at home, at roadside memorials and Churches whether Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant. What we celebrate on 2nd February are the words of Simeon speaking of the baby Jesus: "Mine own eyes have seen the salvation since Thou hast prepared before the face of all people – a light to enlighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel".

The parishes in the Cluster are part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity No. 234216

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL AND FORMATION FOR CATHOLIC LIFE

Sanctuary Lamp Dedication throughout January at CTK is dedicated to the Flynn and Rice families, and at OLAM to Gheorghe Andries (Bobby). There is still availability for February at CTK & OLAM.

Pray For The Sick: Jean McCabe, Paul Cowan, Gerald, John, Josephine Brown, John/Sandra Mageean, Sadie Pulido, Sarah McCallion, Claire/Mark, Carole Smith, Niamh O'Reilly, Jo Teece, Mary Ann Gniadkowski, Alberto Bolongaro, Kyle Billing, Nicola Jones, Patricia Nash, Joanne Fields, Caitlin Hodgetts, Joan/Alan Horton, Peggy O'Donovan, Pauline O'Brien, Elizabeth Teague, Christine Stephens, Margaret Coogan, Sadie Kennelly, Michael Deane, Peter Hadland, Margaret Head and Anne Cunningham.

RIP: Please pray for Margaret Costello (Peggy), Patricia Anne Donnelly, Julie Geraldene Fleming who died recently and for Mark Coupe, Esa Susan Morton, John Joseph Riordan, Terence Stephens, Alan Collins, Joseph Thomas, Dave Edgington, Jamie Arrowsmith, Jadzia Zarzycka, Averil Cozens, John Driver, Catherine Ivy Byrne, Dom Kevin Taggart OSB, Joyce Holloway, Fr. Simon Hall, Christopher Calland, Eddie Walsh, Jennifer Harrison, Grazyna Grunau, Brenda Jones, Hughie Patricik Underwood, Val Lennon, Danny McCrossan, Peggy Jackman, John Murtagh, Michael Patrick O'Donoghue, Anthony Crear, Ruth Black, Michael Coffey, Fr. Osmond Abbott, Esther Hill, Margaret Greenleaf, Nola Murray, Linda Cookson, David Fitzsimons and Christopher Diggie.

Forthcoming Funerals: **Margaret Mary Costello:** Margaret will be received into church on **12th February at 5pm.** Margaret's Funeral Service will be celebrated on **13th February at OLAM.** The funeral service of Julie Geraldene Fleming will be celebrated on **16th February 11.30am at SMM.** Patricia Anne Donnelly's Funeral service will be celebrated on **26th February at 12.00 at SMM** May the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace!

Mass Intentions: We will do our best to respect specific dates and requests for particular places of worship, but we cannot absolutely guarantee it. In particular, we cannot necessarily ensure that a weekend Sunday Mass will be available. Please continue to put your envelope and stipend into the parish office so that we can keep a record of all Masses requested, **please also make sure to add a contact number to your intention.** There will need to be a discussion at the next Parish Pastoral Council meeting about the best long-term solution in the circumstances.

Reorganisation of our ministry of Holy Communion to the sick and housebound: we will need to integrate this absolutely vital ministry across the Cluster and this will inevitably require new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) to be commissioned. We know that there many people either at home or in care homes whom we need to visit. **Please pray about this. Is God calling you to this ministry?** . All existing and any potential new Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are requested to attend a meeting **on Wednesday 11th February 2026 at 7.30 pm** in the Guild Room to address the following: reminder of the nature of the Ministry both in Mass and outside Mass; what the Church expects of Ministers from the *moment they receive the Sacrament to take out to the sick and house bound; discussion about current practice with a view to establish a single best practice throughout the Cluster; allocation of responsibilities.* Please make every effort to attend this. The experience of existing Extraordinary Ministers will be a valuable contribution to the meeting. All Extraordinary Ministers (current and new) will be commissioned afresh on Holy Thursday at the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper (**Thursday, 2nd April**).

Reorganisation of the preparation of our parish children for the sacraments of initiation: The Sacraments of Initiation are: Baptism, Eucharist (First Holy Communion) and Confirmation. A person needs all three in order to become a full member of the family of the Catholic Church. We would like to thank all the families who are waiting for further information about baptism preparation for the patience whilst we gradually get ourselves organised in the new structure. **All parents wishing to present children for baptism are invited to come to a meeting on Saturday 14th February at 10.30 am.** We also need to start getting information to the parents of children preparing for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. However, before we can do any of that we need to review how this important subject has been dealt with over the past two years, make changes where necessary and establish a best practice across the Cluster. To that end, Fr. Simon is inviting all interested parties to a day on evangelisation, initiation and the sacraments which the Newman Cluster of parishes (Christ the King, Our Lady of the Assumption & St Margaret Mary) will be having on **Saturday, 21 February in the Newman Gallery at SMM beginning at 10 am aiming to finish at 2 pm.** The guest speaker will be Fr Sean Gough who is the parish priest at the Divine Mercy Cluster of parishes at Chelmsley Wood. Fr Sean has produced some wonderful resources and, equally importantly, has done some critical thinking around initiation, catechesis and evangelisation. To let Fr. Simon know you are coming, please email him on: fr.simon.ellis@rcaob.org.uk.

