

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

14 Beaconsfield Road, St Albans, AL1 3RB

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

E-mail: stalbens@rcdow.org.uk Website: www.albanstephen.org

YouTube: [youtube.com/c/SsAlbanandStephenCatholicChurch](https://www.youtube.com/c/SsAlbanandStephenCatholicChurch)

THE ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY – 16th August 2020

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

Rev. Steve Pickard (Deacon)

Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbenssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

Fr Julian writes... Today is a double celebration. In the first place we celebrate together Our Lord's Resurrection from the dead. Nothing could be more important than that. In the second we are celebrating also the Assumption of our Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary into heaven. Why is the Assumption important? It reminds us that she is, like the communion of saints, not dead but alive with Christ in the heavenly place interceding for us. Among the saints, she is justly given special significance by the Church due to her role in our salvation. Summarising the general belief of the Church throughout the ages, Pope Pius XII, in his apostolic constitution of 1950, declared that when her earthly life was ended she was assumed into heaven body and soul. Nothing is determined as to whether the assumption occurred before or after her actual death, so that we are free to believe either that she died (the Dormition-an event popular among the orthodox) or did not. But where you may ask, is the evidence for the Assumption in holy scripture? True there is no explicit evidence for it as there is for an event like the Ascension, but let's look at it from a different biblical perspective. A few days ago we celebrated the Feast of the Transfiguration when Jesus' body was transfigured in glory, as he spoke with Moses and Elijah. If Moses and Elijah are seen in glory with Jesus, it is inconceivable that the Mother of our Lord (more important than either of these foremost prophets in the scheme of salvation) is not also in glory. Perhaps you are convinced by this but then you may ask, why need she be assumed? Significantly that is what is traditionally believed of both of these prophets. The bible states that Elijah was assumed in a chariot of fire before he died. As for Moses, it says that he died but that his burial place is unknown. There was widespread belief among the Jews that he also had been assumed after his death. In fact, in his letter, St Jude quotes from the apocryphal text known as the Assumption of Moses. The Transfiguration further helps us to get a right perspective on the role of Mary, assumed into heaven. Unlike any other human character in holy scripture she is depicted in heaven, as clothed with the sun and with the moon at her feet. This is glory indeed. Have you ever tried looking towards the light of the sun? But contrast that, to how Jesus is described in the Transfiguration. The light which transfigured him and his clothes came not from the outside but from within his own body. It is the difference between created light (the light of the sun) and uncreated light-the light of God himself. The contrast befits Mary. She who is created, yet mother of the uncreated, and the one who is always drawing us to worship her Son, the Light of the World. Blessed is she throughout all ages!

For the remainder of August, we will continue with our current Mass schedule which has three Sunday Masses; a Saturday Vigil Mass at 6 pm, Sunday morning at 10 am and Sunday evening at 6 pm. Assuming there is no upsurge in the spread of the coronavirus, we will to the re-introduction of an additional Sunday Mass at the beginning of September, possibly reverting to the more usual times of Saturday 6pm and Sunday 9.30, 11.30 and 7.00pm. I very much hope that we may also be in a position to think about the Mass at St John Fisher School in Marshalswick. Of course any additional Mass requires additional stewards. If you are under 70 and would be willing to volunteer please contact Melanie O'Neill, the chair of our parish council, who is co-ordinating the rota of volunteer stewards. 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 shielding or remain indoors. We need others to step up.

Fr Michael

The Presidents of Churches Together in England have issued the following statement

We, as Presidents of Churches Together in England, have responded to the killing of George Floyd in the United States, and the widespread call for real change to combat racial injustice in our world, above all in our own country. We have spent time over the past few weeks listening to voices of people from the black community, especially the younger generation. This has been a deeply moving experience and illustrated powerfully the many profound changes of heart and actions that need to be made. The attitude that regards black people – and indeed other people of ethnic minorities – as inferior is evil and mars our common humanity. We challenge this unreservedly, recognising the constant experiences of racism, including micro aggression, which black people face.

