



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - 20th 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 / stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

Lockdown Survey - Parish Feedback (Part One)

Firstly, many thanks to all who completed the survey, an encouraging 151 replies were received, however, several were submitted by couples or families so the number of parishioners who contributed was higher. This gave an invaluable insight into the effects of lockdown, and how this may affect the approach of the parish should another occur. The PPC have now had the opportunity to study and discuss the analysis.

The intention is to provide feedback in sections to the parish over the next few weekends, giving some statistical results and possible actions.

Preferences

Question: What order of priority would you give to the reintroduction of the following, if lockdown reoccurred?

Celebrating Mass together in church was the first choice for 2 out of 3 replies, with opportunities for private prayer/Eucharistic adoration in church next and the Sacrament of Reconciliation third. The remaining three priorities: Prayer/scripture groups in church, Virtual prayer groups and Praying the Rosary together in church were very closely grouped in that order.

Actions: Mass attendance at weekends has continued to rise, so the number and times of Masses will continue to be reviewed. A time for Exposition and private prayer is currently available on Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Some commented about the availability of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Those wishing to celebrate the Sacrament are welcome to contact the Presbytery and make a time with one of the priests. Fr Michael & Fr Julian are currently looking at the possibility of a set time and how this might work safely and practicably. Details to follow in the newsletter.

Question: Which of these services do you think is the most important to be able to access online?

Live-streamed Mass from our church was the most popular, 2 out of 3 choosing this as highest priority. The preference for on-line Masses from other churches was closely followed by Services on the Website similar to those made available for Holy Week and Easter.

Actions: The live streaming of Mass continues to be popular and we have already upgraded our system with new cameras and better sound provision. The new system allows Mass to be relayed directly to the coffee dock/reception area in Sacred Heart Centre which acts as an overflow. If necessary, services could also be relayed to the main hall.

Communication

Question: Are there any other means by which you feel that the parish could have communicated with you?

4 out of 5 indicated that communication was efficient and well received, without further suggestions.

Actions: Although a very pleasing result, further improvements are being investigated. Current actions:

- Approximately 500 parishioners receive the weekly updates, including the bulletin, via e-mail; it would be great to see this number increased. A number of parishioners have already asked to receive updates and the newsletter via email. **If you would like to go on our email distribution list, please email the presbytery with your name and email address saying that you wish to be added to the email distribution list.**
- Fr Michael and the new Parish Administrator will look at how the presentation and range of news can be refined.
- The PPC are investigating an outside noticeboard or making better use of the current ones. This is particularly important while the church remains closed apart from Mass times. In the meantime, a QR code has been made available on the external noticeboard which will take people directly to the parish website and thereby the weekly bulletin.

The Government's recent announcement tightening up the guidelines around socialising is 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.

Baptisms Congratulations to the following children who were baptised recently: Otis, Liam, Lucas, Harry, Frederico and Jack.

Parish Men's Group, meeting up again in September

Despite the challenges of Covid, the Parish Men's Group want to start meeting up again this autumn. Physically meeting is not practical so we are going to be holding calls over Zoom. Our first call will be on Saturday 26th September at 9am when we will discuss St Francis and his teachings. There is a video on St Francis available to watch before the meeting and also some suggested reading. If you would like to join us or just find out more about the group then please contact Richard on 07976 252309 or at D4dstalbins@gmail.com for more details.

The Knights of St Columba (KSC) have reinstated the KSC National Easter Season Painting Competition - 2020 that was suspended on 20 March 2020 (a few days before the original closing date of 23rd March), due to the onset of the Covid-19 virus pandemic. The reinstated competition is free to enter and is open to Catholic Junior, Secondary and Senior pupils in three age groups, from 8 to 18 years of age. Entry details, poster, flyer and timetable, have been circulated to art and admin departments in St Albans and District Catholic schools/colleges. Details may also be obtained on e-mail application to the competition coordinator at: kennedy.p@ntlworld.com Prizes will be awarded to the successful artists at the KSC St Albans Council 320 level; KSC Province 29 stage and finally at the KSC national level. A prize of £200 will also be awarded to the overall winning artist's school! The closing date for receipt of artwork entries, to school/college art or admin departments, is **Friday 25th September 2020**.

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 26th September 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.

Good Counsel Network On Monday 28th September, please pray and fast for the end of abortion and euthanasia in this Country. For details of our live saving work see www.GoodCounselNetwork.com

The Season of Creation, 1 Sep - 4 Oct and Novena to St Francis Inspired by his encyclical *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis has established 1st September as the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, with the Season of Creation ending on the feast of St Francis, 4th 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.

Retrouvaille is for couples with marriages that are struggling, maybe not communicating well, and for those who are considering marriage separation or divorce. It is also for those who have already separated or divorced who want marriage help. Some couples come to Retrouvaille during the initial signs of a marriage problem. Other couples are in a state of despair and hopelessness when they attend the programme. Some couples have been married for many years, while others have been married only a short time. For confidential information about Retrouvaille', or to register for the next programme, a virtual weekend commencing on 12th -15th Nov 2020. Call or text 0788 7296983 or 0797 3380443, email at retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

THIS WEEK'S LITURGY

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.

St Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist - Feast 21st September Little is known about St Matthew, except that he was the son of Alpheus, and probably born in Galilee. He worked as a tax collector, a hated profession during the time of Christ. Matthew was working at a collection booth in Capernaum when Christ came to him and asked, "Follow me." With this simple call, Matthew became a disciple of Christ. From Matthew we know much of the life of Christ and his message of salvation for all people who come to God through Him. Around 41 AD, Matthew wrote his Gospel for Jewish people who had become followers of Christ. Matthew's Gospel makes clear that Jesus is the fulfilment of everything said by the prophets in the Old Testament.

