

**NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN**

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

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – 10 May 2020**

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

Rev. Steve Pickard (Deacon)

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**FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER 2020 - JOHN (14:1-12)**

I remember at eighteen going to University. It meant uprooting myself from everyone and everything I knew...and I remember as I sat in the rather sparse room I'd been allocated wondering what on earth I had done. It took time to put down roots, to feel secure and to discover the friends and friendships that would see me through. For me, as for others no doubt, it was a formative time, time to discover different gifts and talents, time, if you like, to negotiate that sea change in relationships and expectations - that leaving home, getting married and any other life changing move, involves. In today's Gospel Christ tells us not to be afraid, but to trust - to trust in God and to trust in him in whose house there are many rooms. He, Christ, is to be our mainstay, our anchor, our security. 'I' he says, 'am the way, the truth and the life'. The second reading for today, from 1 Peter, takes up the same theme. 'Set yourselves close to him so that you too...may be living stones making a spiritual house'.

The temptation we face - on a daily basis - is to go it alone and to do things our way. Its an age old temptation - the same temptation that shattered the peace of the garden, when Adam and Eve decided they would do things their way; when, eating from a tree, that wasn't poisonous, they set up a gulf between each other and between themselves and God. Suddenly, you'll remember the garden wasn't the peaceful place it used to be; instead of walking around freely it became a place to hide in, a place where barriers were erected and discord, suspicion and pain entered into human experience.

If we're honest most of us face the temptation to do things our own way - certainly those first years at University were an opportunity to do that - to stay out late, sleep in, avoid the washing up - and yet part of maturing, is realising that we cannot always have things our own way. If we are to build up relationships, sustain a marriage, or hold down a job we have to take on board

marriage, or hold down a job we have to take on board other people's ideas, other people's expectations, other people's ways of doing things. This process is not simply a matter of reaching agreement or making compromises, it's the very stuff of growing up - of realising that the world does not revolve around me, my whims and my desires. Life, the family we have, the friends we make, the things we experience: all these things shape us but in today's Gospel Christ says it is his way of doing things that will lead us to fulfilment - to the Father and the performance of greater works. 'I tell you most solemnly, whoever believes in me will perform the same works as I do myself, he will perform even greater works'.

Pruning the excesses of youth, settling down; these things most of us recognise as necessary - yet accepting the reign of Christ in our hearts and our lives, accepting that we should conform to his standards is altogether more difficult. For sure, we can go it alone and do things our way, but where we're so self-reliant and self-determined, where we refuse to be told, we tend to become isolated - and isolation tends to embitter us, it cuts us off from others and from God.

When you and I become isolated and embittered, where we fail to be shaped by Christ and by the command to love, we live a fruitless life. Instead of reaching out as Christ reached out or attracting people to ourselves, we repel them, instead of living, of seeing the good and being able to rejoice in it, we stand our ground - and all the while, we miss the beauty before us and the world and the people in it, move on. To be moulded and shaped by Christ, to trust in him, to set ourselves close to him, this is an invitation we ignore at our peril. It is given to us for our own well-being and fulfilment. As the pope emeritus Pope Benedict put it once: 'Do not be afraid of Christ! He takes nothing away, and he gives you everything'.

Fr Michael

## MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

### Sunday 10 May – FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Masses will be offered for John Brennan (Anniv) and the people of the parish.

Reading 1, Acts 6: 1-7

Responsorial Psalm, 32

Reading 2, First Peter 2: 4-9

Gospel, John 14: 1-12

### Monday 11 May – Easter feria

Masses will be offered for Sr Sabina's intentions and for Lea O'Mahony (Anniv)

Reading 1, Acts 14: 5-18

Responsorial Psalm, 113

Gospel, John 14: 21-26

### Tuesday 12 May – Easter feria

Masses will be offered for Anna Ortone (Anniv) and James (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 14: 19-28

Responsorial Psalm, 144

Gospel, John 14: 27-31

### Wednesday 13 May – Easter feria

Masses will be offered for the World Union of Catholic Women's Organisations and for Ann Screene (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 15: 1-6

