



OUR LADY OF THE CRAYS RC CHURCH, CRAY VALLEY
312 High Street, St Mary Cray, Kent BR5 4AR



Tel: 01689 821749 Email: crayvalley@rcaos.org.uk
Parish Priest Email: cyriacusokafor@rcaos.org.uk
Website: www.ourladyofthecrays.com

Parish Priest: Fr. Cyriacus Okafor
Deacon: Reverend Longinus Anyanjo
Parish Secretary: Dominica Winter

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

St. Philomena's
Tel: 01689 826550
Chelsfield Road, BR5 4AD
Head Teacher: Miss V Maher

St. Peter & St. Paul
Tel: 01689 828208
St Paul's Wood Hill, BR5 2SR
Head Teacher: Miss K Everson

Our Lady's Pre-School - www.ourladyspreschool.net
Manager: Anne-Marie Glancy Tel: 07983 660589

To hire the Parish Hall for any event please contact: 01372 457651

SUNDAY 22ND MARCH 2026
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (A)

"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live" (John 11:25)

This weekend is the 5th and the last Sunday in Lent, as next Sunday is 'Passion Sunday,' and finally 'the Holy Week', that reaches its climax on 'Easter Sunday.' The three readings of today fit beautifully together as they tell us of death yielding to a new way of life. The prophet Ezekiel in the First Reading urges the exiled Israelite people in Babylon to look beyond the siege and destruction of Jerusalem to a new future, when God's Spirit will restore their nation. St. Paul in the Second Reading assures the Roman Christians that the power of God's Spirit will give life to their mortal bodies. In the Gospel, Christ demonstrates his power over life and death by raising Lazarus from the dead. This miracle not only shows Christ as the Resurrection and Life (John 11:25-26), but also reinforces our belief in the life-after-death. The raising of Lazarus is a powerful symbol of a new life that all of us can undergo, when we submit to Jesus as our Lord and Saviour.

Death is inevitable, as nothing in life is more certain than death. Most times, we are scared of the thought of death and given these challenging times, the fear of death is more pronounced. In the midst of this fear, Jesus assures us: "I am the resurrection and the life". By this assurance, He gives meaning to our pains, trials and death. By releasing Lazarus from the bondage of death, Christ is ever ready to set us free from the bondage of sin, depression, disillusionment and other vices that hinder our relationship with him.

Confiteor (I Confess)

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore, I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Kyrie, eleison.

Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy.	Kyrie, eleison	Kyrie, eleison.
Christ, have mercy	Christ, have mercy.	Christe, eleison	Christe, eleison.
Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy.	Kyrie, eleison	Kyrie, eleison.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading: A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel 37: 12-14

Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 130: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6b, 6c-8

Response: *With the Lord there is mercy, in him is plentiful redemption.*

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive to the sound of my pleadings. **R**

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand?
But with you is found forgiveness, that you may be revered. **R**

I long for you, O Lord, my soul longs for his word.
My soul awaits the Lord more than watchmen for daybreak. **R**

More than watchmen for daybreak, let Israel hope for the Lord.
For with the Lord there is mercy, in him is plentiful redemption.
It is he who will redeem Israel from all its iniquities. **R**

Second Reading: A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans 8: 8-11

Brothers and Sisters: Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

Gospel Acclamation

Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord.

Everyone who believes in me shall never die.

Glory to you, O Christ, Son of the living God.

THE GOSPEL: A reading from the Gospel according to John 11: 1-45

At that time: A certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary, who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent to him, saying, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it he said, 'This illness does not lead to death. It is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.'

Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So, when he heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours in the day? If anyone walks in the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him.' After saying these things, he said to them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I go to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover.' Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he meant taking rest in sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus has died, and for your sake I am glad that I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. And he said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus wept. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?' Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man,

said to him, 'Lord, by this time there will be a smell, for he has been dead four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out.' The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.' Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what he did, believed in him.

The Gospel of the Lord. *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit (*all bow*) was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Pray brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

SANCTUS

English

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.

Latin

***Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus
Dóminus Deus Sábaoth***

**Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.**

***Pleni sunt caeli et terra glória tua.
Hosána in excélsis.***

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord.**

***Benedíctus qui venit in nómine
Dómini.***

Hosanna in the highest.

Hosána in excélsis.

We shall pray **Preface I of Lent** and say **Eucharistic Prayer II**

The Mystery of Faith

Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.

English

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Latin

Agnus Dei, qui tolis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tolis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.

Agnus Dei, qui tolis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

***O Sacrament most Holy, O Sacrament Divine,
All praise and all thanksgiving, be every moment thine (x 3)***

PARISH INFORMATION AND FAITH NEWS

Second Collection This Weekend: There will be a second collection this weekend in aid of Poor Parishes. This collection, formerly known as the Needs of the Diocese, enables the Archbishop to make grants to some of the poorer parishes in the diocese.

