



Church Website

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: stalbans@rcdow.org.uk Website: www.albanstephen.org
YouTube: youtube.com/c/SsAlbanandStephenCatholicChurch
TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 23rd August 2020



VirginMoney Giving

Parish Team: Fr Michael O'Boy (Parish Priest) Fr Julian Davies (Assistant Priest)
Rev. Steve Pickard (Deacon)

Dear Parishioners

I'm just about to go away for a week's holiday. It's incredible to think that the summer holidays are drawing to a close. Usually, when it gets to summer, we can go away looking forward to a fresh start in September, but this year is different. We have begun baptisms again, but there are still many to catch up on. We have yet to settle on a date for confirmations and while fifty or so children have celebrated their First Communion, another fifty or so remain. Thankfully however we have now settled a date – Sunday 6th September at 11.30am - for the members of the RCIA to be baptised, received and confirmed. Moreover, there are physical signs of things happening. All you have to do is look at the bell tower, see it enveloped in scaffolding, to appreciate this. We're busy replacing the guttering which is in urgent need of repair. Similarly, roofers have begun work on the flat roof over the sacristy. Also, we are now making concrete steps towards a more permanent solution to streaming. This week we have installed a new access point in the Church which will facility a more permanent connection to the internet. Towards the end of September, we hope to install a set of cameras.

Sunday Mass Times

Over the last few weekends, more people have begun to attend Mass. Currently, there is a limit of 58 places in Church and on a few occasions we have reached our maximum capacity and had to turn people away. Barring another lockdown, I suspect numbers will continue to rise. This being so, I think it will be necessary to reintroduce another Sunday Mass. From Sunday 6th September I am proposing that we move to the following schedule of weekend Masses

Saturday 6 pm, Sunday 9.30 am, 11.30am & 7 pm.

This means a return to a more familiar set of Sunday Mass times. Once the schools return we will begin to see what may be possible at St John Fisher in Marshalswick. I am conscious that many people are missing that opportunity to sit quietly in Church so in addition to re-introducing another Mass I am also proposing from Saturday 12 September to have a regular time of exposition from 10am-10.45am on Saturday mornings.

However additional Masses and times of adoration require more stewards, and more stewards means more volunteers...and more volunteers will lighten the burden. It doesn't have to be for a Sunday Mass, it could be for one of the weekday Masses, freeing up other stewards for the weekend. Simply put, without additional volunteers we will not be able to introduce an additional Mass. **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.**

Fr Michael

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

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)
Reading 1, Isaiah 22:19-23
Responsorial Psalm, 137
Reading 2, Romans 11:33-36
Gospel, Matthew 16:13-20

Monday 24 August - St Bartholomew

10 am Mass will be offered for Pat Carpenter (RIP)
7 pm Mass will be offered for Diane Dalton (RIP)
Reading 1, Apocalypse 21:9-14
Responsorial Psalm, 144
Gospel, John 1:45-51

Tuesday 25 August

10 am Mass will be offered for Arnold O'Reilly (RIP)
Reading 1, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-3, 14-17
Responsorial Psalm, 95
Gospel, Matthew 23:23-26

Wednesday 26 August

10 am Mass will be offered for Anthony Sumner (RIP)
7 pm Mass will be offered for Helena Cuneen (RIP)
Reading 1, 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10, 16-18
Responsorial Psalm, 127
Gospel, Matthew 23:27-32

Thursday 27 August - St Monica

10 am Mass will be offered for Karen Brennan (RIP)
Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 1:1-9
Responsorial Psalm, 144
Gospel, Matthew 24:42-51

Friday 21 August - St Augustine of Hippo

10 am Mass will be offered for Kevin Henry (RIP)
7 pm Mass will be offered for the Holy Souls
Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 1:17-25
Responsorial Psalm, 32
Gospel, Matthew 25:1-13

Saturday 29 August - The Beheading of St John the Baptist

Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31
Responsorial Psalm, 32
Gospel, Mark 6:17-29

For confession please call at the Presbytery

Sunday 30 August - 22nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

6pm Vigil Mass will be offered for Tommy Collins (Ann)
10am Mass will be offered for William O'Leary (Ann)
6pm Mass will be offered for George May Xuereb Brennan (Ann)

PLEASE PRAY

This week we pray for the ministers and parishioners of Hatfield Road Methodist Church.

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

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

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Tommy Collins, William O'Leary and George May Xuereb Brennan

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.

