



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - 13 SEPTEMBER 2020



VirginMoney Giving

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 Michael writes Last Sunday we baptized, received and confirmed seven adults belonging to this year's RCIA group. It was a great joy to be a part of the celebration which itself was the culmination of months of preparation and a very patient wait. Thank you to the catechumens and candidates witnessing to what God has done in their lives, thank you to the catechists and sponsors for the support and encouragement they have provided, and thank you to Deacon Steve for his co-ordination and shepherding. Alongside last week's celebration we continue to catch up with baptisms and in October there will be at least two further First Communion celebrations. Also, we have just heard that we can arrange dates for this year's confirmation. Fr Julian has been in touch with the candidates and their families. Elsewhere a number of projects have neared fruition this week.

Streaming In the church workers have spent two days installing a new camera system and the associated technology to facilitate the streaming of Mass and other services. Thank you again to all those who have generously supported this project. Going forward, it will make a tremendous difference in any future lockdown and to those who are housebound. While completing this work we have also taken the opportunity to link the monitor in the coffee area to the camera system. This means that those seated in the coffee area will also be able to see what is going on in Church. It will take a little time to get used to the new system and there will be minor adjustments to make as we go along, but its good to be using the whole of the sanctuary area once more. **To access the live streaming all you need to do is go to the parish website albanstephen.org and click on the streaming icon.**

Contactless Giving Point As you leave the church you will also see a new addition in the porch where we have installed a contactless giving point between the centre doors. Alongside the Virgin Money Giving available on the parish website this will facilitate a cashless collection. In due course we will be able to use the contactless giving point to donate to a variety of causes, and to gift aid that giving, but for now the contactless giving point is dedicated to the weekly offertory. If you want to you're your weekly offering using contactless giving all you need to do is select the amount you wish to donate and tap across the top of the machine with your mobile phone or contactless card.

Roof Work continues on the flat roof above Meeting Room 2 and the sacristy, but somewhat higher up the work to replace the guttering at the top of the Bell Tower has been completed. That said, the scaffolding will remain for a little while. While it is there we will carry out some maintenance work on the louvred windows at the top of the bell tower and have been advised to replace the cement capping on some of the brick work.

Parish Friends Finally, the Parish Friends delivered 18 blankets to Verulam House for their residents. They were delighted to receive them. Two croquetted blankets were also delivered to Alban Manor for parishioners Helen O'Reilly and Eileen Cleary. With the blankets were cards sending love and best wishes to them both from all the Parish. If you know an elderly person who would like a blanket knitted by the knit and natter group please contact the presbytery.

The government's recent announcement tightening up the guidelines around socialising are a clear reminder that there is no room for complacency and that the coronavirus continues to pose a real threat. As we return to church and are getting used to being back, it is easy to become complacent. The following is offered by one of our volunteer stewards, more by way of a plea than a moan.

A Steward's Tale

Firstly, it is a privilege and an honour to help ensure that people can come back to church for Mass and other services, but it would make stewarding easier if those attending could keep to the guidelines. They have been well publicised, are simple and easy to follow. Most parishioners comply fully with them, however:

sometimes people come into the porch without a face covering, and lean over the steward to give their contact details (**please put your mask on before coming into church and pre-book**) it would save a great deal of time, prevent bunching and facilitate social distancing

sometimes people refuse to give a full name or a telephone number, which can lead to quite a long discussion, which inevitably disturbs people already praying in church and causes the build-up of a queue of people coming into church; we only ask for contact details to help with contacting and tracing

sometimes people object to the seat allocated to them or change their seat, which means the original seat has to be sanitised before someone else arrives

sometimes people remove their face covering, pull it below their nose or under their chin, which defeats the whole purpose of wearing a face covering.

I am sure that no-one likes to leave the church straight after receiving the Holy Communion, but **sometimes people stand or kneel in the aisle or in the porch**. This creates a que for communion, makes exiting difficult and delays the sanitising of the surfaces

Sometimes people go back to their seat to pray or collect bags after receiving Holy Communion. This prevents the stewards from getting on with cleaning and sanitising the church

The kneelers in church have been disabled partly because using them can reduce the social distance between people but also because they would need to be cleaned after every service if used. It all adds up. If you do wish to kneel please could you use the floor space immediately in front of your seat. I appreciate that it is less comfortable but if you wish to bring your own cushion, much as you would use when gardening, you would be very welcome to do so.

