

**First Communion Programme.** We have 21 children preparing to receive First Holy Communion on Sunday June 7th. The children are from St Francis Parish and St Thomas' Parish Cloughton. Please remember them in your prayers.

**Longridge Foodbank Collection**

We are continuing to collect for Longridge Foodbank .

**Church Website** our new website address- [stfrancisgoosnargh.co.uk](http://stfrancisgoosnargh.co.uk)

**Attendance and Collection**

Easter Sunday Attendance 118 Collection £414.00  
12th Apr Attendance 65 Collection £249.65  
19th Apr Attendance 74 Collection £349.20

**Feast days**

Wed – ST.CATHERINE OF SIENA  
Fri – St. Joseph the Worker  
Sat – St. Athanasius

**Cycle Of Prayer**

Vocations especially on Day of Prayer for Vocations 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Easter 26<sup>th</sup> April

**People who are Unwell** If you would like the parish to pray for someone, please notify Father Sony on 01772 865229

**DAY OF DISCERNMENT** for those considering a vocation to the priesthood.

Saturday 30 May 12.15pm – 2.30pm

**THINKING OF BEING A PRIEST?** Come to the day of recollection and discernment!

The day is for single men 16 years or over who are considering priesthood: **Saturday 30 May 12.15pm – 2.30pm at St Peter's Cathedral, Balmoral Road, Lancaster LA1 3BT.** Gather in the Cathedral for Mass at 12.15, followed by lunch and meeting with Bishop Paul. To book email Heather: Heather.Watts@lrcd.org.uk or Tel: 01524 841190. There is no charge. As well as meeting the Bishop, you will have the opportunity to get to know how discernment works and who can assist you. You will also meet many others from across the Diocese of Lancaster exploring a vocation to priesthood

	<b>St Francis Hill Chapel</b>
	The Hill, Horns Lane, Goosnargh Preston PR32FJ
	Telephone: 01772 865229 Clergy: Fr Sony Jose Kadamthodu
	StFrancis.Goosnargh@lrcd.org.uk
	Parish Safeguarding Representative –Maria Peel

**Sunday 26th April 2026**

**4th SUNDAY OF EASTER  
Vocations Sunday  
Mass 10.30am**

***Parish Mission Statement***

*Our Parish, guided by the example of our patron St Francis of Assisi, seeks to be a welcoming Catholic Community by living, sharing and growing in faith. We strive to deepen our own relationship with Christ and meet the needs of others.*

Today's Mass is being offered for the Clarkson and Ibison families

We pray for all who are unwell in our parish especially  
Shirley Walker & Frank Morris.

We remember Mary Cooke & Francis Hayward whose anniversaries occur around this time

**There will be No mass on Tuesday**

**Requiem mass for Joseph Gornall on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April @ 12.30pm**

Tea and coffee will be served at the back of church after mass

## St. Francis Relics

- exposed for veneration at the basilica in Assisi.
- Hidden History: After his death in 1226, St Francis's remains were buried secretly to prevent theft, and their exact location was lost for centuries, only rediscovered in 1818.
- Modern Display: The relics have been housed in a neoclassical crypt, later a neo-Romanesque setting, and now displayed in a Perspex box for public devotion.

Francis of Assisi, that lovable saint, was the subject of a very successful exhibition at the National Gallery in 2023. The exhibit I found most impressive was a sackcloth habit reputed to have been worn by the 13th-century *poverello*, the man who took poverty seriously. The coarse-spun garment is housed in a gilt Baroque frame, not because it is "art" but because it is a relic, to be viewed with devotion. This month the most personal relic of all, the saint's body, is to be exposed for veneration at the basilica in Assisi. This is the 800th anniversary of St Francis's death and already 350,000 pilgrims have booked a slot to pray next to his mortal remains.

Their exact location was unknown for hundreds of years, because of a strange series of events. Francis had died on October 3 1226. He was buried temporarily at the chapel of St George within the city walls of Assisi. But the pope sanctioned the building of a basilica to house his remains, and the building work was overseen by Brother Elias, the early companion of Francis who announced his death and the presence on his body of stigmata – the marks of Christ's crucifixion in his hands, feet and side.

In May 1230, two years after the canonisation of St Francis, his relics were solemnly translated to the completed church. At that moment, Brother Elias took a decision that led to the loss of their exact location. He ordered the doors of the basilica to be locked and the remains of the saint to be buried in a grave cut in the rock of the hillside in a stone sarcophagus with a grille of iron to protect it.

The fear was that the holy relics would be stolen by rival devotees – the city of Perugia, perhaps. *Stolen* might not be quite the right word to use. I think that the general opinion was that such relics could not be owned as property. That was well and good, but it left things open to opportunists.

In 828, for example, Venetian merchants took the body of St Mark, the Evangelist, from Alexandria in Egypt and brought it back to Venice, where it has remained ever since, supplanting the former patron of the city, St Theodore, whose statue remains on one of the pillars of the Piazzetta.

In the case of St Francis, neither the papal legates nor the Minister General of the Franciscans knew where the body was buried beneath the marble floor of the basilica. Only in 1818 did excavations find it. An earlier attempt in 1806 was thwarted by Napoleon's incursion into Umbria. But two months of work with pickaxes by night discovered a void beneath the high altar. On December 12 1818, at 10pm St Francis's body was uncovered. Bonaventure Zabberoni, the custodian of the friary at Assisi, reported to Pope Pius VII: "At the first contact with air, the hands resting on the stomach suddenly lowered."

A neoclassical crypt was constructed for the relics in 1824 and in the 1920s was replaced with a simpler neo-Romanesque setting.

In 1978, in the manner of the times, the relics were enclosed in a Perspex box to be displayed for public veneration. On February 21 a procession will transfer the relics from the crypt to the main altar of the lower church at Assisi, where they will remain for a month.

The focus on physical remains might sound gruesome, but it is worth remembering that the paintings of St Francis by Cimabue, El Greco, Murillo and Zurbarán were not painted as "art" to be seen in a museum but as objects to instil devotion, to open a window into heaven, just like the bones of the saint who is now believed to reside there..

