

# NEWS BULLETIN - Ss ALBAN & STEPHEN

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Items for the bulletin by Noon on Wednesdays. We are a Fairtrade Parish.

## FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – 1 MARCH 2020

Parish Team: Fr Michael O'Boy (Parish Priest) Fr Julian Davies (Assistant Priest)

Rev. Steve Pickard (Deacon)

Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

*Fr Julian Writes...* 'No man is an island'. In a world of ever shrinking horizons, with so much interrelated in the fields of communications, security and economics Donne's words appear so obviously true. We are all in this together. The spread of COVID-19, the name given to the latest outbreak of a coronavirus, reminds us that disease can breach even the strongest of human defences. Human progress seems like regress when cities shut themselves down, planes don't fly, sport is disbanded and people wear protective masks. Even our superiority over the animal kingdom is brought into question, when we realise that possibly a single mammal carrying a virus has produced a global health crisis. The one salutary side effect of the epidemic is that it presents to opponents on the international stage a greater threat than from across or within their borders. Ideological or trade wars seem strangely tooth less when overshadowed by the prospect of a pandemic. Who cannot have been touched by seeing the deputy health minister of Iran wiping his brow at a conference called to highlight the disease only to announce shortly after that he himself had the virus. Or the doctor who first alerted the authorities in Wuhan and whose warnings were ignored as scare mongering later succumb himself. At what cost free speech! How dare he question political health provision and our capability to contain minor infections! What might be a Christian response in the face of this disease? In the first place it has to be one of compassion and solidarity with all affected. We might not be in the epicentre but we can always pray because prayer knows no geographical barriers. As a starter we might pray not just for those infected, but for the emergency services, for those seeking remedies and for our fellow believers especially in affected areas. We should be inspired by the story of the martyrs who in this country continued to bring light and hope into plague ridden neighbourhoods often at great danger to themselves, not just because of the risk of infection but because they were under the callous gaze of the persecuting authorities opposed to their very existence, martyrs such as our own John Southworth and John Roberts. As a Church let's identify with the needs of others and offer fasting and focused intercession on behalf of communities and nations, as the people of God have often done throughout history. God promises to heal our land if his people turn back to Him. Why should we disbelieve Him? Oberammergau has never forgotten that its prayers were answered in 1633 and may Milan in its hour of need

invoke the prayers and example of St Carlo Borromeo. Perhaps we could echo also a prayer which has been circulated from churches in Wuhan: *'We, the covenant people who have received great grace, cry out to You O Lord, asking you to forgive us for our pride and ignorance. Our neglect has created this global disaster. Today we repent for our sins. Please purify our hearts...We pray for your Mercy Lord. Our bodies are weak and vulnerable like dust in the wind. May we come to you with a heart of repentance...Merciful God, You are slow to anger and abundant in love. Please remove this plague, hear the cry of your people, and have mercy on the city of Wuhan. These are the prayers of the churches that the Lord loves, all in the holy name of our Redeemer Jesus Christ. Amen'*

**Way of the Cross** Every Saturday morning during Lent at 9.30 am, you are invited to follow the Way of the Cross in Church. Led by different groups within the parish, each week will have a different theme but all will help us make a spiritual pilgrimage through contemplation of the 14 stations of the Passion of Christ.

**Coronavirus** The advice already received from the Diocese remains the same. In light of this advice we would ask that those with cold or flu like symptoms 1) receive the host in the hand and 2) do not receive from the chalice at Masses where communion under both kinds is made available. The best way of protecting us from spread is for everyone to use universal good hygiene, which will effectively disrupt spread of the virus. \*Catch it - sneeze into a tissue\* Bin it - bin the tissue\* Kill it - wash your hands with soap and water\* Do not touch your face unless you've washed your hands\* See <https://rcdow.org.uk/news/advice-regarding-coronavirus/> for more details

**Saint David's Day**, St David, or Dewi Sant in Welsh, is the patron saint of Wales. His feast day is 1st March. He lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> century and came from an aristocratic family. His mother was St Non, he was taught by St Paulinus, he founded a monastery and became Archbishop of Wales. His shrine became a great place of pilgrimage; four visits to the shrine at St David's were considered the equivalent of two to Rome, and one to Jerusalem! The most famous story about Saint David tells how he was preaching to a huge crowd and the ground is said to have risen up, so that he was standing on a hill and everyone had a better chance of hearing him. David was a great church leader. He was a prophet and a teacher, a man of prayer and a miracle worker. He was the heart of the monastic community he founded and through his teaching and his monks, shaped the spirituality of his time and place.

**MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS  
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

**Saturday 29 February**

**6.00pm** Private Intentions

**Sunday 1 March**

**8.00am** People of the Parish

**9.00am** M<sup>W</sup>Wick Arthur & Catherine Ball (Anniv.)

John Fisher School

**9.30am** Jack Madden (RIP)

**11.30am** Peter Doran (RIP)

**7.00pm** Angelo Ortone (Anniv.)

**Monday 2 March – Lent feria**

**10.00am** Private Intentions

*10.30 – 11.30 am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*

**7.00pm** Frankie Kennedy (RIP)

**Tuesday 3 March – Lent feria**

**10.00am** Herbert Buckingham (RIP)

**Wednesday 4 March – Lent feria**

**7.00am** Private Intentions

**10.00am** Thomas Taylor (Anniv.)

**7.00pm** Private Intentions

**Thursday 5 March – Lent feria**

**10.00am** Kathleen Horan (RIP)

**Friday 6 March – Lent feria**

**10.00am** Private Intentions

**7.00pm** Private Intentions

*7.30–8.30 pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*

*7.40–8.40 pm Confessions*

**Saturday 7 March – Lent feria**

*9.30am Stations of the Cross led by Parish Friends*

**10.00am** Barbara McSweeney (RIP)

*10.30–11.30 am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*

*10.30–11.30 am Confessions*

*11.30 am Benediction*

**SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**

**Saturday 7 March**

**6.00pm** Dan Burgess (RIP)

**Sunday 8 March**

**8.00am** People of the Parish

**9.00am** M<sup>W</sup>Wick Patricia McCarthy (Anniv.)

John Fisher School

**9.30am** Private Intentions

**11.30am** George & Freda Sumner (Anniv.)

**7.00pm** Lucy Baines (RIP)

*Please note that Mass intentions may change  
at short notice to accommodate funerals*

**PLEASE PRAY**

Together with Churches Together in St Albans, this week we pray for the Minister, Elders and members of Trinity United Reform Church.

For the Sick in Our Parish

For those who have died recently: Rose Doyle, Celia Dunne, Margaret Duncan and Ella Vellacott.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Arthur & Catherine Ball, Angelo Ortone, Thomas Taylor, George & Freda Sumner and Patricia McCarthy.

The Funeral Mass for Margaret Duncan will take place on Thursday 12 March at 10am

*May their souls and the souls of all the faithful  
departed through the mercy of God rest in peace*

**Thank You**

For your generosity in last week's offertory

**Spam Emails** There have been a number of spam emails impersonating Fr Michael being sent to parishioners. Do not reply. The email addresses currently being used are 'parishoffice5465@gmail.com' and 'missionarypriest1001@gmail.com', however there may be more. If you are in any doubt about any emails you receive supposedly coming from either of the priests or the administrator, then the best thing to do is to call the office. Further to this, all emails and phone numbers have been removed from the parish website. If you would like to make an enquiry about any message then please contact the parish office on 01727 853585 or email stalbans@rcdow.org.uk

**MSC 120-year Celebration 20th June 2020** Planning is underway for a wonderful parish party to follow the Mass on 20th June to celebrate 120 years of service of the MSCs in St Albans. Could you help with setting up or clearing away, giving someone a lift, providing entertainment, loaning a gazebo, serving refreshments or donating a dessert? If you can help in any way, please contact Dave or Melanie. June may seem a long way off, but summer will come round very soon and we need to get our plans in place!

**Mothers' Prayers** will meet on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March at 8pm. Anyone wishing to pray for children is welcome. Information from email; office@mothersprayers.org

**Confirmation** The third session of the Confirmation programme is this Sunday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, in the parish centre at 5pm. The fourth session will be next Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, at 5pm.