We believe that churches have a significant role to play in combating racial injustice. If we are to be effective in doing so, we must look at ourselves.

We are painfully aware of the racism that blights the life of our churches. We are intent upon a process of identifying racial injustice within our churches – current and historic – repenting of it and taking action to effect real change. This includes the potential for discriminatory behaviour in the way that we make church appointments, which we know can happen at the conscious or unconscious level. We want to ensure that these processes are just and demonstrate the so often neglected gospel truth of Colossians 3:11 “there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all”. In this verse Paul makes it clear that racial injustice and discrimination is not only profoundly unjust and an affront to God but also the very denial of Christ who reached out to all human beings.

Some Member Churches of Churches Together in England have already embarked upon this journey of tackling racial injustice. The Church of England plans a new action group, and among the Free Churches work by the Methodist and United Reformed Churches, together with Baptists Together is already under way, as is also true for the Catholic Church. The Pentecostal Forum has long held this issue in its view, as have the Orthodox Churches.

We call upon all churches to travel together on this journey of racial justice so that together, as one community of churches in England, we may reach out in love and respect to one another in pursuit of our common witness.

An area of great concern to us as Presidents is the relationship between the black community and the criminal justice system. We will therefore be facilitating conversations between young black women and men and senior members of the police service. We are also seeking to engage both the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice in further considering the day-to-day experience of many young black people in England.

We encourage all churches throughout England to do all they can to build trust and improve accountability between black communities, the police, civic bodies and wider community groups. In particular, we call upon groupings of Church Leaders throughout the nation to reach out to their black colleagues in church leadership who are currently absent from their membership, making more inclusive ecumenical leadership. Our desire is that these groups will create spaces for those in authority to listen, as we have, to the powerful testimony of young black women and men as a step towards greater social cohesion.

We see these issues as matters of gospel and faith for all who follow Jesus Christ, the one who calls every nation and people to the justice of the Kingdom of God.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 16 August - The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

6pm Vigil Mass will be offered for John & Josie Sheehan
Wedding Anniv. Renewal

10am Mass will be offered for People of the Parish

6pm Mass will be offered for Joseph Deacy (Anniv)

Reading 1, Apocalypse 11:19, 12:1-6,10

Responsorial Psalm, 44

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 15:20-26

Gospel, Luke 1:39-56

Monday 17 August

10 am Mass will be offered for Fr Bernard Bardouillet
(RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Rob Wilkinson (Ann.)

Reading 1, Ezekiel 24:15-24

Responsorial Psalm, Deuteronomy 32

Gospel, Matthew 19:16-22

Tuesday 18 August

10 am Mass will be offered for Ranji Moorthy (RIP)

Reading 1, Ezekiel 28:1-10

Responsorial Psalm, Deuteronomy 32

Gospel, Matthew 19:23-30

Wednesday 19 August

10 am Mass will be offered for Hugh Coyle (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Mary Davin (RIP)

Reading 1, Ezekiel 34:1-11

Responsorial Psalm, 22

Gospel, Matthew 20:1-16

Thursday 20 August - St Bernard

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

The funeral for Eddie Mansfield will be held at 11am

Reading 1, Ezekiel 36:23-28

Responsorial Psalm, 50

Gospel, Matthew 22:1-14

Friday 21 August - St Pius X, Pope

10 am Mass will be offered for Alan Durant (RIP)

7 pm Mass will be offered for Ann & Michael Whitehead
(Ints)

Reading 1, Ezekiel 37:1-14

Responsorial Psalm, 106

Gospel, Matthew 22:34-40

Saturday 22 August - The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Reading 1, Ezekiel 43:1-7

Responsorial Psalm, 84

Gospel, Matthew 23:1-12

Sunday 23 August - 21st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

6pm Vigil Mass will be offered for Maureen Findlay-
Wilson (RIP)

10am Mass will be offered for the People of the Parish

6pm Mass will be offered for Mary Murphy (RIP)

PLEASE PRAY

This week we pray for the clergy and parishioners of
Marshalswick Mass Centre of Ss Alban & Stephen.