Sacrament of Holy Communion & Confirmation 2026: A third and final enrolment date of Sunday 22/02/2026 9.30am has been arranged. Please contact the parish office on 0121 3730988 or christ-theking.bham@rcaob.org.uk to confirm your attendance. Please hand in a completed enrolment form to the parish office before the enrolment date. In preparation for this enrolment, parents are asked, please, to complete and application form from the parish office which is open from 08.30 am to 3 pm Monday to Friday. Telephone and email details are given on p.1. of this Newsletter.

News of Fr. Thé: Fr. Thé has been in touch to let us know how he is getting on. He has been in Taiwan for 3 weeks now and he says that he is being kept very busy (no change there, then) and he has absolutely no trouble in falling into a deep sleep any time after 9 pm. He says that he is enjoying life with all his other fellow student missionaries. He ends his love to one and all. Please continue to pray for him.

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PARISH, COMMUNITY, DEANERY AND DIOCESAN NOTICES

Christ the King/OLAM



Last Week's Collection CTK

Loose:	£ 396.82
Envelopes:	£ 136.00
S/O	£ 259.35
Total:	£ 792.17

St Margaret Mary / POLW



Last Week's Collection SMM

Loose:	£228.25
Envelopes:	£147
New Building Fund:	£10
Total	£385.25

Mass attendance for last weekend
CTK/OLAM: 412 (CTK – 356 and OLAM – 56).

SMM: 162

Dona average per week (CTK): £37.00.

Last Week's Collection OLAM

Loose:	£ 104.60
Envelopes:	£ 205.55
S/O	£ 223.85
Total:	£ 534.00

Welcome to Fr. Jude: Fr. Jude arrives in the parish this week. Alongside his primary job as a Law Lecturer at Newman University, he will be a welcome addition to the clergy team supporting Fr. Simon.

A word of thanks: Fr. Simon and Deacon Gary would like to express their heartfelt thanks to the team of parishioners who came together to clear the Christ the King Presbytery and make it fit for Fr. Jude's arrival. It was a lot of hard work. Much appreciated.

Racial Justice Sunday: This year Racial Justice Sunday falls on 1st February. In recognition of this, the West Indian Chaplaincy invites you to a conference which begins at 10.30 am on **Saturday 7th February** full details including venue and how to register are on the poster at the back of each Church.

Half-Day of Recollection at the Convent of the Sisters Minor of St. Francis: The Sisters invite you to join them for prayer, worship, bible study and cake over tea on 21st February at the Convent beginning at 3 pm.

Urgent Appeal for Volunteers: We need new volunteers to take charge of the PowerPoint and projection at the 11.15 Mass at SMM. Our thanks go to Christian and Yvonne who previously did this for us and who have relocated out of the Cluster.

Sycamore Course: The Sycamore Course offers an opportunity to get to know our faith better and to reflect on it. Sessions take place in the Newman Gallery at SMM You reach the Newman Gallery via the Church. **Parents of children preparing for First Holy Communion and Confirmation are especially encouraged to attend.**

New Heights Community Project has a vacancy for a Community Development Officer. You will play a key role in developing and coordinating community events and activities. At 30 hours per week over five days and £31,736 per annum, if you think this could be for you please email Cameron at, cameron.archer@new-heights.org.uk for more information or go to <https://new-heights.org.uk/get-involved/>

Cluster Youth Group: The Cluster Youth Group meets in the Newman Gallery at SMM on Tuesdays. Forthcoming dates and topics are: 03/02 (Movie Night); 24/02 (Police Visit); 27/02-01/03 (Called to Serve Altar Servers' Retreat at Alton Castle); 10/03 (Art Night); 24/03 (Easter Biscuit making night).

Vacancy at St. Thomas and Edmund of Canterbury, Erdington Abbey: The Abbey is looking for a new Receptionist and Office Assistant. The salary will be £13.75 per hour. It is a permanent part time post seeking 8 hours per week. Those interested must send a CV and supporting statement to Fr. Kieran (fr.kieran.brady@rcaob.org.uk) by **5th February 2026**. Shortlisting will take place on 5th and 6th February 2026. Interviews will take place in the 2nd week of February. Full job description is on the poster at the back of each Church.

40 days for Life: This is a focussed period of prayer which officially begins on Ash Wednesday (18th February) and ends on Palm Sunday (29th March). The Launch Event in this Diocese will take place on Sunday 15th February 2026 at 2 pm at St. Joseph and St. Helen's Church Hall, 84 Northfield Road, King's Norton, Birmingham B30 1JG. It is an all-age event entitled: "A New Generation Rising to Defend Life". Young pro-lifers will share their reasons for being involved in this project. No booking is necessary. Contact Isabel on 07773 501721 or izzys@gmail.com for more information or to get involved.