It is said that he wrote the book in Aramaic so as to convince people that Jesus was the Messiah and that His kingdom had been fulfilled in a spiritual way. It was an important message at a time when many were expecting the return of a militant messiah brandishing a sword. It is thought he departed for other lands to escape persecution sometime after 42 AD. According to various legends he fled to Parthia and Persia, or Ethiopia. It is not known if his death was natural or if he was martyred. Matthew is the patron saint of bankers.

St Pio of Pietrelcina (1887-1968) - Feast 23rd September

St. Padre Pio was an Italian priest known for his piety and charity, as well as the gift of the stigmata. Francesco Forgione was born in 1887 in the small village of Pietrelcina in southern Italy, he joined the Capuchin friars at the age of 16. He took the name of "Pio" in honour of Pope Pius I. He became a priest seven years later, and spent 50 years at the monastery of San Giovanni Rotondo, where he was very much sought after as a spiritual advisor, confessor, and intercessor. His popularity became a source of concern and the Vatican began to restrict his activities to minimise public interaction. Padre Pio himself was uncomfortable with the attention caused by the stigmata he had received in 1918. A Church investigation concluded that the stigmata were not faked, and the wounds healed upon his death. By 1934, the Vatican began to change its attitude and Padre Pio was again allowed to perform public duties. Pope Pius XI encouraged people to visit him. In 1947, Fr Karol Wojtyla visited Padre Pio who prophetically told him he would rise to the highest post in the Church. Fr Karol became Pope John Paul II in 1978. Padre Pio used his newfound popularity to open a hospital in 1956 in San Giovanni Rotondo. Many miracles were ascribed to him during his lifetime. He died on 23 September 1968 and over 100,000 people attended his funeral. Pope John Paul II recognised Padre Pio as a saint in 2002. He is the patron of civil defence volunteers, adolescents, and the village of Pietrelcina.

Our Lady of Walsingham 24th September The shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham in Norfolk was one of the great pilgrimage centres of mediaeval times. The lady of the manor of Walsingham, Richeldis de Faverches, had a vision in which the Virgin Mary instructed her to build in her village an exact replica of the house in Nazareth where the Annunciation had taken place. According to tradition this vision occurred in 1061, although the most likely date for the construction of the shrine is a hundred years later. The original shrine was destroyed at the Reformation, but in the 19th and 20th centuries, pilgrimage to Walsingham was revived both for Catholics and also for Anglicans.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 20 September - 25th SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME

6pm Vigil Mass will be offered for Vincent O'Reilly (Ann)

9.30am Mass will be offered for Liber Marzo (Ann)

11.30am Mass will be offered for the Keating family (Ints)

7pm Mass will be offered for George Taites and other deceased members of the Taites family (Ints)

Reading 1, Isaiah 55:6-9

Responsorial Psalm, 144

Reading 2, Philippians 1:20-24,27

Gospel, Matthew 20:1-16

Monday 21 September - St Matthew

10am Mass will be offered for Danny Onn (Ann)

7pm Mass will be offered for Masie Shaughnessy (RIP)

Reading 1, Ephesians 4:1-7,11-13

Responsorial Psalm, 18

Gospel, Matthew 9:9-13

Tuesday 22 September

10am Mass will be offered for Joan Edwards (RIP)

Reading 1, Proverbs 21: 1-6,10-13

Responsorial Psalm, 118

Gospel, Luke 8:19-21

Wednesday 23 September - St Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)

10am Mass will be offered for Francis Herlihy (RIP)

7pm Mass will be offered for Michael McDonagh (Ints)

Reading 1, Proverbs 30:5-9

Responsorial Psalm, 118

Gospel, Luke 9:1-6

Thursday 24 September - Our Lady of Walsingham

10am Mass will be offered for Sr Mary Dominic (Ints)

Reading 1, Ecclesiastes 1:2-11

Responsorial Psalm, 89

Gospel, Luke 9:7-9

Friday 25 September

10am Mass will be offered for the Moore family (Ints)

7pm Mass will be offered for Peter and Margaret Brian (RIP)

Reading 1, Ecclesiastes 3:1-11

Responsorial Psalm, 143

Gospel, Luke 9:18-22

Saturday 26 September

Reading 1, Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:8

Responsorial Psalm, 89

Gospel, Luke 9:43-45

6pm Vigil Mass will be offered for the Peters family

Sunday 27 September - 26th SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME

9.30am Mass will be offered for Brian Huckle (Ann)

11.30am Mass will be offered for Finian Gavin (Ann)

7pm Mass will be offered for Brendan Kearns (Ann)

For confession please call at the Presbytery

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches together in St Albans, this week we pray for the pastor and members of the City Church.

For those suffering with the Coronavirus and for all the Sick:

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Vincent O'Reilly, Liber Marzo, Danny Onn, Brian Huckle, Finian Gavin and Brendan Kearns

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

First Holy Communion We recently celebrated just over fifty First Holy Communions. Some of the remaining families have been in touch to ask whether it would be possible to hold any additional First Communion Masses and these have been arranged for Saturday 17th and Saturday 24th October. If any families would like their child to celebrate First Holy Communion as part of a group and to do so on Saturday 3rd October, Saturday 24th October or Saturday 31st October please email the parish office at stalbans@rcdow.org.uk

Retiring Collection Next Sunday there will be a retiring collection for the Holy Places of Palestine. This collection is requested by the Holy Father and is to support a Christian Community which has suffered much and which inhabits the land which witnessed Christ's life, death and resurrection. Contributions can be made at the door or placed through the Presbytery letter box in envelopes marked 'Holy Places'.

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.

Contactless Giving Point As you leave the church there is a contactless giving point between the centre doors. 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 make 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.