

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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

PENTECOST SUNDAY – 31 May 2020

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

Rev. Steve Pickard (Deacon)

Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbansg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

'They heard what sounded like a powerful wind and saw what seemed to be tongues of fire'. Some words from the first reading from Acts 2: 1-11. Today as we celebrate the feast of Pentecost - the gift of the Holy Spirit - we could get bogged down in a discussion of the details. It seems odd, given the momentous nature of the event, that the scriptures cannot be more precise; that the description still leaves something to be desired, something to be imagined, something mysterious. It 'sounded like', it 'seemed to be'. Yes, we have this account of the coming of the Holy Spirit, but we cannot pin this Holy Spirit down, but this, I suspect, is just as it should be. How on earth could we reasonably expect to put God's Spirit in its place? How on earth could we have the audacity to contain it or sum it up, to provide an account where every i is dotted and t is crossed?

You see, if anything, today's feast speaks of a Holy Spirit that has the capacity to wonder at will. That will never be confined to any place or nation. That makes itself understood in any language you care to choose. This is a powerful spirit that will transform the apostles; enabling them to overcome the fear that kept them locked away and to go out and preach the gospel.

Just as the spirit transformed the apostles, in the Eucharist it transforms something as fragile as bread and ordinary as wine into an extraordinary food - the body and blood of Christ - and that done we dare in the ordinary way of things to share in this blessed banquet, this holy communion. Simply put, we feast on the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the same Spirit that made its home in us in baptism and confirmation. That's why this time away from Mass and the Blessed Sacrament is so painful. We are cut off from the bedrock, the source, that nourishes and transforms us, which makes our Christian living possible.

The Holy Spirit we encounter at Pentecost came to empower those it touched. It came that the apostles might go out, that the Church might grow, that the world at large might know the abiding presence and love of Christ. So, when we dare to share in the Eucharist, the bread and wine that has been enthused with the Holy Spirit and

transformed into the body and blood of Christ, we dare to accept the commission that the Apostles received that first Pentecost. All at once our thirst for the Eucharist is a thirst for the will of Christ; that the Gospel, the good news, might be known.

Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church...and in our culture its common place to give gifts to those whose birthday it is. For sure we could celebrate Pentecost and look at the gifts that Christ has given to the Church in the sending of his Holy Spirit, but as well as reflecting on the gift we have received, shouldn't we also reflect on what it is we are being called to give. Birthdays are for celebrating, birthdays are for the exchange of gifts, and today it may be that we should consider what it is we can give to the Church. In the sending of the Holy Spirit, in the empowering unleashed by the gift of His Spirit Christ proves, his fidelity to us. He doesn't return to the Father leaving us bereft and empty-handed; he returns to the Father that we, his apostles and disciples, might be the workers of miracles, amazing and astounding those that encounter us.

Throughout the scriptures the Holy Spirit is depicted as a life-giving force: it hovered over the deep at the very dawn of creation, it is there as Christ is baptized in the Jordan and his public ministry is initiated, and now, at Pentecost it gives birth to the Church, and calls forth all sorts of gifts from the apostles...that group of Galileans who came to be understood by peoples of every race and nation - weak, fragile and flawed men - willing to be God's instruments. Too often, when faced with the challenge of Christian living, we comfort ourselves with the knowledge and excuse of our being human...it is the weakest of excuses...for those Galileans were every inch as human as us, and what is more, as we celebrate today, and in every Eucharist, in the power of the Holy Spirit, all things are possible. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful!

Fr Michael

Our 10.00 am daily masses are being live streamed. For information about this please see back of this leaflet

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 31 May – PENTECOST

Masses will be offered for the People of the Parish and the intentions of Rita Capparelli and family.

Reading 1, Acts 2:1-11

Responsorial Psalm, 103

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13

Gospel, [John 20:19-23](#)

Monday 1 June – Mary, Mother of the Church

Masses will be offered for William John Griffith (RIP) and Guy Morillon (RIP)

Reading 1, 2 Peter 1:2-7

Responsorial Psalm, 90

Gospel, Mark 12:1-12

Tuesday 2 June - feria

Masses will be offered for Anna Ortone (Anniv) and the deceased members of the Bergin and Cawley families

Reading 1, 2 Peter 3:11-15, 17-18

Responsorial Psalm, 89

Gospel, Mark 12:13-17

Wednesday 3 June – Ss Charles Lwanga and

Companion Martyrs

Masses will be offered for Gabriel & Teresa Sequeira (Anniv) and Cath Molloy (RIP)

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 1:1-3, 6-12

Responsorial Psalm, 122

Gospel, Mark 12:18-27

Thursday 4 June - OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE ETERNAL AND HIGH PRIEST

Masses will be offered for Cliff Staniforth (RIP) and Tom & Nellie Lawless (Anniv)

Reading 1, Genesis 22:9-18

Responsorial Psalm, 39

Gospel, Matthew 26:36-42

Friday 5 June – St Boniface

Masses will be offered for Elaine Gatta (RIP) and Terry Mahabir (Anniv)

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 3:10-17

Responsorial Psalm, 118

Gospel, Mark 12:35-37

Saturday 6 June – Memoria Blessed Virgin Mary

Masses will be offered for John Taylor (RIP) and for Annie Coakley & the deceased members of the Sheehan Family

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 4:1-8

Responsorial Psalm, 70

Gospel, Mark 12:38-44

Sunday 7 June – THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Masses will be offered for Teresa Cahill (Anniv) and the People of the Parish. The Mass for Roy McGoohan (RIP) will be offered on Tuesday 9 June, for Herbert Buckingham (RIP) on Thursday 11 June and for John Taylor (RIP) on Friday 12 June.

