

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 12th July 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 I would like to begin by thanking all those who have made the streaming of our weekday and Sunday Masses possible. A particular thanks to those who have zoomed in to provide the responses. We will continue to stream Masses, but now that we are allowed a congregation the consensus has been that we should depend on the congregation to provide the responses. Moreover, I would like to thank those who have made the re-opening of the Church for private prayer and now, the public celebration of Mass, possible. Thank you to our volunteer stewards and thank you to the planning group that have worked with us on interpreting and implementing both government and diocesan guidelines.

The Sunday Obligation As Catholics we are asked to attend Mass every Sunday. It is an integral part of what it is to be a practicing Catholic. It's here that we hear Christ's command in the scriptures and are nourished with his body and blood; in the Mass then, that we are called to and equipped for the lives that we are to live in the world at large. During this time of pandemic however, the Bishops have released us from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. First and foremost, therefore, I would like to reassure those who are shielding and vulnerable that they are not under an obligation to attend Sunday Mass, indeed I would encourage those parishioners in this position to make use of the streamed Masses, and in this way to join safely with those in Church. Moreover, given that there are a limited number of spaces in Church, I would encourage those parishioners who are not at work in the week and who are free to do so, to think about coming to Mass during the week instead of at the weekend for the time being. In this way there will be more spaces available for those who can only attend at weekends.

Volunteer Stewards In order for any Mass to take place it is necessary to have four volunteer stewards on duty to assist those attending and to sanitise the Church after each Mass. We are in absolute need of more volunteers, especially if we are to increase the number of Masses and make sure that it does not become an onerous responsibility for those who have already volunteered. More hands, lighter work! Please contact Melanie O'Neill, the chair of the Parish Pastoral Council, if you are under 70 and willing to volunteer. Melanie's contact details are mjoneill5@btinternet.com or 07900 051956. Remember, our parish like many others relies on many older or retired people to act as volunteers. At the moment many of these are being asked to shield and to remain indoors, so we need more of our

younger parishioners to step up.

Weekday Masses We have been celebrating Mass publicly again for just under a week and have asked people to register if they wish to attend one of these Masses. My hope is that the attendance at weekday Masses will increase so for the time being I would ask people to continuing pre-booking their seat at weekday Masses by contacting the parish office by email stalbans@rcdow.org.uk or phone **01727 853585** to reserve a place. Places will be offered on a first come first served basis. Finally, please be aware that from the week beginning Monday 20 July we will revert to our usual practice of a morning Mass only on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Sunday Masses From Saturday 18 July there will be no Saturday morning Mass, however we will celebrate a Sunday Vigil Mass at 6.00 pm. On Sundays there will be a morning Mass at 10 am and an evening Mass at 6.00 pm. Again, people are asked to pre-book and provide a contact telephone number. Please email the parish office stalbans@rcdow.org.uk or phone **01727 853585** to reserve a place.

Contact Details In order to facilitate tracking and tracing people are requested to provide a contact number when they come to Mass. Please note that registers of attendance & contact details will be destroyed after 21 days.

When you come to Mass We are striving to keep to 2m distancing. At times this is not always possible, so we are asking people to wear a face covering in Church. Also, I appreciate it can be more challenging with younger children, but I would ask everyone - young and old - to remain within their allocated seating area, only moving out of it for Holy Communion as directed at the end of Mass. Moreover, because we need to keep a register please endeavour to arrive in good time. This will enable the stewards to keep a record of who has come, to allocate the available seating most effectively, and to direct people to their seats.

