



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - 4 OCTOBER 2020



VirginMoney Giving

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

Rev. Steve Pickard (Deacon) Mrs Angela Gray (Parish Administrator)

Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

We are a Fairtrade parish

Lockdown Survey - Parish Feedback (Part Three)

This third, and final, feedback summary on the recent parish lockdown survey considers pastoral care for parishioners during lockdown and how lockdown affected people's attitudes towards faith.

Pastoral Care

Question: I have felt cared for by the parish during lockdown?

It was highly encouraging that 64% of replies were in agreement with this statement, many also including a message of appreciation for everything that had been done. Conversely 15% disagreed, a relatively small but still significant number that needs further investigation as to what could have been done better. The remaining 21% expressed no opinion.

Question: In what ways has the parish cared for you?

The most quoted responses, all between 40 and 20% of the total number of replies, were, in order of popularity

- Communication Updates (Bulletin/newsletter, email update)
- Live-streamed Mass
- Contact/Support (including by other parishioners)
- General availability of Priests

Question: In what ways could the parish have cared for you better?

Unfortunately, there were very few suggestions offered (all less than 3% of the total number of replies), these centred around

- Better local networking
- More Individual contact
- More Information on Sacramental rescheduling
- Online Mass sooner

Actions

- The majority of points raised for improvement point to the need for better and more varied means of communication in order that key messages are not missed
- Encourage those who would like support to contact the parish office so as to be linked with a local parishioner and/or be contacted by a priest

How Lockdown Affected Attitudes Towards Faith

Question: How has lockdown affected your faith?

Extremely heartening to find that most people indicated they coped well during Lockdown: 35% replied their faith had strengthened and nearly 30% that it had no effect, with only 4% saying faith had lessened. The main positive outcome was that it gave more time to meditate/reflect/pray.

The negatives mentioned were: Missing Church community (10%), Frustrated sacramentally (4%), Concern for young (2%)

Question: How has lockdown affected your view of the church?

Around 4 in 5 replies were positive either emphasising the importance of their view of the church or its being unchanged, many also mentioning that the parish had responded very well to the situation. Only a small number (8%) indicated that its importance had lessened or that it was more remote.

Question: How has lockdown affected your view of Sunday Mass?

Similarly, a large majority (70%) indicated that its importance had been reinforced or unchanged. However, a significant group (18%) felt that Sunday Obligation had become less important for them: with several commenting that the simplicity and brevity of the online model suited them and their children, including the ability to pause and the convenience of choosing the time to watch.

Actions

- A very high percentage affirmed that Lockdown had not diminished their faith life and in some cases have found it strengthened. This highlights the importance of continuing to support the majority whilst investigating ways of guiding people who have found the situation more challenging.
- The Liturgy Group and PPC are canvassing opinions of their members to recommend possible alterations to the style of services although actions are limited by national restrictions.

Final Remarks

We are extremely grateful for all the replies. Your views and suggestions have helped and refined our reflection on the events of the past months. Certainly, they will help shape our response should another lockdown be imposed, or public Masses and services be suspended once more. It is reassuring to know that the vast majority of respondents were supportive of and grateful for everything achieved under these difficult and unique circumstances. The overall response rate was encouraging, with a high proportion of those who were contacted directly (e.g. via the emailed updates) contributing.

A few final reminders:

- Please remember we are here to support you. If at any stage you are feeling vulnerable or know of another parishioner who needs support e.g. lonely, isolated, in crisis please contact the parish office (ideally by phone or email, but also by calling at the presbytery). We cannot help if we do not know.
- Similarly, if further constraints are imposed and you feel you would be able to offer your support e.g. supporting the isolated by delivering newsletters, stewarding for public Masses or services, reading, please contact the parish office. Please note that involvement in any activity to support the vulnerable requires that the necessary safeguarding checks be in place.
- Please continue to read the parish website and Newsletter. These are our main source of communication, especially when public Masses are limited or suspended. If you are looking for resources to help and general updates this is where you will be able to find them.

Brendan Day, one of our parishioners, who is in formation for the permanent diaconate, shares a year-end report.

He writes... Apologies for being late with this report. Year 2 finished back in June and I've now completed the foundation degree in Pastoral Ministry. Like the rest of the world, Covid-19 forced us to discover the delights of Zoom and Microsoft Teams. We stopped attending St John's Seminary, Wornesh, just as many had to stop going to work, school and church, and lecturers and lectures went on-line. There have been advantages but we have missed the physical gatherings so central to formation.

The last year was just as busy as the first, busier in fact. In addition to the academic side of things, and in preparation for preaching, we have had to deliver monthly reflections on the Gospel. Deacon Tony Barter, whom some of you will know from St Barts, arranged evenings where we could present our reflections to a small group, before this moved online with lockdown.

