

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – 17 May 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 Michael writes...On Thursday of the coming week we will celebrate the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven. We will recall how having been crucified, and risen from the dead, Jesus returned to the Father where he sits at his right interceding for us. 'There', as the Catechism puts it, 'Christ permanently exercises his priesthood, for he "always lives to make intercession" for "those who draw near to God through him"' (CCC. 662). It is this priesthood, the priesthood which draws people to God through Christ that each and every baptised person shares in. 'Go', says Christ to his disciples in the Gospel we will listen to on Thursday, 'make disciples of all the nations'.

At the end of his earthly life therefore Jesus gives to the church its missionary commission. He doesn't keep his work to himself, rather he says to us, come and share in my life's work, my mission, come and share in the very thing that underpins all that I am about and all that I have done; come, bring others to the Father, the Father whose son I am, and who I reveal to you. But Jesus doesn't invite us to share his work alone. He doesn't off-load it and go find something better to do, as we might. Rather, he promises to be with us every step of the way. 'Know that I am with you always', he says, 'yes, to the end of time'.

So, one of the questions we might ask ourselves is, how? How am I, how are we, to take up and continue with that work of drawing others to the Father. And here, I think, the fact that Christ was incarnate, that he walked among us, that ours is an 'incarnational religion' should not be lost on us. Christ rooted himself among us sharing the everyday experiences, the joys and the sorrows, of the people he ministered to. Mission begins in the here and now. It begins where people are and with how people are, not as we would want them to be. The clue is given in Acts of the Apostles where, having seen Jesus ascend into the heavens, the Apostles are left staring into the sky, only to be rebuked by the Angels. 'Why are you men from Galilee standing here looking into the sky?' Mission

doesn't begin somewhere else, it begins here, it doesn't begin in some distant future, it begins now, it doesn't hanker after the past, dwelling on what has been lost, rather it looks to a future. 'Jesus', as the angels say, 'will come back'.

Today, as we continue to grapple with the coronavirus, the temptation is to look to life as it was as some kind of golden age, to want to recapture things as they were, to 'return' to normal. I am sure, if you asked the Apostles, whether they preferred life after Christ's Ascension to life before the Ascension, when they had the opportunity to walk in his company, watching him, speaking with him and listening to him, each would have chosen the latter. But that was not an option. Things had changed. Christ had returned to the Father, the landscape had been altered, the world was a different place.

Livestream of Mass. Every day at 10 am there is mass being streamed live at the Parish YouTube Channel: **Ss Alban and Stephen RC Church**. Or visit the home page on the **parish website** and click on the link provided. If you have access to a Smart TV you should be able to connect to You Tube from there: search for "Ss Alban and Stephen Catholic Church".

If you join the daily streamed Mass, please consider clicking the 'subscribe' box on the parish YouTube channel. Once there are over 100 subscribers, it can be given a user-friendly URL so that it is easy to find the parish channel on YouTube. It will also be possible for reminders of live events streamed from the parish to be sent to you by clicking the notification bell.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 17 May - SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Masses will be offered for Franciszek Frosztega (Anniv) and the People of the Parish

Reading 1, Acts 8: 5-8, 14-17

Responsorial Psalm, 65

Reading 2, First Peter 3: 15-18

Gospel, John 14: 15-21

Monday 18 May - Easter feria

Masses will be offered for Fr Robert Wright (RIP) and John Drummond

Reading 1, Acts 16: 11-15

Responsorial Psalm, 149

Gospel, John 15: 26-16:4

Tuesday 19 May - Easter feria

Masses will be offered for Alan Neale (RIP) and Arthur & Catherine Ball

Reading 1, Acts 16: 22-34

Responsorial Psalm, 137

Gospel, John 16: 5-11

Wednesday 20 May - Easter feria

Masses will be offered for Frank Burke (Anniv) and Patrick Bagge (Anniv)

Reading 1, Acts 17: 15,22-18:1

Responsorial Psalm, 148

Gospel, John 16: 12-15

Thursday 21 May - THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

Masses will be offered for John Taylor (RIP) and Elizabeth Ingman (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 1: 1-11

