

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN
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SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 19th 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... One of the challenges and one of the consolations of the past few months has been the streaming of a daily Mass from the Church; a challenge because it took me some way from my comfort zone, a consolation because it was a means of bringing the Mass to and communicating with the parish at large. With or without the coronavirus it is clear that the live streaming of Mass from the parish is and could continue to be a vital means or way for sick and housebound to remain connected to the rest of the parish. Its also a way in which other celebrations can be shared with family and friends who are unable to attend. My sense from our recent parish council meetings and from experience in other parishes is that we should continue with the livestreaming of a daily Mass and that we should look to a more permanent solution.

Last week we met with an experienced company who have equipped many places of worship and talked through what would be needed to stream Mass from the Church and to maintain the sense of intimacy which many of you have appreciated. Nothing comes cheaply and an initial quote puts a price tag of around £8,000 on the provision, networking and installation of a camera system.

Housekeeping Notes for Attending Church

Please book in advance (details below).
Please remember to wear a face covering.

In a bid to prevent the spread of the virus we would ask you:
to observe the 2m distancing at all times
to refrain from moving around the Church,
to avoid touching surfaces as you move through the church,
to leave the Church after you have received Holy Communion and not to return to your seats

If you are under 70 please consider volunteering (details below)

REPORT FROM THE MEETING OF THE PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL **Wednesday 8th July, 2020**

The PPC has continued to meet monthly during the lockdown using Zoom technology.

Re-opening of church for private prayer and celebration of public Mass: The church re-opened on 15th June for private prayer, and from 6th July for the public celebration of Mass. A maximum of 58 people can be accommodated at each Mass and a booking system is currently in place to reserve seats. 50 parishioners have kindly volunteered to act as stewards, but more volunteers are needed for the 11 Masses each week and so that we have reserves in place to cover for holidays. The PPC is very grateful to the volunteers who are ensuring that guidance from the Government and the Diocese of Westminster is being followed to comply with social distancing in church and sanitising of the church between services. It is hoped that Sunday Masses will commence on the weekend of 19th July, with the Saturday vigil at 6pm, and on Sunday at 10am and 6pm. The 10am Mass continues to be streamed each day and is available on YouTube.

(Continued overleaf)

Funerals and Weddings: A maximum of 30 people are allowed to be present at funeral and wedding services so these will be reserved for invited guests.

First Holy Communion Masses: Fr Michael hopes that FHC Masses can be held in the next few weeks, but this will depend on the availability of volunteer stewards. Attendance at FHC Masses will be by invitation to the families

Sacred Heart Shrine: Building work is complete on the shrine, and additional cost estimates for the surrounding frame are being investigated.

MSC supported Charity Appeal: An appeal will be made before Christmas for the *Catholic Workers Farm* and *The Living Room*.

Memorial bench for Fr Tom: Work is in progress with St Albans Council to refurbish an existing bench overlooking the cricket pitch in Clarence Park and to include a rededication in memory of Fr Tom.

Live Streaming of Mass going forward: Discussions are ongoing with external providers on the installation of a more permanent technical streaming capability.

Survey of parishioners on support during the lockdown: Following up on suggestions discussed by the City Centre Churches, it was decided to develop a questionnaire for parishioners to obtain their feedback on support from the parish during the lockdown. The results will feed into plans going forward.

Youth Coordinator: The need to do more to engage young people in our parish was identified as a priority at the last parish assembly. The possibility of appointing a youth worker to lead on activities for young people aged 10 - 18 was discussed and will be taken forward for further discussion by the Youth Team.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, 12th August 2020

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.**

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.

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.