Easter Offering: Envelopes are now in porch for your Easter offering and you can also donate via the contactless machines. This is a gentle reminder that your donations at Easter are your personal gift to Fr. Cyriacus. If you are a member of the Gift Aid scheme, please add your Gift Aid number to the envelope so that we can claim the tax back.

Lectio Divina: As part of our Lenten programme, we encourage parishioners to join us for Lectio Divina on Wednesdays from 6.30-7.15pm. The sessions will be followed by the evening Mass. Please bring your bible.

March Birthdays: This weekend we are celebrating all our parishioners who were born in the month of March with a special blessing at the end of each Mass. Please join us in the hall after Mass for birthday cake and refreshments.

A Day With Jesus: Our Lenten retreat will take place on Saturday the 28th of March. Please take a flyer from the porch. There will be four priests offering the Sacrament of Reconciliation, so this is an ideal time to make your Confession before Easter.

Altar Servers Training: There will be a training session for all our parish altar servers on Wednesday the 1st of April at 5pm. Parents are encouraged to ensure their children attend this session.

Washing of the Feet: If any adult would like to have their feet washed on Maundy Thursday, please add your name to the list in the porch.

Stations of the Cross: During the Lenten period, there will be Stations of the Cross every Friday at 7.30pm conducted by the different Groups in the Parish.

Mar 27 th	Legion of Mary	April 3 rd	11am	Confirmation & Holy Communion Candidates
		GOOD FRIDAY	7.30pm	Fr. Cyriacus

Lenten Prayer Requests: Lenten prayer request sheets are placed by the font. Please return the completed forms to the box provided.

Lenten Alms Collection: Alms are collected throughout the season of Lent. You can put your alms in the box labelled 'Lenten Alms' placed near the font.

Finance Meeting: There will be a meeting of the parish Finance Committee on Wednesday the 15th of April at 8pm. All members of this committee are asked to add this date to their diary.

Marriage and Family Life Course: The next session of 'Rooted in Love' takes place via Zoom on Thursday the 26th of March at 8.30pm. This is an opportunity for married and engaged couples to grow closer, deepen their faith and meet new people. Email mflkent@rcaos.org.uk to sign up or receive more information.

Planning Application: A planning application has been submitted to build homes on the former staff car park at St. Philomena's, one of our parish schools. This project would have a negative impact on the school, including safety (the only access for construction vehicles is the school drive), dust and noise (the building site would be immediately next to the infant playground and safeguarding (the properties would overlook the school premises at close proximity. Planning application 26/00266/FPA can be found on Bromley Council website and the deadline for comments is 30 March 2026.

Concert: On Saturday the 28th of March, The Orpington Chorale will be performing Rossini's Petite Messe Solennelle. The concert will be held at All Saints Church, Bark Hart Rd, BR6 0QD. More information can be found on the poster in the porch.

Radiate: Evangelisation Expo 2026: You are invited to join Radiate, a one-day evangelization expo for people who feel the call to share their faith but are unsure where to begin. This will take place on Saturday the 18th of April from 11am-4.30pm at Amigo Hall, St. George's Cathedral. For more information and to register visit www.aec.rcaos.org.uk/expo

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary meet every Sunday at 12.30pm in the altar server's room. All are welcome to join them.

Baptism: If you would like to have your child Baptised in our parish, please contact Reverend Longinus on longinusanyanjo@rcaos.org.uk. If you are a practising parishioner here you will be invited to join the Pathways to Baptism course.

BANK DETAILS

For bank transfers to the Parish –
Account Name: RCAS Cray Valley
Account Number: 50533401
Sort Code: 60-16-03

Thank you for your generosity to your parish.

LIVE STREAMING

This parish routinely livestreams 11 AM Mass on Sundays between 10.30 AM and 12.30 PM on YouTube. You may appear on camera **only** if you approach the altar without prior notice to the recording team during this time. The camera is set to avoid capturing parishioners receiving Holy Communion. If you have any concerns, please speak to the Priest or Communications Team.

Readings For The Week Ahead

	1 st Reading	Psalm	2 nd Reading	Gospel
23/03/26	Daniel 13:41c-62	Ps 23:1-6		John 8:1-11
24/03/26	Numbers 21:4-9	Ps 102:2-3, 16-21		John 8:21-30
25/03/26	Isaiah 7:10-14;8-10	Ps 40:7-11	Hebrews 10:4-10	Luke 1:26-38
26/03/26	Genesis 17:3-9	Ps 105:4-9		John 8:51-59
27/03/26	Jeremiah 20:10-13	Ps 18:2-7		John 10:31-42
28/03/26	Ezekiel 37:21-28	Jer 31:10-13		John 11:45-56