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

For those who have died recently: John Brayne, Eddie
Mansfield, Marion Haye, Anthony O'Shea, Antoinette Igoe
and Royln Seeboruth.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Joseph
Deacy, Patricia Elliott and Rob Wilkinson

The Funeral Mass for John Brayne (RIP) will be held at 10 am
on Monday 10 August followed by cremation at West Herts
Crematorium.

The Funeral Mass for Eddie Mansfield (RIP) will be held at
11 am on Thursday 20 August.

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

Housekeeping Notes for Attending Church It is now a
legal requirement to wear a face covering in church.
Please have your face covering in place before entering
the porch and keep it in place throughout Mass.
Vulnerable people who are unable to wear a face covering
are advised not to come to church at this time. Please book
in advance. Observe 2m distancing at all times. Refrain from
moving around the Church. Avoid touching surfaces as you
move around. Do not to return to your seats after receiving
Holy Communion. If you are under 70 please consider
volunteering

It is with great sadness that the death is announced of Mrs
Antoinette Igoe (RIP) in Lancashire at the age of 91. Mrs
Igoe was deputy head at Loreto College until her
retirement in the early 1990s.

Future Streaming 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. It's also a way in which other celebrations can be shared with family and friends who are unable to attend. Recently 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. In doing so we have stressed the need for the close ups which will maintain the sense of intimacy which many of you have commented on appreciatively. 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.

Parish Administrator Michael Roche will be stepping back from his temporary role as Parish Administrator in September. Further details can be found at <https://jobs.rcdow.org.uk/parish-administrator-ss-alban-stephen-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 stalbans@rcdow.org.uk or phone 01727 853585 to reserve a place.

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 we are called to and equipped for the lives that we are to live in the world at large. At this time the Bishops have released us from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Those shielding and vulnerable should be assured that they are under no obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Please consider participating via the streamed Masses. Given that there are a limited number of spaces in Church, please would parishioners who are not at work in the week and who are free to do so, think about coming to Mass during the week instead of at the weekend. In this way there will be more spaces available for those who can only attend at weekends.

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.

VirginMoney Giving As you may be aware, due to the Coronavirus, the Church has had a drop in collection money of almost £2000 a week. This money goes a long way towards the upkeep of the church, as well as helping us to modernise (for example you will see elsewhere in this bulletin about the cost of installing a dedicated livestreaming service). Therefore, we have set up a simple way of donating to the Parish, via the platform VirginMoney Giving. There is a QR Code, right, which - when scanned - will take you to the church website. You will see on the homepage this [link](#), which takes you to the VirginMoney Giving page. Of course, we recognise that this is a tough time for everyone, so please don't feel pressured, only give if you are able and willing. Thank you for your generosity.



Pope St Pius X (1835-1914) - Feast 21 August Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto was born in the village of Riese, near Venice, one of 10 children of a very poor family. He was ordained to the priesthood at the age of 23. He was successively bishop of Mantua and of Venice, and was elected Pope, against his wishes, in 1903. In his time as Pope, he sought to "restore all things in Christ." He insisted on the separation of Church and State, and banned the formation of political associations that claimed exclusive religious sanction for their political programme, whether of the Left or of the Right. He revised the code of Canon Law, founded an institute for scriptural studies, and initiated the revision of the Latin translation of the Bible and the reform of the liturgy. He lived in great poverty even when he was Pope, and preached sermons every Sunday in the courtyards of the Vatican. He is perhaps best remembered for his encouragement of the frequent reception of Holy Communion, especially by children. In his simplicity and goodness of heart, he performed miracles even when he was alive. On the 11th anniversary of his election as Pope, Europe was plunged into World War I. Pius had foreseen it, but it killed him. "This is the last affliction the Lord will visit on me. I would gladly give my life to save my poor children from this ghastly scourge." He died a few weeks after the war began, and was canonised in 1954.