Finally The number and timing of Sunday Masses will be kept under review. It would be worth getting into the habit of checking for any latest news on the website. If there is more demand for Sunday Masses we will to provide another, but please be aware that the timing of Masses will need to bear in mind the need to sanitize and air the Church between Masses.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 12th July - 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Masses will be offered for Larry John Chrimes (Ann) and Joanna Mary Gribbin (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 55:10-11

Responsorial Psalm, 64

Reading 2, Romans 8:18-23

Gospel, Matthew 13:1-23

Monday 13 July - feria

10 am Mass will be offered for Nancy Donoghue (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Eric Hopkins (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 1:10-17

Responsorial Psalm, 49

Gospel, Matthew 10:34-11:1

Tuesday 14 July - feria

10 am Mass will be offered for Mariano Casotti (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Mrs Culhane (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 7:1-9

Responsorial Psalm, 47

Gospel, Matthew 11:20-24

Wednesday 15 July - St Bonaventure

10 am Mass will be a Funeral Mass for Etheldreda 'Betty' Forster (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Angus Bettany (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 10:5-7, 13-16

Responsorial Psalm, 93

Gospel, Matthew 11:25-27

Thursday 16 July - Our Lady of Mount Carmel

10 am Mass will be offered for Danny Onn (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Milena Braganza (Ints)

Reading 1, Isaiah 26:7-9, 12, 16-19

Responsorial Psalm, 101

Gospel, Matthew 11:28-30

Friday 17 July - feria

10 am Mass will be offered for Margaret Sweeney (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Joanna & Marian

Hoscllowicz (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 38:1-6, 21-22, 7-8

Responsorial Psalm, 38

Gospel, Matthew 12:1-8

Saturday 18 July - Memoria of Blessed Virgin Mary

6 pm Mass will be offered for the deceased relatives and friends of Marion Miller

Reading 1, Micah 2:1-5

Responsorial Psalm, 9B

Gospel, Matthew 12:14-21

Sunday 19 July - 16th Sunday in Ordinary Time

10 am People of the Parish

6pm Michael Aylward (Ann)

Mass will also be offered today for Patrick Keegan (Ann)

PLEASE PRAY

With Churches Together in St Albans we pray this week for the Ministers and members of London Colney Baptist Church

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

For those who have died recently: Canon Christopher Tuckwell, Canon Vincent Berry, Alan Durant, Vicky Barnes, Tim Donoghue and Stefania Estacchini.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Louis Fernandez, Richard Field, Larry John Grimes, Milly Carroll, Michael St John and Joanna Mary Gribbin, Michael Feeney

The requiem mass for Ethelreda (Betty) Forster will be held on 15th July Wed at 10am. May she rest in peace.

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

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.**

Funerals: We are now allowed to have Requiem Masses but government guidelines limit attendance at these to 30 people. This number would also include the organist, if a family wished to have music, and the 4 stewards needed to marshal and sanitise the church afterwards. Families will also need to bear in mind that current guidelines prohibit singing and curtail other aspects of a customary Funeral Mass e.g. the number of readings, the intercessions, the eulogy and anything which might lengthen the time spent in church.

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 stalbans@rcdow.org.uk

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 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. It will 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 stalbans@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 stalbans@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 stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

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 stalbans@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*

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.

FEED thy neighbour The Vineyard's FEED food shop has reopened to current guests. Other help services (such as CAP Debt Advice, Family Lawyer, Housing Advice, MIND) will not be running at the Care Centre, but if possible will operate these over the phone/zoom, contact heather@thevineyardchurch.co.uk or on 01727 739 064. FEED currently needs: washing powder, porridge, pulses, pasta sauce, coffee and tinned food. You can drop off items at the church warehouse doors (7 Brick Knoll Park, AL1 5UG) Monday -Friday between 10am-3pm. Items can also be dropped off at FEED Donation Points at Sainsbury, Morrisons and Waitrose. Monetary donations can be made by bank transfer or planned giving: see the website (www.thevineyardchurch.co.uk/feedfund) or phone 01727 812765.

Baptism: Fr Julian is now getting in contact with those families who have had to postpone a child's baptism. Our first priority is to establish alternative dates for those families who have completed the baptism preparation course. We are also looking to a 'virtual' baptism preparation course for those parents yet to complete the course and thereafter to setting dates for their children's baptisms.