Sunday & Weekday Masses Please remember there are a limited number of spaces in church so it is necessary to pre-book a seat. Please contact the parish office stalbens@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.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 19th July – SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

6pm Vigil Mass will be offered for Deceased relatives & Friends of Marion Miller

10am Mass will be offered for Patrick Keegan (Anniv)

6pm Mass will be offered for Michael Aylward (Anniv)

Reading 1, Wisdom 12:13,16-19

Responsorial Psalm, 85

Reading 2, Romans 8:26-27

Gospel, Matthew 13:24-43

Monday 20 July – feria

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

7 pm Mass will be offered for Clif Staniforth (RIP)

Reading 1, Micah 6:1-4, 6-8

Responsorial Psalm, 49

Gospel, Matthew 12:38-42

Tuesday 21 July - feria

10 am Mass will be offered for Karen Brennan (RIP)

Reading 1, Micah 7:14-15, 18-20

Responsorial Psalm, 84

Gospel, Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday 22 July – ST MARY MAGDALENE

10 am Mass will be offered for Kevin Barry (Ann)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Margaret Lavelle (RIP)

Reading 1, Song of Songs 3:1-4

Responsorial Psalm, 62

Gospel, John 20:1-2,11-18

Thursday 23 July – ST BRIDGET OF SWEDEN

10 am Mass will be offered for Annie Coakley (RIP)

Reading 1, Galatians 2:19-20

Responsorial Psalm, 33

Gospel, John 15:1-8

Friday 24 July - feria

10 am Mass will be offered for Kennedy Family (Ints)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Martina Athy (Ints)

Reading 1, Jeremiah 3:14-17

Responsorial Psalm, Jeremiah 31

Gospel, Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday 18 July – ST JAMES

There is no 10 am Mass this morning as there will be two First Holy Communion Masses celebrated today.

Reading 1, 2 Corinthians 4:7-15

Responsorial Psalm, 125

Gospel, Matthew 20:20-28

6 pm Vigil Mass Vincent O'Reilly (Ann)

Sunday 26 July – SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

10am Mass will be offered for Eric Hopkins (RIP)

6pm Mass will be offered for Ivan Potiuk (RIP)

PLEASE PRAY

With Churches Together in St Albans we pray this week for the Minister and members of St Mary's Church, Childwick Green.

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

For those who have died recently: Janina Chilczuk

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Elsie Rigg, Patricia Dorman, Michael Aylward, Patrick Keegan, Kevin Barry and Kathleen McGowan, Fr Tony O'Sullivan, Joseph Scully and Vincent O'Reilly.

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

Parish Survey

Fr Michael, Fr Julian and the PPC would greatly value your thoughts on how Lockdown has affected your views of the church and the response of the parish in supporting you, albeit within the stringent confines of Government regulations.

You are all invited to complete a questionnaire that is being sent out electronically with the weekly Parish Update and will also be available to download from the Parish Website. Paper copies will be available in the porch after all Masses from the 19th July.

Your views are very important for the evaluation of our response to the Lockdown. Helping us to learn from your experiences will be invaluable should similar restrictions be imposed in the future.

Please return completed forms *to the parish office either by email to stalbens@rcdow.org.uk or by hand delivery through the presbytery door or by posting to Ss Alban & Stephen, 14 Beaconsfield Rd, St Albans AL1 3RB by 1st August 2020*. Please note that your personal e-mail details will not be passed on to those analysing your responses.

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.

Virtual Lourdes Pilgrimage As the Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage cannot take place this year, a virtual pilgrimage will take place instead from 26th June to 1st August, with a full programme of Masses and devotions. Full details can be found on the events page of the diocesan website and on the attached poster. All are welcome to join in this virtual pilgrimage on the dedicated Westminster Diocese Lourdes Pilgrimage YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9AT-YIsH22Hbp2rnIG7jsA>

A Catholic Response to George Floyd and Black Lives Matter Westminster Justice and Peace Commission are running an event exploring how we respond to racial injustice and discrimination as a diverse and multicultural Catholic community. This online event takes place on 24th July from 7.30pm to 8.30pm. Guest speakers include Baroness Scotland (London, UK) and Leslye Colvin (Alabama, USA) who will guide a reflection on responses and what action to take. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/a-catholic-response-to-george-floyd-and-black-lives-matter-tickets-112811815176>

Landings Online London Landings invites those exploring new ways to return to their faith to reconnect through an on-line, eight-week Landings Programme of informal sharing and discussion. For information and to register interest in joining a July on-line programme, contact Ruby Almeida: landings.london@gmail.com

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.

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.

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 The Bishops of England and Wales have yet to issue the guidelines for the Baptism, Reception and Confirmation of Adults, so unfortunately we will have to further delay the celebration of the sacraments for this year's catechumens and candidates. Please keep the members of the RCIA group in your prayers.

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 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.