



Church Website

## NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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**THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - 24 JANUARY 2021**



VirginMoneyGiving

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

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

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*We are a Fairtrade parish*

*Fr Michael writes...* I have just returned from my post-Christmas 'holiday'. I say 'holiday' in inverted commas because this holiday was unlike any other. I spent it here in the presbytery, very much a 'staycation', with the phones in my bedroom and the sitting room switched off. I avoided my office and the temptation to answer emails, had a whole series of lazy mornings, and went for more regular walks. As I return, I am all too conscious of how the pandemic is touching so many of us more closely. Now, it is not so much other people and other families, who are being touched by the pandemic, but so many more of us, and so much closer to home, as we see more immediate family, friends and neighbours testing positive for and suffering with the corona virus. I am also conscious of the many parishioners who have died in recent weeks, some as a direct result of the virus. The coming weeks will see a good many Funeral Masses. Please pray for those who go before us and pray also for the families who will say their farewell under the current restrictions which affect the shape of the liturgy as well as the numbers who can attend.

As I write, we find ourselves in the week of prayer for Christian unity. It's tempting when we think of Christians from other denominations to see them as being 'other', as if there really is a them and us, but the Church teaches that there is only one baptism, one Body of Christ that we join through baptism, and therefore only one Church. The challenge or difficulty is the divisions that have arisen in this one Church which prevent us from seeing those in other Christian traditions for who and what they are, our brothers and sisters in Christ. The current pandemic has placed us all in the same boat. To get through it we must work together, with each of us owning a responsibility for the health and well-being of others. The divisions in the Church demand something similar; a recognition that apart from the other and divided, the body, life itself, is diminished.

### Admission to Acolyte

*Brendan Day Writes...* I am now halfway through my third year. With many of those in full or part time education my studies and formation continue amidst the current lockdown. On-line lectures resumed on 16<sup>th</sup> January and there is an essay to complete and submit before the end of this month. The formation program has had to be juggled a bit with additional on-line sessions replacing the usual residential weekends. Like those in training with me, I miss the gathering and sharing that happens when we are allowed to meet, but like so many we are adapting and trying to look for the positives: fewer car journeys / less pollution and so on.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December, at a small service held in St Edward the Confessor Church in Golders Green, North London, myself and another candidate for the permanent diaconate were instituted as Acolytes. This is the final minor ministry before ordination. If you want to find out more, please follow [this link](#). Acolyte is a ministry to which a person is specially appointed by the Church. The main role of the 'Acolyte' is to assist the deacon and the priest at the altar in the celebration of the Mass. An acolyte may also distribute Holy Communion during the Mass and to the sick. Acolytes are also entrusted with publicly exposing the Blessed Sacrament for adoration but cannot give the benediction.

Clearly in the current circumstances I'm not able to fulfil these duties, but hopefully as the vaccine is rolled out, lockdown is no more, and we are all able to fully participate in the Mass, you'll see me more regularly on the sanctuary serving at our celebration of the liturgy and assisting Fr Michael, Fr Julian and Deacon Steve.

I'm also delighted to report that St Mary's University emailed me on the 15th January to confirm my grade for the foundation degree course I've completed; I have been awarded a "pass with merit" and to say I'm pleased is an understatement. Please keep me and those training with me in your prayers, Brendan.

**Prayer from Right to Life UK** "We pray for our Government, that their ability to support pregnant women would increase and that they would anchor themselves in the desire to protect all human life. Lord hear us."

## LOCKDOWN ARRANGEMENTS

**Contacting the parish office** In line with current government advice, our parish administrator is working mainly from home. This means that the phone may not always be manned during parish office hours (9am-1pm, weekday mornings) and you may not get a response to a voicemail immediately. The best way for parishioners to contact the parish office at the moment is by emailing [stalbans@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbans@rcdow.org.uk).

**Weekly bulletin** During this lockdown period, the weekly bulletin will only be available electronically. Parishioners on the newsletter distribution list or parish database will continue to receive an electronic copy of the bulletin each week. It is also available on our website and can be accessed [here](#).