Responsorial Psalm, 121

Gospel, John 15: 1-8

### Thursday 14 May – ST MATTHIAS

Masses will be offered for John Taylor (RIP) and for Caitriana Fleming (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 1: 15-17, 20-26

Responsorial Psalm, 112

Gospel, John 15: 9-17

### Friday 15 May – Easter feria

Masses will be offered for Celia Dunne (RIP) and William O'Leray (Anniv)

Reading 1, Acts 15: 22-31

Responsorial Psalm, 56

Gospel, John 15: 12-17

### Saturday 16 May – Easter feria

Masses will be offered for the intentions of Ken Liversidge and for Anne O'Toole (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 16: 1-10

Responsorial Psalm, 99

Gospel, John 15: 18-21

### Sunday 17 May – SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Masses will be offered for Franciszek Frosztega (Anniv) and the People of the Parish. The Mass for Arthur and Catherine Ball will be said on 19 May, for Elizabeth Ingman (RIP) on 21 May, for Mick Dunne (RIP) on Saturday 23 May and for John Yuill (RIP) on 26 May.

## PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches together in St Albans, during Christian Aid Week, we pray for and with communities across the world who are most vulnerable to coronavirus.

For all those suffering from Coronavirus and the Sick in our Parish

For those who have died recently: Karen Brennan, Nancy Donoghue, Anthony Moran, Maria Cristina Blake, Janet Ryan, Michael Castiello and Ana Isabel Paz

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Barrie Witchard, John Brennan and Anna Ortone

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

**Virtual Prayer Group** We have begun a virtual prayer group which met each evening in Holy Week at 7.30 pm and we will continue to meet on Sunday and Wednesday evenings, also at 7.30 pm. If you would like to take part, please contact Brendan Roche at [bkroche@me.com](mailto:bkroche@me.com)

**Parish Update** We have begun to send out a Parish Update by email. If you have not been in receipt of these and would like to receive them please email [stalbands@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbands@rcdow.org.uk) requesting the Parish Update. Also, please visit the Parish Website to keep in touch and see what resources there are to help you. The website now includes a reflection on the Sunday Gospel written by Fr Michael or Fr Julian. Also, you will find the Diocese of Westminster website and Vatican Website useful.

## Offertory

Several people who usually contribute to the offertory either in cash or by using the offertory promise envelopes have contacted the presbytery asking how they might continue their weekly giving. We do not know how long the current situation will continue for and I am conscious that with the uncertainty the current situation creates, many will be concerned about their jobs and livelihoods. If you are able to – and I genuinely mean 'if' – and you wish to continue with your regular pattern of giving you may like to consider giving by standing order. This seems the most sensible way forward as it avoids the weekly handling of both envelopes and cash. If so, please email the parish office at [stalbands@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbands@rcdow.org.uk) and ask for details of how you might give by standing order.

**Live streaming of Mass** is available at [www.churchservices.tv](http://www.churchservices.tv) (click on 'churches' under menu). Every Thursday evening at 7pm, one of the bishops of England & Wales, will celebrate Mass in his cathedral, live streamed, for all those frontline workers in the NHS and care homes, for the sick and their families. The next few Masses will be celebrated on: **14 May:** Bishop Robert Byrne CO, Newcastle Cathedral, **21 May:** Bishop Mark Davies, Shrewsbury Cathedral, **28 May:** Bishop Terence Draney, Middlesbrough Cathedral

**Walsingham on-line Retreat** An online retreat given by Mgr John Armitage is available on the [walsingham.org.uk](http://walsingham.org.uk) website.

**Safeguarding & DBS Checks** Although many aspects of parish life have had to be put on hold there are still things we can be doing to prepare for when things are up and running again. If you are a volunteer and work with children or vulnerable adults, you need to have an up to date DBS in place. If you do not have a DBS or do not have an up to date one, issued within the last 3 years, why not use this period to complete the necessary paperwork. Much can be done on-line. Please contact Mary Harber at [stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk) / 07976 277059

**Parish Assembly & MSC Mass** Please note that in view of the Coronavirus pandemic both the Parish Assembly and the Celebration of the MSC's time in St Albans will be postponed until 2021.