CHURCH MINISTRIES

	21 st & 22 nd March	28 th & 29 th March
READERS 6PM	A Dsouza G Selvaraj	P Lobo D Fufeyin
READERS 9AM	A Garber T Wickenden	I Joby T Wingfield
READERS 11AM	M Esong P Ajayi	P Chitongo M Adepoju
EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS 6PM	E North	D Ekpoudom
EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS 9AM	M Abu T Meaney	K Wingfield I Floyd
EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS 11AM	M McEveney N Adewale	M Ehiosun F Adewale
CLEANING	Team 3 – Anne-Marie Glancy	Team 4 – Chris Meaney
LINEN	Funmi Obende	Theresa Akagbosu

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND THE HOUSEBOUND

Please continue to pray for: Alison Hannah, Helen Efemini, Sister Maureen Fay, Mary Mackay, Clara Soares, Jennifer Smith, Mary O'Lone, Eamon Murphy, Shelagh Murphy, File Marku, Douglas Lewis, Terry Wingfield, Salma Lamina, all the Sick Clergy of the Diocese and the housebound of the Parish.



BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE – NAMES FOR MARCH We remember in our prayers: John Kent, Pearl Wood, Pasquale Cappucio, Lawrence Abu, Ekata Kuyan, Vincent Dunleavy, Martin Geraghty, Jeremiah Crowley, Roy Hawker, Roy Sinclair, Irene Rudd, Charles Wickenden, Edward Sabage, Mary Daly, Eleanor Sullivan, Mary Wakefield, Alexander Goslitski, Maria Fernandes, Augustine Juwah, Sheila McNally, Marilena Donovan, Alan Sparrowhawk, Elsie Valins, Winifred Ferne, Michael Gray, Patrick King, Ronnie Byrne, Michael Walsh, Queenie Viliesid, Sunday-Lawrence Ksagmede, Elizabeth Duffy, Patrick McNally, Pauline Sheehan, George Clark, Esme Esterbrook, Margaret Forsythe, Carmela Said, Queenie Damerum, Michael Abu, Joana Ndango Anjorim, Frank Edmond, Rogers Knight, Jean Marrhant, Margaret Murrice, Muriel Brenton, Mary Howard, Jerry McClelland, Gabriel Olushola Amire, Albert Manzi, Rosanna Barraclough, Mario Angeli and Edel McEveney

DIARY FOR THE WEEK

<p>Sun: Mar. 22: Fifth Sunday of Lent (A)</p> <p>6pm Mass (Sat. Vigil): Tony Murphy, RIP, Thomas Butler, RIP and Oscar Bernabe, RIP</p> <p>9am Mass: Stella Hawker, SR</p> <p>11am Mass: Onovughe Odibo, RIP (10 Year Anniversary), Derek Tilley, RIP and William & Laura, 28th WA</p> <p><i>(11am Mass Livestreamed on YouTube)</i></p>	<p>Sat: Mar. 28: A Day With Jesus (Lenten Retreat)</p> <p>10am: Rosary</p> <p>10.30am: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</p> <p>10.40am: Spiritual Reflection</p> <p>11am: Confessions</p> <p>12pm: Sacrifice of the Mass and Anointing of the Faithful.</p> <p>6pm Vigil Mass: Stella Hawker, BT & WB</p>
<p>Mon: March 23: Feria</p> <p>8.45am: Exposition of the Bl. Sacrament</p> <p>9.30am Mass: Holy Soul</p> <hr/> <p>Tues: March 24: No Mass</p> <hr/> <p>Wed: March 25: Solemnity fo the Annunciation of the Lord</p> <p>2pm: Funeral Mass of Julia Sutton</p> <p>6.25pm: Exposition of the Bl. Sacrament</p> <p>6.30pm: Lectio Divina</p> <p>7.30pm Mass: Gerry Butler & Kay McCoy, RIP</p> <hr/> <p>Thu: March 26: Feria</p> <p>8.45am: Exposition of the Bl. Sacrament</p> <p>9.30am Mass: Pinto Family, RIP</p> <hr/> <p>Fri: March 27: Feria</p> <p>8.45am: Exposition of the Bl. Sacrament</p> <p>9.30am Mass: Elaine & John Slattery, WB</p> <p>7.30pm: Stations of the Cross</p>	<p>Sun: Mar 29: Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord</p> <p>9am Mass: Sir Michael Abu, RIP</p> <p>11am Mass: Charles Uwaechie, TG for successful surgery.</p> <p>Note:</p> <p>SI means Special Intention SR means Speedy Recovery BI means Blessed GB means God's Blessings GP means God's Protection WB means Well-Being TG means Thanksgiving PI means Private Intentions BT means Birthday Thanksgiving WA means Wedding Anniversary Pro Populo: People of the Parish</p> <p>Private Mass: Mass to be said by the Priest alone</p>

CONTACT & FOLLOW US

Website: <http://www.ourladyofthecrays.com/>

Live streamed & past masses, YouTube channel 'crays parish':

<https://www.youtube.com/@craysparish7800/streams>