Knit and Natter Members and friends of Parish Friends knit and natter group have been knitting squares throughout lockdown to make blankets to take into Care Homes. At a recent garden tea party three knitters got together with Marion Burgess and Helen Bassill to celebrate their achievements. Between them the ladies had made 300 squares which were croqueted together by Marion to make 10 blankets. If anyone is interested in knitting squares or baby hats while sitting at home please contact Helen via the Parish - 01727 853585 or email - stalbans@rcdow.org.uk

LiveSimply Environmental issues have slipped under the radar recently, because of our concentration on coronavirus, so, as part of the 'Season of Creation' celebration this year, Our Lady of Lourdes, Harpenden, parish LiveSimply group are organising a Zoom meeting on "Ecological Conversion: The Journey to 2030". It will be Zoomed at 11.00 am on Saturday 26 Sept. in four weeks time. You can enjoy it from the comfort of your own homes. But it would help us greatly if you would let us know, if you would like to join us, so that we can see the numbers involved. It will be presented by John Paul de Quay of the Arundel & Brighton Diocese and a founder member of the 'Ecological Conversion Group'. Please contact: graham-ryan@sky.com. Laudato Si

The Season of Creation, 1 Sep - 4 Oct and Novena to St Francis Inspired by his encyclical Laudato Si, Pope Francis has established 1 September as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, with the Season of Creation ending on the feast of St Francis, 4 October. During this season we are encouraged to pray for the Earth, our common home. CAFOD has produced a beautiful novena for the season which can be viewed either as short video links or downloaded as text see www.cafod.org.uk/novena Many parishioners were consoled during the lockdown period by becoming more aware of the natural beauty all around us. Now, responding to the urgent message of Pope Francis to care for the Earth, we can try and do our little bit during this month, perhaps by using locally grown produce whenever possible or by reducing our use of plastics, especially clingfilm, and by praying for our world.

CAFOD - Cancel The Debt However many problems the global pandemic has brought to our own country, the situation for the world's poorest nations is far, far worse. The world's poorest nations are struggling with the double impact of the global health pandemic and its severe economic effects. Many are facing a potential crisis as they struggle to pay their debts owed to financial institutions and richer nations. If debts are cancelled, the money saved could be spent on vital health needs and support the most vulnerable people at this time of desperate need.

The annual World Bank and IMF meetings in October provide world leaders with the opportunity to help the world's poorest people by addressing this debt crisis, and the UK could play a critical role. CAFOD have launched a campaign to persuade the UK government that it's time to #CancelTheDebt. CAFOD are asking us to join their photo action as follows:

1. Take a photo of yourself creatively displaying the words "Cancel the debt".
2. Share your image on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram using the hashtag #CancelTheDebt, making sure to tag [@cafod](#).
3. Or email CAFOD your photos at campaigns.writer@cafod.org.uk and CAFOD will upload them for you.

For more information visit cafod.org.uk/cancelthedebt

The Knights of St Columba have resumed their Easter Season painting competition for 8-18 year olds. There are three age groups 8-11, 12-14 and 15-18 with three cash prizes in each age range. £200 will be awarded to the overall winner's school. The deadline for submission is Friday 25 September 2020. For competition enquires please contact kennedy.p@ntiworld.com

THIS WEEK'S LITURGY

The Exaltation of the Cross - Feast 14 September We are accustomed to the cross. We wear it around our necks, chisel it on tombstones and anchor it into rocky mountain peaks. The Church has been so successful in communicating its truths about suffering and death, about resurrection and life, that we perhaps don't notice that, over long centuries, a device of torture and death has been reinterpreted as the world's greatest symbol of life and peace. Why then do we exalt this instrument of torture? The Cross reminds us that Christianity is not an abstract and spiritual religion. It springs from God's direct intervention in the affairs of the world, a real historical event involving real people and a real execution on a real cross. Everyone dies it. So God did it and "so made the grave a sign of hope that promises resurrection". The Cross, then, has to be a sign of hope for us all.

Our Lady of Sorrows -15 September Today's memoria commemorates the sorrows of Mary, especially those lived during Jesus' passion and death. Images of Mary show her heart pierced by seven swords, symbolic of seven sorrows: the prophecy of Simeon; the flight into Egypt; Jesus being lost in the temple; meeting Jesus on His way to Calvary; standing at the foot of the Cross; being present when Jesus was removed from the Cross; and her presence at His burial. Mary was perfect, but her life wasn't perfect. She was hurt by the same pain, humiliation, and sorrow that affect us all. She was unmarried and pregnant and the subject of her neighbours' whispers. She and her family had to flee to a far-off land to escape the murderous King. She lived a real life filled with real human drama. But her most intense sorrows were felt when she was in her late forties, when her one and only child died a public death, leaving her, already a widow, totally alone, her middle-aged face stretched with sorrow. She is Patroness of Slovakia.