Fr. Hudson's Race Night: There will be a fundraising Race Night at Coleshill Town Hall on 10th March 2026 in aid of Fr. Hudson's projects: 7pm to 10.30 pm (First Race 7.15 pm). The entry cost is £20 to include a fish and chip supper.

The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and National and Archdiocesan policies and procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representatives in the Cluster are Caroline Gorman (CTK), Angela Hooker (OLAM) and Renata Olkowska (SMM). To report concerns or issues email Caroline on sg.christ-theking.bham@rcaob.org.uk; Angela on sg.ol-assumption.bham@rcaob.org.uk and Renata on sg.margaret.mary.bham@rcaob.org.uk Alternatively concerns or issues can be reported to the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on **0121 230 6240** or safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk

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MERGER NEWS NO. 4

Merger Consultation – Next Meeting: There will be a meeting in the Maryvale Community Centre, Old Oscott Hill B44 9SP on **Saturday 7th February 2026 at 3 pm** to consider issues raised in the September consultation specifically about that area of the Cluster. Anybody in the Cluster is welcome to attend whether they worship regularly at OLAM or not. The meeting will be chaired by Graham Green (Vice-Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council). Jackie Scott (the Chair of the Merger Advisory Group) will be present and address the meeting. Deacon Gary will also address the meeting. Wendy Gasson will take minutes.

Quick Recap

- The September Consultation across CTK and OLAM received 375 replies and numerous comments by way of feedback. Of those replies two thirds came from CTK and one third from OLAM. What was then the 10.00 Sunday morning Mass at CTK accounted for 50% of all the replies just on its own.
- With varying degrees of enthusiasm, it seems now to be generally accepted that there must be a merger by fusing the two parishes of CTK and OLAM so that resources, human and otherwise, can be shared to everybody's benefit.
- When CTK and OLAM are fused into one parish, the new parish must have a new name. "Parish" here does NOT mean the building in which we worship but the community that comes together to worship in whatever buildings we have. A new name marks a fresh start in that community's mission to live out and spread the Gospel. The new name does not require the schools to change their name. The buildings which serve as our places of worship will not be changing their name either.
- The Parish Council, following a suggestion from the Merger Advisory Group, agreed that two names be put forward to you for consideration. Those names were: (1) St. John Henry Newman and the Sacred Heart and (2) Blessed Dominic Barberi. "Saint John Henry Newman and Sacred Heart" was overwhelmingly more popular but there were a number of comments indicating that the choice was too narrow and that whilst St John Henry Newman and the Sacred Heart captured the rich history of Maryvale, other parishes with similar names were close by and it was, being frank, a bit of a mouthful. The Merger Advisory Group recognises that we need a second look at that aspect of the merger.
- The other major matter in the September consultation was the question of the future of the current OLAM Church. The issue there is: can the building be repurposed or should we move down the hill to use the Sacred Heart Chapel at the Maryvale Institute or find some other place of worship. Since September, work has been going on behind the scenes to examine a proposal from Cardinal Wiseman school that they buy the building from the Parish and convert it into a 6th Form Centre with the parish using what would then be a school chapel for Mass at weekends.

Where are we now?

- Amongst the various issues considered in the Merger Document (on the websites) was that of Mass times. We no longer need to consult on that because the new schedule has been fixed following Fr. Thé's departure for Taiwan.
- There will be a second consultation specifically about new parish name on 7th/8th March. There will be a list of names at all three of our places of worship for which you can vote. The aim is to draw up a short list of 3-5 names which we can submit to Archbishop Bernard. He has the ultimate decision. Parish names have to have "a sacred designation", i.e. a saint's name. Names referring to Council Wards or postcodes are not allowed (Rome's rules).
- After careful investigation, the Cardinal Wiseman proposal is not feasible. This will be a disappointment to many but unfortunately it is a no go.

What will be discussed on Saturday 7th February?

- There will be a fuller explanation of why the Cardinal Wiseman proposal cannot happen and what other options there are for providing an appropriate place of worship on the Maryvale side of the parish.
- In view of some of the comments on the feedback, the way Diocesan Finances work, who is responsible for building repairs and what happens to the money if parish buildings are sold needs to be thoroughly explained.
- There is clearly also some concern about the place of OLAM within the Cluster so that will have to be discussed as well.

How will the meeting be run?

- The meeting will start at 3 pm with prayer. After some introductory comments from the three members of the panel, there will be an opportunity for small group discussion. We will have a tea break somewhere around 3.45/4.00 pm. Then there will be feedback from the groups and any final questions. The meeting will close with prayer at 5 pm.
- There will be an opportunity to join with Deacon Gary in Evening Prayer at 5.15 pm.

After Saturday's meeting, what next?

- There will be a report to the Parish Pastoral Council when it next meets on 10th February.
- There will be the consultation on names on 7th/8th March – see above.
- The draft Petition for Merger which must be submitted to the Archdiocese will be available for comment after all Masses on the weekend of 21st/22nd March and before the evening Mass of the Annunciation on 25th March.
- The aim is to submit the petition as soon as possible after Easter Sunday.

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