Among other things the academic programme has included article, book and programme reviews, essays, reflective pieces, exegetical studies and an oral exam on Canon Law. With the foundation degree completed we are now taking modules on Catholic Social Teaching at St Mary's University in Twickenham. The hope is that all these studies will lead to a post-graduate certificate.

Last December I received the Ministry of Lector or reader from Bishop Paul, the auxiliary bishop with responsibility for Hertfordshire. If all goes according to plan, I will receive the Ministry of Acolyte in November before ordination in the summer.

Over this last year, with more time given to the scriptures and to prayer, especially to the Divine Office which deacons, like priests and religious, are expected to pray, I have grown to appreciate more and more the working of God's Holy Spirit in my life. I have also been greatly supported and encouraged by your prayers and regular good wishes. The year ahead will be just as challenging. So please please continue to pray for me. If it be God's plan, ordination to the Permanent Diaconate should take place in July 2021. Hopefully by then scientists will have found a solution to Covid and some of you will be able to join me at Westminster Cathedral.

PARISH LIFE

Baptisms Congratulations to the following children who were baptised recently: Conan and Louis. Contact Fr Julian juliandavies@rcdow.org.uk for baptism enquiries.

First Holy Communion Additional First Communion Masses will take place in small groups on the following Saturdays in October: 2.30pm on 3rd and 17th, 11.30am and 2.30pm on 24th and 31st. If you would like your child to celebrate First Holy Communion on any of those dates, please email stalbins@rcdow.org.uk.

Confirmation There will be eight masses for this year's confirmation. The times are 11.30 and 2.30 on November 7, 14, 28 and December 5. An email has been sent asking parents to choose their first three preferences. Please reply to Fr Julian at juliandavies@rcdow.org.uk.

We would like to thank those candidates who have sent in the requested letter to Fr Michael. If you have not done so it would be appreciated if you could do so within the next few weeks. Details of the letter can be found on the church website, searching sacraments, then confirmation, then 'write a letter' among the assignments which candidates were asked to embrace during the lockdown.

Stewarding - If you are able to volunteer as a steward at any of the above First Holy Communion and Confirmation masses, please contact the Parish Office stalbins@rcdow.org.uk for more details. Many thanks to those parishioners who have already volunteered.

Sunday & Weekday Masses Please remember there are a limited number of spaces in church so it is necessary to pre-book a seat. To reserve a place, please contact the parish office during office hours (9am-1pm weekdays) by emailing at stalbins@rcdow.org.uk or by phoning **01727 853585**.

Family Fast Day Online Mass this Friday 9th October 6pm
You are invited to join CAFOD online this Friday 9th October in prayer for those affected by COVID 19 in developing countries and in thanksgiving for our supporters here in the UK. For further information see our web page: <http://cafod.org.uk/fastday>.

Family Fast Day this Friday 9 October This week our parish is marking CAFOD's Family Fast Day to help people facing the worst of the coronavirus crisis. Let's come together to help the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world survive, rebuild and heal. Please donate online at cafod.org.uk/give or by using one of the envelopes. You can also give easily via text. Text CAFOD to 70085 to donate £10.

Virgin Money Giving If you would like to donate to the parish using Virgin Money Giving please visit [the website](#) or use the QR code at the top of the newsletter.

Contactless Giving Point A new contactless giving point is located in the church porch. 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 card.

You Can Be Santa 'voucher scheme' As always the aim of YCBS is to help children/families who may not otherwise enjoy the full spirit of Christmas. With the current pandemic in mind we will be asking for donations of gift vouchers only this year. If you are aware of families within the Parish who may appreciate being a part of the scheme please encourage them to contact YCBS at stalbinsycbs@rcdow.org.uk with their full contact details. All contact details will be kept in confidence and in accordance with data protection requirements. We will be appealing for voucher donations in October and will be asking for vouchers (in £10 denominations) from the following outlets: Sainsbury's, Argos, Amazon & One4All. For information please email stalbinsycbs@rcdow.org.uk.

Virtual small groups - during these difficult times, some of the small communities in the parish have been keeping their faith alive by meeting virtually using Zoom. This autumn we will be starting the new faith sharing resource, **According to Thy Word**, specially produced as we journey through this Year of the Word - The God Who Speaks. The booklet, available at the back of the church for £3, can also be used by families or individuals at home. There are six weekly sessions focusing on six ancient titles of Our Lady. The booklet can also be downloaded as a pdf file [using this link](#). Although this resource is not time dependent, it is suggested that we all start the first session in the week commencing Sunday 11 October. If you are interested in joining a virtual small group, please contact Mike on 854596 or whitemw@talktalk.net or Stan at grabecki@hotmail.com or on 765549. If you do not have a computer, tablet or smartphone, you can even join the meeting by phone.