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. At the top of the Bulletin, there are two QR Codes which, when scanned, will take you either to the church website homepage or the VirginMoney Giving page. The QR codes are both labelled for you to differentiate. You can go directly to the VirginMoney Giving page by using this [link](#). 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.

Parish Lockdown Survey

Many thanks to those who have completed the parish survey on the effects of the Lockdown on your views of the Church and Faith. It was extremely pleasing to receive 151 replies (100 online and 51 paper copies). There many helpful and informative comments and, once they have been fully collated, further feedback on the analyses will be given in due course.

Saint Bartholomew, Apostle - Feast 24 August Bartholomew was born at Cana and brought by the Apostle Philip to meet Jesus. Nothing further is known for certain. Eusebius speaks of him in India, but the Roman Martyrology has him martyred in Armenia, skinned alive according to the Persian custom. Because his relics were enshrined on the island in the Tiber that is principally used as a hospital, he has become a patron saint of the sick.

Saint Monica (331-387) Feast 27 August Monica was born at Thagaste in Africa of a Christian family. She was married young, to Patricius, and among her children was Augustine. He had a brilliant intellect and uncertain morals and a wayward spiritual career. With many tears she prayed unceasingly to God for his conversion and her prayers were answered shortly before she died. She had a deep faith and outstanding virtue and is a wonderful example of a Christian mother.

Beirut, Lebanon

On the afternoon of August 4th, the skyline of our beloved city, Beirut, was tainted. Our people's bodies were dismantled, limb from limb after a most devastating explosion. Bodies on the pavements, bodies on hospital floors, bodies decapitated in crushed and blown cars, bodies humiliatingly lying in the middle of the streets, violated by tragedy. Every single body was accompanied by a phone, being rung ruthlessly by loved ones praying it wasn't their daughter, their son, their sibling, their parent, their relative, repulsively torn apart on the gravel of their homeland. Victims of the explosion were walking around, filming the catastrophe, and whispers of excruciatingly agonizing weeps could be heard by the survivors.

Our people are crying. A mother's scream is a distinct one. Our 10,452km² bellowed with shrieks and wails of women whose children have been ripped from their embrace. Children screeched at the sound of smashing glass and fallen roofs. The streets were filled with shards of glass. People's homes surrendered to ruin. Several hospitals were shattered. Warehouses stocked with medical supplies, demolished. The port, our main means of importing supplies food, product, burned to ashes. Grain, a nutrient so basic yet so necessary, has been wiped from a six-month reserve storage. Our economy will crash even further. Over one hundred of our citizens are marked deceased. Over five-thousand persons are wounded in hospitals that are that are immensely struggling with capacity and medical supplies. The medical system is in turmoil because of the overriding pressure and lack of medical supply. Civilians are racing to hospitals to donate blood in the midst of a pandemic. A good number of local people are still missing, with hopeless alerts being sent around. If a mask was not being worn for the purpose of the pandemic, they are now being worn for the fright of getting poisoned through the soiled air. Despite all the distress being lived, our people still have the will to press the palms of their hands together and call for God.

Our country is bleeding. We are encountering a disturbance greater than all of us, and we cannot do it alone. The Lebanese Maronite Order has opened the doors to its monasteries and schools to house many nationals who have lost their homes and has medicated and cared for as many as seven hundred in its hospitals. It is our duty to help our people, and we very much hope that it is yours too. The donations will go to the LMO for the Solidarity Initiative in order to raise a sufficient amount of donations to aid the vulnerable residents in restoring the homes they have lost to this disaster, as well as providing medical supplies, and food distribution.

They say Beirut represents a Phoenix, its glory shines exceptionally beyond the rest. It is a city that never sleeps. It is a city that is alive with energy, love, and laughter. Its seas never show fear and its streets never submit to the ordinary. And while it is in grief and sorrow, Beirut will rise from the ashes again, just like the resilient Phoenix it always has been.

While we are actively attempting to secure aids to our devastated nation, we need your help to make our efforts go even further. Your support is crucial to our efforts in reinforcing hope to our nation.

We thank you for taking the time to read our message and for any potential contributions you may present.

Yours Sincerely,

Fr Fadi Kmeid

Superior of Our Lady of Lebanon - UK

Deceased	135+
Wounded	5000+
Missing	100+
Homeless	300,000+

You can donate to the Lebanese Maronite Order Charitable trust using the following details:

Account Name: The Lebanese Maronite order charitable trust

Bank of Beirut UK Ltd.: 66 Cannon Street, London, EC4N 6AE

Sort Code: 60-83-75

Account No.: 12023802

Purpose: Aid to Beirut