**Christian Aid Week 10-16 May** We pray for people living in refugee camps and city slums, with limited sanitation facilities, who are unable to wash their hands regularly, and have little opportunity to isolate from others. We pray for Christian Aid partners working to provide soap and buckets, communicating clear, accurate information, raising the voices of the most vulnerable and ensuring they are kept as safe as possible. We remember that we are part of a global community. We are neighbours who are going through this coronavirus pandemic together. For prayers and ideas on fundraising see [www.christianaid.org.uk/news/coronavirus-guidance-christian-aid-week-events-and-activities](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/news/coronavirus-guidance-christian-aid-week-events-and-activities) Churches Together traditionally organize an ecumenical service during the week. This year, it will be hosted by St Saviour's on YouTube on Sunday 10 May at 4 p.m. To share in the service, please go to <https://m.youtube.com/channel/UCZszmVAXQQUWpI-tXm8qolw>

**Rosary** Fr Julian writes: I am wondering whether you would consider joining me each day in saying the Rosary intentionally. We could establish a powerful prayer chain connecting each of our households. We will be reinforcing our community together, praying into the issues which face us and interceding on behalf of those who are most vulnerable at this time. How you pray the chaplet is up to you. The important thing though is that we pray intentionally and meditatively

**SUNDAY:** For all suffering from the virus. For those who have died and those mourning them

**MONDAY:** For all doctors, nurses and other health professionals working in hospitals

**TUESDAY:** For all working in hospices, care and nursing homes, social and domestic carers

**WEDNESDAY:** For all ambulance crews, paramedics, emergency services and those keeping routine postal, transport and civic services functioning

**THURSDAY:** For those facing domestic abuse or violence, lack of shelter or food, or loss of livelihood.

**FRIDAY:** For those keeping schools and shops open, and producing and delivering vital supplies

**SATURDAY:** For wisdom for scientists in seeking solutions and the government in their response

**Our Lady of Fatima Feast Day 13 May** Between May 13 and October 13, 1917, three Portuguese children—Francisco and Jacinta Marto and their cousin Lucia dos Santos—received apparitions of Our Lady near Fatima, a city 110 miles north of Lisbon. Mary asked the children to pray the rosary for world peace, for the end of World War I, for sinners, and for the conversion of Russia. Mary gave the children 3 secrets. Following the deaths of Francisco and Jacinta in 1919 and 1920, Lucia revealed the first in 1927. It concerned devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The second was a vision of hell. Lucia became a Carmelite nun and died in 2005 at the age of 97. Pope John Paul II directed the Holy See's Secretary of State to reveal the third secret in 2000; it spoke of a "bishop in white" who was shot by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows into him. Many people linked this vision to the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II in St Peter's Square. The feast of Our Lady of Fatima was added to the Church's worldwide calendar in 2002.

**Traidcraft** fairly traded food and drinks are still available if required to anyone. We have a simple to use collection and payment method which does not involve any person-to-person interaction. We have a wide range of our usual products - tea, coffee, cookies, chocolate, muesli, rice/pasta, jam/marmalade, dried fruit & nuts, household/garden gloves, etc - and are able to order most items and have delivery within a week. If you would like to purchase any fair trade products or find out more, please contact Maureen or Stan - 765549 or [grabecki@hotmail.com](mailto:grabecki@hotmail.com).

**CaFE** Café are making the following online courses freely available for parishioners' personal use: 'The Joy of Hope', 'Let It Be' and 'The Saints'. If you would like to access one of these courses please contact the parish office via email [stalban@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalban@rcdow.org.uk) saying which course you would like to follow and requesting the relevant password. If you would like to know more about CaFE why not visit their website at <https://faithcafe.org>

**Love and FEED our Neighbour** The Vineyard in St Albans are in desperate need of essential items of food to help more than 80 individuals/families a week who depend on their foodbank. Their FEED project needs your support more than ever in these difficult times, particularly as many vulnerable children will not have access to free school meals at present. Please consider making a money donation to FEED through [www.bankuet.co.uk/feedstalbans](http://www.bankuet.co.uk/feedstalbans) or food donations can dropped off at The Vineyard Church St Albans, 7 Brick Knoll Park, St Albans, AL1 5UG: Monday –Friday 10am - 4pm. You can also drop off food at their donation points at the St Albans Sainsbury, Morrisons and Waitrose stores.