If you would like to receive an electronic copy of the bulletin by email each Friday, please email the parish office. Alternatively you can find a copy on our website. If you know someone who is unable to access the electronic version of the bulletin, you share relevant parish news with them on a regular basis or print them a copy if you can do so in a COVID-19 secure way.

**Mass Intentions** To limit the spread of infection, parishioners will not be able to book mass intentions in person at the presbytery until further notice. If you would like to book a Mass intention please contact the parish office via [email](#). Alternatively you can post an envelope through the presbytery door with the details of the Mass intention (who it is for and why) as well as your name, a contact phone number or email address and your donation. We will then contact you with a suggested mass date. The diocesan suggested Mass offering is £10.

**Keeping in touch** The parish website will continue to be updated with latest news and information. If you would like something added to the bulletin or the news section of the website, please contact the parish office.

All of our masses are livestreamed via our YouTube channel which can be accessed via our website or by clicking [here](#). You can also find support and useful resources on the Liturgy Group section of our [website](#).

The parish also has a Facebook group which provides support and updates and currently has over 370 members. You can join this group by clicking [here](#) or by searching Facebook for SS Alban and Stephen Catholic Church.

## LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

**Sacrament of Reconciliation** If you are in need of confession, please contact the Presbytery. Confessions will be held in the open air and observe social distancing.

**Baptisms** Please contact Fr Julian for baptism enquiries by emailing him at [juliandavies@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:juliandavies@rcdow.org.uk).

**Anointing of the Sick** Current restrictions allow for end of life care, so those who are dangerously ill can be anointed at home or while in residential care (should the care or nursing home permit). Currently we are not allowed into Watford General Hospital (01923 244366) If somebody is admitted to hospital and wishes to be visited or anointed please contact the hospital chaplaincy. Where the person is incapacitated, the request must come from the next of kin.

## PARISH LIFE

**54<sup>th</sup> Week of Prayer for Christian Unity - 18<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> January.** You are invited to:

- A Churches Together Service of Prayer for Christian Unity on Zoom on 24 January
- Take part in the Unity Challenge:
  - Visit a church that you are not used to.
  - Ask God to show you how He is at work there.
  - Come to the online Winter Forum (preceded by a brief AGM) on 8 February and share your experience.

Local churches with streaming services include St Alban & St Stephen RC church, St Albans Abbey, St Alban & St Stephen RC church St Sophia (Greek Orthodox), The Vinyard Church and St Luke's CofE Church.

The 2021 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is set aside for Christians around the world to jointly pray for visible Christian unity and move closer towards the fulfilment of Jesus' Last Supper prayer "that they all may be one." The theme for 2021, "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit," is inspired by John 15: 5-9. It was chosen to express the Christian community's vocation to pray and work for reconciliation and unity within the Church, our human family and all of creation.

### Prayer for Christian Unity

God our Father, you reveal to us your love through Christ and through our brothers and sisters. Open our hearts so that we can welcome each other with our differences and live in forgiveness. Grant us to live united in one body, so that the gift that is each person comes to light. May all of us together be a reflection of the living Christ. Amen

**Contactless Giving** A contactless giving point is now located in the Church porch. To make an offering using contactless giving, select the amount you wish to donate and tap the top of the machine with your phone or card.

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

**Invitation to CaFE's Bible Course THE BIG PICTURE**  
Lockdown provides the ideal opportunity for us to take up this inspirational course which is a recommended resource for the Bishops' Conference Year of the Word initiative called 'The God Who Speaks'.

The journal-based course will be run for our parish with weekly Zoom meetings, and daily readings from your own journal. The course runs on Thursday evenings at 8pm over 12 sessions starting on 14 January and we welcome those who have done the course previously.

To see a trailer for the course visit [faithcafe.org](http://faithcafe.org). Each participant will need a course journal with its DVD and free downloads of weekly filmed overviews. These are available with 33% discount for £10 delivered within the parish. To register please phone 0845 050 9428 or email [tim@faithcafe.org](mailto:tim@faithcafe.org) with your name and phone number.