Ss Cornelius and Cyprian - 16 September Cornelius (-253) was made bishop of the church in Rome in the year 251. He fought against the Novatian schismatics, and established his authority with the aid of Cyprian. The emperor Gallus sent him into exile, and he died at Civitavecchia in June 253 and is buried in Rome. Cyprian (210 - 258) spent most of his life in the practice of the law. He became bishop of Carthage in 249. and steered the church through troubled times, including the persecution of the emperor Decius. In 258, the persecution of the emperor Valerian began. Cyprian was first exiled and then, on the 14 September, executed. Cyprian's many letters and treatises shed much light on a formative period in the Church's history, and are valuable both for their doctrine and for the picture they paint of a group of people in constant peril of their lives but still determined to keep the faith.

St Robert Bellarmine (1542 - 1621) - 17 September Robert was born in Tuscany and became a Jesuit. He taught theology in Rome, and was active in disputation against the Protestants, where his effectiveness was increased by his charity and moderation. He was nominated a cardinal and archbishop of Capua; but it is for his writings that he is chiefly known. Not only did he write controversial works, he also wrote two catechisms and some devotional commentaries on the Psalms and on the Seven Last Words.

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 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.

Virgin Money Giving Total donations for August 2020 came to £1,470. Gift Aiding these donations has added a further £294 to this amount. Thank you to all those who have contributed using Virgin Money Giving. If you would like to donate using Virgin Money Giving please visit [the website](#) or use the QR code at the top of the newsletter.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 13 Sep – 24th SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME

6pm Vigil Mass - John Paton (Ann)
9.30 am Mass - People of the parish
11.30am Mass - Genaro Capparelli & Giuseppe Capparelli (Ann)
7pm Mass - Louis Fernandes and deceased members of Fernandes family
Reading 1, Ecclesiasticus 27:30-28:7
Responsorial Psalm, 102
Reading 2, Romans 14:7-9
Gospel, Matthew 18:21-35

Monday 14 Sep THE EXALTATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

10 am Mass - John C. Healy
7 pm Mass - Mary Curran (RIP)
Reading 1, Numbers 21:4-9
Responsorial Psalm, 77
Gospel, John 3:13-17

Tuesday 15 Sep – Our Lady of Sorrows

10 am Mass - Michael McDonagh (Ints)
Reading 1, 1Corinthians 12:12-14,27-31
Responsorial Psalm, 99
Gospel, John 19:25-27

Wednesday 16 Sep – Ss Cornelius and Cyprian

10 am Mass - Sr Mary Dominic (Ints)
7 pm Mass - Helena Cuneen (RIP)
Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 12:31-13:23
Responsorial Psalm, 32
Gospel, Luke 7:31-35

Thursday 17 Sep - St Robert Bellarmine

10 am Mass - Peggy & Alban Brampton (RIP)
Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Responsorial Psalm, 117
Gospel, Luke 7:36-50

Friday 18 Sep

10 am Mass - Brony Beeson (Ann)
7 pm Mass - Daniel Brudney (RIP)
Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Responsorial Psalm, 16
Gospel, Luke 8:1-3

Saturday 19 Sep– The Most Holy Name of Mary

10-10.45 am Exposition with opportunity for quiet prayer
Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 15:35-37, 42-49
Responsorial Psalm, 55
Gospel, Luke 8:4-15
6pm Vigil Mass for Sunday - Vincent O'Reilly (Ann)

For confession please call at the Presbytery

Sunday 20 Sep – 25th SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME

9.30am Mass - Liber Marzo (Ann)
11.30am Mass - Michael Gilbert (RIP)
7pm Mass - George Taites and deceased members of the Taites family

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches together in St Albans, this week we pray for the ministers and members of St Saviour's Church.

For those suffering with the Coronavirus and for all the Sick

For those who have died recently: Anthony O'Shea, Olive Guerin

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: John Paton, Genaro Capparelli & Giuseppe Capparelli, Brony Beeson, Vincent O'Reilly

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

The Knights of St Columba have resumed their Easter Season painting competition for 8-18 year olds. There are three age groups 8-11, 12-14 and 15-18 with three cash prizes in each age range. There will be additional local prizes awarded by the local KSC. Nationally, £200 will be awarded to the overall winner's school. The deadline for submission is Friday 25 September 2020. For competition enquires please contact kennedy.p@ntlworld.com