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches together in St Albans, during Christian Aid Week, we pray for the ministers and members of St Michael's Church.

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

For those who have died recently: Tom Bagge, Annie Coakley, Claudio Frascchetti, Sean 'John' Mckay and Brian Albert Moore.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Anna Ortone, Teresa Sequeira, Tom & Nellie Lawless, Terry Mahabir, Teresa Cahill and Vincent O'Reilly.

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

Volunteers needed to help re-open our church

In the light of the Government's guidance that it may be possible to open churches from early July, Cardinal Vincent has advised all parishes in the diocese to begin to prepare for limited opening of churches initially for private, personal prayer. The Government will provide guidance on opening churches safely, and this will require the help of volunteers to ensure social distancing and regular cleansing of surfaces in church. In order to open our church for approximately 1 hour each morning (11am to 12noon) and evening (6.30pm to 7.30pm), we will need 3 volunteers for each session. If you are not self-isolating or shielding and you feel you could volunteer to help re-open our church, please contact Melanie (mjoneill5@btinternet.com or 07900 051956). If there are more volunteers we can look at extending the proposed opening times.

Cardinal's Pentecost's Address The Cardinal has posted an Address to the Diocese for Pentecost. This is available online at <https://vimeo.com/421046273> and on the diocesan website

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 the parish office stalbands@rcdow.org.uk

Ministers of the Word: renewal of promises On this Feast of Pentecost when the Apostles first received the gift of the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim the Good News of Jesus, we celebrate those in our community who have been called to serve as Ministers of the Word and continue to proclaim the Sacred Scriptures. While they cannot renew their promise in our church this year, Ministers are invited to make their personal commitment to this service in their own homes – if possible during the live-streamed Mass. Once our church has re-opened, our Ministers will be officially re-commissioned and receive God's blessing during Sunday Masses.

Livestream of Mass. Every day at 10 am Mass is streamed live from the Church on YouTube Channel: Ss Alban and Stephen RC Church. 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 YouTube 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.

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.

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 stalbands@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 stalbands3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

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

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 stalbands@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*

Love and FEED our Neighbour The Vineyard are in desperate need of tinned food, rice and pasta to help those families who depend on their foodbank. Money can be donated at www.bankuet.co.uk/feedstalbands or food donations can be dropped off at The Vineyard Church, 7 Brick Knoll Park, St Albans, AL1 5UG: Monday -Friday 10am - 4pm, or drop off items at donation points at 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 peoples 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

Support for the Homeless in St Albans Since the introduction of the need to practise social distancing to reduce transmission of Covid-19, support services in St Albans for the homeless have had to change. The Open Door Night Shelter remains open but those living there now have to spend most of their time in their rooms and their afternoon drop-in sessions have had to close. Centre 33 also had to close its premises in Spicer Street. Immediately after lockdown, Centre 33, the Open Door Charity and others put a lot of effort into ensuring that meals were still available for those sleeping rough. At the same time, the Council and others worked hard to find accommodation for rough sleepers. By late March, accommodation had been offered to all those who needed it. Only a few people turned it down. Cooking at Open Door had to stop because the kitchen could not support social distancing. To supplement donations of meals from some local pubs on some evenings, volunteers from the Open Door Charity, the Winter Beds Project and Centre 33 now prepare meals at St Saviour's Church Hall sufficient for all those living at the Night Shelter and the few who are still rough sleeping and who call at Open Door to pick up their meal as a take away.

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

Prayers for Christian Denominations Between the Ascension and Pentecost we shall be praying daily at mass for the Christian denominations in our area. 21st: Coptic Orthodox; 22nd: Salvation Army; 23rd: Anglican St Albans Diocese; 24th: URC; 25th: Anglican St Albans Diocese; 26th: Methodist; 27th: RC Westminster Diocese; 28th: Chs Together Herts; 29th: Baptist; 30th: RC Northampton Diocese; 31st: Anglican St Albans Diocese

Stay Cybersafe in your Zoom Meetings Many parishioners are using technology to hold virtual prayer groups and other online meetings to see and talk to other people during the current lockdown situation. 'Zoom' meetings, in particular, have been a popular mechanism to stay in contact. We are reminded to ensure our meetings are safe by adopting the recommended security guidelines on the [Zoom.us website](https://www.zoom.us) where information is clearly and briefly

set out. If you are using a different online service, please check their security advice. Such advice is periodically updated so please check from time to time. There are instances of hackers disrupting meetings which we obviously wish to avoid. This week we have two relatively new celebrations

The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church: Feast 1 June Pope Francis decreed in 2018 that the ancient devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, under the title of Mother of the Church, be inserted into the Roman Calendar to be celebrated annually on the day after Pentecost. The Pope wishes to promote this devotion in order to "encourage the growth of the maternal sense of the Church in the pastors, religious and faithful, as well as a growth of genuine Marian piety". The Blessed Virgin Mary was originally given the title of Mother of the Church since she gave birth to Christ, the Head of the Church, and became the Mother of the redeemed people before her Son had given up the spirit on the Cross. Pope Paul VI confirmed the title during the Second Vatican Council in November 1964 and decreed that the whole Christian people should, by the use of this title, give still greater honour to the Mother of God.

Jesus Christ, the Eternal and High Priest: Feast 4 June This feast focuses on Jesus' Priestly Office. Jesus is considered the model for believers, and for the clergy in particular, with priests acting *In persona Christi* ("In the person of Christ"). The laity are thus urged to pray both for vocations to the priesthood and that priests would become like Christ, the compassionate and trustworthy high priest ever-living to intercede for humanity before The Father.

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.**