**Centre 33 Update** Although Open Door & Centre 33 are open, they cannot use their normal premises during the current crisis, they are now using the kitchen in the hall of St Saviour's Church to cook evening meals for the homeless in St Albans. Please pray for the volunteers and those they support.

**Knit and Natter: Fill the hours** Although we cannot meet at present, ladies do continue to knit at home, just think what can be achieved in our weeks of isolation! Blankets for the vulnerable, beanie hats for babies, twiddle muffs for those with dementia and wonderful stripy jumpers for the orphans in South Africa. Any knitters can make squares (30 stitches) for blankets for Care Homes or Catholic Workers Farm, or scarves for those in need or homeless. If you need more wool or details, contact Helen (07860 830340).

**Friends of the Holy Land Pentecost Appeal** The Friends of the Holy Land (FHL) Charity cannot hold many of its usual fundraising events due to the current Coronavirus crisis. Meanwhile, the impact of the virus on Christians in the Holy Land is devastating as so many local people rely on the income from pilgrimages and tourists. The Charity has launched the FHL Pentecost Challenge to raise funds before Pentecost on 31 May. Three long standing supporters have pledged to match fund the first £100,000, so every £1 you donate will have the impact of £2. Please consider making a donation at [www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/pentecost-challenge](http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/pentecost-challenge)

**The Tablet** We are aware that some parishioners would often buy the Tablet from the back of church, but whilst the lockdown is in effect, we have stopped supplying these papers. You can choose to subscribe to the Tablet, where they have quarterly, six monthly, or annual subscription options on offer. Go to <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/subscribe> or email for more information [ifarrar@thetablet.co.uk](mailto:ifarrar@thetablet.co.uk)

**The history of the Catholic Church in St Albans** As we celebrate the dedication of our church on 4 May 1977, we look back on the history of our parish. The first public Mass celebrated in St Albans after the Reformation was on 3 May in 1840, when a room in the White Hart Inn on Holywell

Hill was used as a chapel. It was the first public Mass in the city since the 16th century and the embryonic start of our parish. In 1848, Alexander Raphael, a newly elected MP and a convert to Catholicism, decided to build a Catholic Church in Verulam Road. However, he died intestate. The church site was purchased by Mrs Worley, and the church completed according to its original design and donated it to the Church of England. Known as Christ's Church, it's now converted to offices. The mission of St Albans from 1852 to 1854 was described as vacant. Nor is it mentioned in the Catholic Directory for 1857 to 1861. In 1861 the Barnet priests commenced to serve St Albans once a month. From 1870 Mass was said every Sunday. In 1876, Fr Bampffield of Barnet decided to build a small church in London Road. It was dedicated to Ss. Alban and Stephen by Cardinal Manning on the Feast of St Alban, 22 June 1878. Thus, the first Catholic Church was opened in St Albans.

*To be continued*

### **A Prayer for Spiritual Communion**

*Dear Guardian Angel, go for me to the church,  
there kneel down at Mass for me.*

*At the Offertory, take me to God, and offer Him my service:*

*What I am, what I have, offer as my gift.*

*At the Consecration, with your seraphic strength,*

*adore my Saviour truly present,*

*praying for those who have loved me,*

*for those who have offended me,*

*and for those now deceased,*

*that the blood of Jesus may purify them all.*

*During Holy Communion,*

*bring to me the Body and Blood of Jesus*

*uniting Him with me in spirit,*

*so that my heart may become His dwelling place.*

*Plead with Him, that through His sacrifice*

*all people throughout the world may be saved.*

*When the Mass ends,*

*bring home to me and to every home,*

*the Lord's blessing. Amen*

Remember to keep your distance from others and to observe proper hygiene...

- **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.**