First Holy Communion 2020: Parents and guardians should have received an email from Fr Michael asking if they wished their child to celebrate their First Holy Communion sooner rather than later, or whether they would prefer to postpone it until a later date, possibly next year, when their children could celebrate First Holy Communion in the more usual way. To date nearly 60 of the 100 or so families involved have responded. Of those who have responded, half have opted for their children to celebrate Holy Communion sooner rather than later. Over the coming weeks there will be two First Holy Communion Masses each Saturday where up to seven children will celebrate their First Holy Communion according to the guidelines laid down by the bishops for the celebration of Mass and in the presence of a limited number of guests.

Confirmation: We have yet to receive guidelines from the bishops on confirmation but will be in contact with parents and candidates as soon as we do.

RCIA: We are waiting for the guidelines on adult baptism and confirmation to be issued but are hoping that these will be in place before Sunday 19 July. Assuming they are we hope to baptise, receive and confirm the members of this year's RCIA group.

Marriage: Many couples have postponed their wedding ceremony until next year, but we have some that will be taking place, according to the guidelines for marriages, in the next few months. Fr Michael has been in contact with all the couples expecting to get married since the lockdown commenced, but if you were expecting to hear from him, and have not done so, please contact him at the presbytery.

First Holy Communion & Confirmation 2021 As yet the children from this year's Communion and Confirmation programmes have still to celebrate their First Communion or be confirmed. We are actively looking at how and when this might happen. For those expecting to make their First Holy Communion or be confirmed next year (2021) please note that the preparation programmes for these will not begin until January 2021 and that registration forms will be available in mid-september. The running of these programmes depends on the support and assistance of volunteers to act as Table Leaders and Catechists. With the current restrictions in place, and the likelihood of their continuing in some shape or form, it is likely that we will have to run the programmes, certainly the First Communion Programme, in a different way. With up to 100 children making First Holy Communion each year we will almost certainly have to divide these up into small groups running at different times. All this requires planning, but first and foremost it requires volunteers without whom it will be impossible to offer the programmes. Being a volunteer Table Leader and catechists can appear daunting, our hope is to dedicate the

autumn term, the period before the programmes begin, for the training and formation of Table Leaders and catechists. If you would like to find out more please contact Fr Michael re First Holy Communion and Fr Julian re Confirmation.

AREN'T WE FORTUNATE! In our part of Hertfordshire we have such an outstanding and historical building as St. Albans Abbey / Cathedral. It was founded in the 8th Century and is the Shrine of Britain's first saint and martyr, and is the oldest site of continuous Christian worship in this country. The other very unusual aspect of the life of this Church of England Abbey is that Catholic Mass is celebrated there every week. There is no other example of this anywhere in the UK. It has taken place ever since 1983. Worship will resume again, in common with all the churches, and the next Catholic Mass will be celebrated on this coming Friday 17th July at 12.00noon. Why not give it a try? The celebration is a very prayerful occasion. Because the Nave is so extensive there is no problem about distancing. Just enter by the Welcome Entrance. We look forward to seeing you. Mgr. Harry Turner (R.C. Ecumenical Chaplain)

Feast of St Bonaventure (1218-1274) - 15 July Bonaventure was born in Etruria in about 1218. He became a Franciscan in 1243 and studied philosophy and theology at the University of Paris. He became a famous teacher and philosopher, and was a friend and colleague of St Thomas Aquinas. At this time, the friars were considered revolutionary with their radical embracing of poverty and rejection of institutional structures. Bonaventure was elected general of the Franciscan order in 1255, and is regarded as the second founder of the Order. He declined the archbishopric of York in 1265 but was made cardinal bishop of Albano in 1273, dying in 1274 during the Council of Lyons. Bonaventure wrote extensively on philosophy and theology, but always insisted that the simple and uneducated could have a clearer knowledge of God than the wise. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1588 by Pope Sixtus V.

The Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel - 16 July Holy Scripture celebrates the beauty of Mount Carmel, where the prophet Elijah defended Israel's pure faith in the living God. In the 12th century some hermits took up residence on this mountain and eventually set up the Carmelite Order, which is dedicated to living a contemplative life under the patronage of the Holy Mother of God.