Stella Maris Centenary Mass - 3pm on 4 October. This year Stella Maris (formerly known as Apostleship of the Sea) is celebrating 100 years of its support to seafarers, fishers, and their families. To mark the beginning of our centenary year we will be holding Mass celebrated by Archbishop Philip Tartaglia of Glasgow and will be streamed live at www.stellamaris.org.uk/centenarymass.

SCHOOLS

Secondary School Transfer - For those parents and guardians who need to obtain a Certificate of Catholic Practice to accompany their child's Secondary School application Fr Michael will be available between 4 pm and 6 pm on Wednesday 7th October and again at the same time on Wednesday 14th October. Please call at the Presbytery (Priests' House) beside the Church.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 4 October - 27th SUNDAY IN ORD TIME

6pm Vigil Mass - Alec Anderson

9.30am Mass - Michael Gilbert (RIP)

11.30am Mass - Quigley family (Ints)

7pm Mass - Patrick William Curran (Ann) and Mary Curran (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 5:1-7, Psalm, 79,

Reading 2, Philippians 4:6-9, Gospel, Matthew 21:33-43

Monday 5 October - feria

10am Mass - Eamon Browne (RIP)

7pm Mass - John Stevens (Ints)

Reading 1, Galatians 1:6-12, Psalm, 110,

Gospel, Luke 10:25-37

Tuesday 6 October - feria

10am Mass - Ian Donoghue

Reading 1, Galatians 1:13-24, Psalm, 138,

Gospel, Luke 10:38-42

Wednesday 7 October - Our Lady of the Rosary

10am Mass - Elaine Gatta (RIP)

7pm Mass - Anthony Sumner (RIP)

Reading 1, Galatians 2:1-2, 7-14, Psalm, 116,

Gospel, Luke 11:1-4

Thursday 8 October - feria

10am Mass - Frances Boak (Ints)

Reading 1, Galatians 3:1-5, Psalm, Luke 1:69-75,

Gospel, Luke 11:5-13

Friday 9 October - St John Henry Newman

10am Mass - Eddie Mansfield (RIP)

7pm Mass - Ken Liversidge (Ints)

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 4:1-5, Psalm, 95,

Gospel, John 15:9-17

Saturday 10 October - St Paulinus of York

10am Exposition - Priest available for Confessions

Reading 1, Galatians 3:22-29, Psalm, 104,

Gospel, Luke 11:27-28

6pm Vigil Mass Karen Doran (Ann)

Sunday 11 October - 28 SUNDAY IN ORD TIME

Prisons Week

9.30am Mass - Graham Smith (Ann)

11.30am Mass - Annie Coakley

7pm Mass - People of the parish

For confession please call at the Presbytery

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches together in St Albans, this week we pray for the Ecumenical Chaplaincy at St Albans Cathedral and Abbey Church.

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick:

For those who have died recently: Nigel Appleyard, Faith McAvan and Lynda Ellis.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Karen Doran and Patrick William Curran

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

Our Lady of the Rosary - Feast 7 October The feast of the Holy Rosary was instituted by Pope Pius V to celebrate the anniversary of the defeat of the Turkish fleet at the battle of Lepanto on the first Sunday in October 1571, which ended the threat of Muslim domination of the Mediterranean and was ascribed in part to the prayers and processions of the Rosary confraternity in Rome. Later the feast was moved to the fixed date of 7th October.

St John Henry Newman (1801 - 1890) Feast 9 October Born in London in 1801, John Henry was for over 20 years an Anglican clergyman and Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. His studies of the early Church led him progressively towards Catholicism, and in 1845 he embraced "the one true fold of the Redeemer". In 1847 he was ordained priest and went on to found the Oratory of St Philip Neri in England. He was a prolific and influential writer on a variety of subjects. In 1879 he was created Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII. Praised for his humility, unstinting care of souls and contributions to the intellectual life of the Church, he died in Birmingham on 11 August 1890. He was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI at a ceremony in Birmingham on 19 September 2010, and canonised by Pope Francis in Rome on 13 October 2019

ECO-CHURCH St Albans Diocese and A. Roche UK have put together a great online conference called: **ECO CHURCH: WORKING TOGETHER TO NET ZERO** on Saturday, 10 October, 10am to 4pm, helping us reduce our carbon footprint & care for creation. [Click here to download the pdf.](#) As the feast of St. Francis of Assisi on 4 October marks the end of the ecumenical Season of Creation, we give thanks to God for all that He has made, we repent for the damage that we have caused and commit ourselves to take action to protect the Earth, our common home.

Steward Appeal. The opening of the church for masses requires stewarding. If you are under 70, please consider giving up an hour a week to volunteer. Contact Melanie O'Neill at mjoneill5@btinternet.com.