

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

14 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, AL1 3RB

Office Hours Monday-Friday 9am-1pm Tel: 01727 853 585

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

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 5th July 2020

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

Rev. Steve Pickard (Deacon)

Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbands3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

From Monday 6 July there will be two public Masses Monday-Friday at 10am and 7 pm. On Saturday mornings there will be a 10 am Mass. As yet there are no public Sunday Masses. At present the maximum capacity for the church has been fixed at 58 people. If you would like to attend Mass please contact the Parish Office by phone (01727 853585 between 9 am and 12 Noon Monday – Friday) or email (stalbands@rcdow.org.uk) to book a place. Hopefully all who wish to come can be accommodated, but it is possible that you may be disappointed. Please note that you will need to:

- Follow the stewards' instructions
- Wear a face covering
- Sanitise your hands on entering and leaving the church
- Observe social distancing of 2m
- Follow the one-way system around the church
- Sit in a pre-allocated seat
- Avoid touching surfaces

Please also note that your experience in the church and the celebration of Mass will be different:

- There will be no Holy Water to bless yourselves with
- You will need to ask a steward for help if you wish to light a candle
- There will be no Singing, intercessions, offertory procession or sign of peace
- Communion will be distributed at the end of Mass
- Your offering can be made at the door as you leave
- There will be no toilet facilities

If we are to have Sunday Masses we need to recruit more volunteers who are willing and able to direct visitors and sanitise the church afterwards. If you are not self-isolating or shielding, under 70, and want to help please contact Melanie (mjoneill5@btinternet.com or 07900 051956).

I once went to an optician to receive a new pair of glasses. He fitted them and they seemed to be fine. However as soon as I left his premises I realised that he had either made the wrong prescription or given me someone else's glasses. The gospel passage today suggests that we have the wrong prescription...about ourselves, others and God. Jesus invites us to sit in the divine optician's chair and to have our vision tested. The first thing we note is that Jesus approaches God differently from the way that we often do. He calls God his Father and he blesses him. We tend to ask God to bless us without ever considering blessing him. We see Jesus' more Jewish perspective at the start of the Lord's Prayer which calls us to acknowledge the love and greatness of God before asking him to meet our needs. It's why in our offertory prayers, we first bless the Lord God of all creation. Further problems of sight are detected. God isn't an object to be analysed or some mathematical problem to be solved. If we think we have summed God up are sums are wrong. In fact God reveals himself to those who can't fathom him out, and if God doesn't reveal himself, he remains hidden and unknown. This is why we need to become blind before we can see, a fool before we can become wise and a child before we can become mature. Jesus then makes some claims which will want us to break our glasses if we haven't already dropped them. He says that he knows God absolutely and God knows him absolutely, and that he is the sole discloser of God. So if you think that Jesus is simply a moral teacher or a great religious leader you are not playing tennis. Time to smash the false spectacles of religious relativism and political correctness!

Fr Julian

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 5th July – 14th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Masses will be offered for the People of the Parish and for Edna & Oswald McCarthy.

Reading 1, Zechariah 9:9-10

Responsorial Psalm, 144

Reading 2, Romans 8:9, 11-13

Gospel, Matthew 11:25-30

Monday 6 July – St Maria Goretti

10 am Mass will be offered for Anne O'Toole (RIP)

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

Reading 1, Hosea 2: 16-18, 21-22

Responsorial Psalm, 144

Gospel, Matthew 8:18-26

Tuesday 7 July - feria

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

7 pm Mass will be offered for the Holy Souls

Reading 1, Hosea 8:4-7, 11-13

Responsorial Psalm, 113B

Gospel, Matthew 9:32-38

Wednesday 8 July - feria

10 am Mass will be offered for Tom Burke (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Geoff Bliss (RIP)

Reading 1, Hosea 10:1-3, 7-8, 12

Responsorial Psalm, 104

Gospel, Matthew 10:1-7

Thursday 9 July - feria

10 am Mass will be offered for Elaine Gatta (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Holy Souls (RIP)

Reading 1, Hosea 11:1-4, 8-9

Responsorial Psalm, 79

Gospel, Matthew 10:7-15

Friday 10 July - feria

10 am Mass will be offered for Louis Fernandes (Anniv)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Richard Field (Anniv)

Reading 1, Hosea 14:2-10

Responsorial Psalm, 50

Gospel, Matthew 10:16-23

Saturday 11 July – St Benedict, Abbot, Co-Patron of Europe

10 am Mass will be offered for Mary Curran (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Lillie Butler (Ints)

Reading 1, Proverbs 2:1-9

Responsorial Psalm, 33

Gospel, Matthew 19:27-29

Sunday 12 July – 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Mass schedule for Sunday 12th July is yet to be confirmed

PLEASE PRAY

With Churches Together in St Albans we pray this week for the ministers and members of Churches Together in Hertfordshire.

For all those who are 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

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 order to open our church for approximately 1 hour each morning (12noon- 1.00 pm) 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.

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.**

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

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. 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 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 stalbands@rcdow.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 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*

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. The shop is being regularly cleaned, strict social distancing measures are applied and the number of people in the FEED shop is restricted at any one time; please note only *one* member of a household should attend a FEED session, where possible. Our other help services (such as CAP Debt Advice, Family Lawyer, Housing Advice, MIND) will not be running at the Care Centre, but where possible will operate these over the phone/zoom, contact heather@thevineyardchurch.co.uk or on 01727 739064. FEED currently needs rice, pasta, fruit juices/squashes, baby food, and tinned food. You can drop off items at the church (7 Brick Knoll Park, AL1 5UG) Monday -Friday between 10am-3pm. Please take them straight to the warehouse doors and ring the bell. You can also drop off items 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.

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 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)*

St Benedict, Abbot, Co-Patron of Europe (480-547) Feast 11 July Benedict was born in Nursia, in Umbria, and studied in Rome; but appalled by the dissolute life of the city, he became a solitary hermit at Subiaco. His reputation spread, and some monks asked him to be their abbot; but they did not like the discipline he imposed and tried to poison him. Learning from this experience, Benedict organised various small communities of monks and nuns in various places, including that at Monte Cassino. He drew up a set of rules to guide the communal life of monasteries. This Rule of St Benedict has proved so wise that it has served as the foundation of practically every attempt at communal living ever since – and not only in religious communities. His Rule recognises that people aim at perfection but often fall well short of it, and aims to be a “rule for beginners” in which even the least perfect and least able can grow in spiritual stature. A Benedictine

monastery is characterised by a group of people who, by their strivings to live and grow together, have become more and more *themselves*, as God intended them, instead of being crushed into false uniformity by some idealistic and authoritarian regime. The Rule of St Benedict has much to say to all of us: it drags our eyes up to the stars but keeps our feet firmly on the ground; it calls us to perfection but keeps us sane.