Responsorial Psalm, 46

Reading 2, Ephesians 1:17-23

Gospel, Matthew 28:16-20

Friday 22 May - Easter feria

Masses will be offered for Patrick Daly (Ann) & deceased members of family and David Holden (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 18: 9-18

Responsorial Psalm, 46

Gospel, John 16: 20-23

Saturday 23 May - Easter feria

Masses will be offered for Mick Dunne (RIP) and Freda & Margaret Clancy (Anniv)

Reading 1, Acts 18: 23-28

Responsorial Psalm, 46

Gospel, John 16: 23-28

Sunday 24 May - SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Masses will be offered for Sajish Kandaramath (Ann) and the People of the Parish. Mass for Anne Moor-Lawor (RIP) will be said on Thursday 28 May and Mass for Sister Frances (Anniv) will be said on Friday 29 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 those who are Sick in our Parish.

For those who have died recently: Karen Brennan, Nancy Donoghue, Michael Castiello, Ana Isabel Paz, Anne Coakley, Claudio Frascchetti, Annie Coakley and Brian Albert Moore

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Franciszek Frosztega, Alan Neale, Frank Burke, Patrick Bagge, Patrick Daly, Freda & Margaret Clancy, Sajish Kandaramath and Sr Frances.

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

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 and ask for details of how you might give by standing order.

Virtual Prayer Group A virtual prayer group which met each evening in Holy Week at 7.30 pm continues 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

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 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.

Live streaming of Mass is available at 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 Draine, Middlesbrough Cathedral

Delivery of paper bulletin: If you know anyone who does not have access to the internet but would like a paper copy of the Bulletin and Gospel reflection, please provide their details to 853585 or stalbins@rcdow.org.uk

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 stalbins3@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.

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

Walsingham on-line Retreat An online retreat given by Mgr John Armitage is available on the walsingham.org.uk website.

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.

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 stalbins@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/feedstalbins or food donations can be 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.

Compassionate Community Connector Programme: Help during Coronavirus Crisis 020 8207 5115 email: help@communities1st.org.uk or go to their **website** This charity will provide help with Shopping and Telephone Tech Support. If you are feeling lonely or isolated at this difficult time, they will arrange for someone to give you a call. Need to go into hospital? Need someone to look after your pet? They'll try to help.

The Living Room is delivering daily group therapy sessions to clients using Zoom just get in touch via their contact form: www.livingroomherts.org/contact They are still taking calls. If it's an urgent query - from 9am to 12.30pm you can call the Stevenage team (07383 393 459), St Albans (07990 112 033) and (01923 590 159). Check the Living Room website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for more updates and messages.

Mind in Mid Herts are keen to support people to manage stress during this current coronavirus pandemic and prevent the possibility of people developing mental health problems. They have developed new digital wellbeing courses. All on-line giving all the benefits of face-to-face support but in people's own home. Open to all:

www.mindinmidherts.org.uk/support-for-you/digital-courses/

Contact support: 01727 865070; online on www.mindinmidherts.org.uk click on self-referral or email admin@mindinmidherts.org.uk

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

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

The history of the Catholic Church in St Albans Fr Bittleston became the first resident priest in 1883 of our original church in London Road. The clergy who served were then missionaries from Barnet. In 1886, responsibility for the parish passed to the diocese. In 1899, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart were invited to take charge of the mission of St Albans with Fr Michael Tierney MSC as Rector. He realised by 1900 that the church in London Road was too small and too insignificant for a place as important as St Albans, the scene of the first martyr of England, so he decided to build a larger, more ornate church that would help to restore the place to its former glory as a Catholic centre, renowned throughout the land as a place of pilgrimage. In 1903, having purchased a site in

Beaconsfield Road and, after raising another £6,000, our present church was built. It was smaller than it is now, because of the extension that took place in the mid-1960s to incorporate the side aisles and chapels. When the nave was completed the church was dedicated and blessed by the Most Rev. Francis Bourne, Archbishop of Westminster on New Year's Day 1905.

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.**