**Help needed** if any parishioners would like to make up a rota for Teas/coffees after 11.30 mass on Sundays: leave your name and contact details in the presbytery, or come and say hello after mass.

**Faith sharing during Lent** The latest diocesan faith-sharing booklet - *A Word for Lent* [£3] - invites us to see salvation gradually unfold in our own lives, as well as in the lives of the Gospel women and men, whose stories are as relevant today as they were 2000 years ago. Beautiful works of art accompany us on each stage of our journey through *A Word for Lent*. Whether alone or in a group, these Lent Sunday Gospel reflections provide stimulating insights and ways into deepening personal prayer and commitment to Jesus. We are invited to obtain a booklet and encouraged to use it during Lent to help us consider what we can do to grow after the mind and heart of Jesus. Booklets are available in the Church and at John Fisher Mass Centre, or online. If you would like to join a confidential small group during Lent, then please contact Stan for more information. For example, one small group will meet during the day on Tuesdays starting 3<sup>rd</sup> March from 1.30-3.30pm, in room 1/conference room.

**Adoration** on the 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month, there is an opportunity to pray before the blessed sacrament in prayer room and the Church, with exposition and Holy hour on Friday from 7.30-8.30pm and on Saturday 10.30-11.30am

**APF Magazines** The Spring issue of Mission Today is now in the Church Porch for collection by Promoters. For any queries please call Tony Hughes

**Cafod Lenten family fast day** - we are all invited to take part in a simple meal on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March to support CAFOD's Lenten family fast day. Any money saved can be donated to the second collection for CAFOD which will be taken over the weekend of 7/8<sup>th</sup> March. This year our donations will be used to help fund local people who save and support the health of the world's poorest families. Gift-aid envelopes will be available in the church for those who pay income tax and who wish to increase the value of their donation by 25%. More details from Stan. Placed by the parish J&P group.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Year 7 Youth Club** is on this Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> March at 8-9pm in the Hall. Come along and meet up with your friends and make some new ones!

**Traidcraft** this weekend after all masses at the church. Sunday 8 March after 9 am mass at John Fisher School. All proceeds to Cafod, in fact no money has ever been deducted for anything. We buy the stock and add 10% on for Cafod hence we usually send between £1000-£1200 annually. Thank you for your support of Fairtrade workers. Traidcraft Coffee morning Thursday 5 March at 43 Avenue Road AL1 3PY 9.30am until 12 noon.

**Bingo** in the Parish Hall by the Knights of St Columba. On Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> March, at 8.00pm, to raise funds for HCPT - a charity offering pilgrimage holidays to Lourdes, for disabled and disadvantaged people. Admission is 50p towards refreshments and everyone is most welcome. Many thanks to all that supported our last Bingo evening. £385-00 was raised for the funds of the SVP.

**St Patrick's Day Tea Party** Parish Friends invite all parishioners to a St Patrick's Day Tea Party in the church hall on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March from 3-5pm. Entertainment will be provided by Peter and Damien Fahy and Irish coffee will be served. Lifts can be arranged. All donations will go to CAFOD. Guest and Helpers Lists are available in the porch and Marshalswick mass centre. For catering purposes please add your name to the Guest list if you will be attending the party or to the Helpers list if you can provide help or food on the day. Further details from Helen

**New year, new prayer life?** Why not consider joining a small group to pray and share your thoughts and experiences in strict confidence. A friendly group meets on alternate Tuesday evenings at 8pm in the café area of the Hall. Dates for our next few meetings are 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March. No need to book, just turn up.

**The Catholic Women's League** will be holding their AGM on Tuesday 3 March after the 10am Mass in the Parish Hall. Soup and roll afterwards. Reminder subs (£23) now due. 100 club £5 if you wish to be included in the prize draw.

**Meet a Medieval Monk from St. Albans** A Talk by Peter Godwin, an Abbey Guide and member of the Knights of St. Columba, in Rooms 1 & 2 of the Parish Centre, commencing at 8.00pm on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> March. There is not a charge and everyone is invited.

**Global Healing.** This short exploration, over two sessions in the church hall, of the papal encyclical *Laudato Si'* invites each of us to look at the world anew and encourages us to make small but meaningful changes to the way we live in relation to our delicate home. Session 1: Saturday 7th March 10.45-12.45. Refreshments to start. Three short film clips, each with a short discussion time. Session 2: Sunday 29th March. 2.00-5.15pm. "Before the flood" - a National Geographic documentary film - followed by refreshments, group discussion and examination of practical responses. All are welcome. No need to book. More details from Stan

**Easter Season Painting Competition - 2020** The Knights of St Columba (KSC) is again sponsoring a National Easter Season Painting Competition. Entry is free and is open to Catholic Junior Secondary and Senior pupils in three age groups, from 8 to 18 years. Entry details have been circulated to art departments in St Albans and district Catholic schools and details can also be found on posters and flyers display in the church porch and at St John Fisher school Mass centre. Prize awards will be made at KSC National, Province and St Albans stages. The closing date for receipt of entries, to school/college art departments is Monday 23 March 2020. Further details available from

## AROUND AND ABOUT

**Churches Together in Marshalswick** are holding a series of talks this year, all to be held at Marshalswick Baptist Church, with a theme of 'Ticket to Ride'. The first of these talks will be given by Revd Dr Alan Smith, the Lord Bishop of St Albans, titled 'Starting on Time'. These talks kick off this Sunday at 7pm. No need to book in advance. The series continues each Sunday in March, with Revd Natasha Woodward on 'Penalty for Improper Use'

The SVP are **distributing 11,500 Vinnie Packs** containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter. Please could you consider sponsoring packs at a suggested donation of £3.50 per pack? Donations can be sent to Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ with cheques made out to SVP or by bank transfer to Nat West sort code 60-60-04, account no. 4608 8237. Thank you so much for your support.

**Thinking Lunch** On Thursday 5th March 2020 the Revd Antony MacRow Wood will talk to us on the subject 'can credit unions play a significant part in promoting financial inclusion?' before a discussion. Drinks provided, but please bring your own sandwiches. Join us at 12.30-1.30pm at Marlborough Road Methodist Church, St Albans AL1 3XG.

## SCHOOLS

**Vacancy** Ss Alban and Stephen Catholic Junior School are looking for an After School Club Supervisor to work Monday to Friday from 3-6pm (term time only). We are also looking for a Breakfast Club Supervisor to work Thursday and Fridays from 7.30-8.45am (term time only) If you are interested in either position, please email the school office - [admin@ssasjm.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@ssasjm.herts.sch.uk) for more details and an application form. Successful candidates will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS check.

**FAO Past pupils/parents/staff of St John Fisher School** St John Fisher PTA are holding a spring ball on Saturday 14th March at St Michael's Manor hotel in St Albans. Five years on from our last very successful 'Fisher 50' Ball, we would like to hold another to raise funds for an additional classroom. We would very much welcome a reunion of past pupils, parents and teachers/staff and your partners. St Michael's Manor is a beautiful venue. The cost of a ticket is £50 per person which includes a welcome drink, three course meal, wine on the table and a disco. We can seat you with friends, or if you would like to put your own table of 8-10 people together, even better! If you are interested please contact the PTA at [PTA@sjfisher.herts.sch.uk](mailto:PTA@sjfisher.herts.sch.uk)

## AND FINALLY

**The Dowry of Mary Pilgrimage to Westminster - Saturday March 21** The touring statue of Our Lady of Walsingham will make a final 3-day visit (19th-21st March) to Westminster Cathedral just before the re-dedication of England as the Dowry of Mary at Walsingham on the Feast of the Annunciation. A group from the parish will be setting off from St Albans City station, following 10am Mass. If you are interested in joining the March 21 pilgrimage, please contact Rosemary

**Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony**, Westminster Cathedral, Saturday 30th May 2019 at 3pm. The Cardinal will be inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese who are celebrating their 5th, 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th, and 60th (and every year over 60) wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage in 2020. If you are celebrating an anniversary, please give your parish clergy the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and email (or telephone number, if no email).