**You Can Be Santa Scheme 2020** The response from our parishioners for donations of vouchers was tremendous and many also gave us cash donations as an alternative to vouchers. We were able to provide £20 worth of vouchers to 165 children. Many of these are known to us from our parish schools, the SVP, the Life House and through individual parishioners. We also supported children from the St. Albans Refuge, families known to Home Start and the Intensive Family Support team. All the vouchers were delivered with a lovely Christmas card from the Parish which the children could colour in. In addition we gave vouchers to the single adults living in the Refuge and 13 adults with learning disabilities.

Our volunteer visitors did a great job, as usual, in ensuring that the vouchers were safely delivered to each family on our list or passed onto those organisations who distributed them on our behalf. As always, when we needed extra or last minute help with the scheme it was there for us. 2020 was a very difficult year for everyone and it has been uplifting to see that the generosity and thoughtfulness that always characterises the 'You can be Santa' scheme was not in any way diminished by the current crisis.

So a heartfelt thanks to everyone for all their support and to everyone who gave their time, commitment, and donations.

**Donating to our Parish** In view of the current lockdown please consider making your offertory contribution by standing order if you do not already do so. If you would like to gift aid your donations, but have not yet completed a gift aid form, please think about doing so.

Between January and March 2020, the average total received by standing order was £6,724.25 a month. By October 2020 this had increased to £9,044.80 a month.

Please see our [website](#) or click [here](#) for a standing order and gift aid form.

In light of the current restrictions, your donations matter more than ever. Thank you for your continued generosity.

**Parish Pastoral Council** Please [click here](#) for the most recent meeting report from the PPC.

**Communications** Do you have an interest in how we as a parish community communicate, not only among ourselves, but with the world at large? Do you have skills and experience that may help? Would you like to be part of a Parish Communications Group? Would you be willing to join a communication strategy group? If so, please email Fr Michael at [michaeloboy@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:michaeloboy@rcdow.org.uk).

## OUR SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY

**Certificates of Catholic Practice** If you require a certificate of Catholic Practice to accompany an application for a school or nursery place please contact the school or parish office for further information.

**Mary's Meals "Double the Love" Appeal** Until 31 January 2021, donations made will be matched by a funder, up to a total donation value of £2 million. So now, for just £7.95 (£6.36 if gift-aided), we can feed a child at school, in one of the world's poorest countries, every day FOR A YEAR. Please click [here](#) to donate.

**Thinking Evening: "A Revolution in Nuclear Power - Hope in the Climate Crisis"** 2 February, 7.30 for 7.45pm by Zoom. Please click [here](#) for a flyer and more details. This is one of a series of "Thinking Evenings" hosted by Marlborough Rd Methodist Church.

**CAFOD - Your Support in Action** Join CAFOD online on Saturday 30 January from 10.30am to 12.30 and listen to CAFOD's representative live from Ethiopia talking about how your support is enabling communities gain access to clean water. For a registration link and further information, contact [westminster@cafod.org.uk](mailto:westminster@cafod.org.uk)

**Caritas Volunteer Fair "Step Forward in Love"** Online Event on Wednesday 10 February from 11am to 1pm. Whether you want to try volunteering for the first time or are looking for a new role, come and find out what volunteering opportunities are out there at the moment. Please register [here](#) to join in.

**The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons**  
This treaty, ratified by many nations, came into effect on 22 January. We pray that this treaty will add to the pressure on nuclear powers to remove weapons of mass destruction from their arsenals & to work towards world peace and justice. With the Bishops of England, Wales and Scotland, we pray that the freed up resources may be used "to alleviate the suffering of the poorest & most vulnerable members of our society, for the Common Good of all peoples."

## MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

### **Sunday 24 January – 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME**

6pm Vigil Mass People of the Parish \*

9.30am Mass Jan Saxon (RIP) \*

11.30am Mass Roy McGoochan (Ann) \*

7pm Mass Helena Cuneen (RIP) \*

Reading 1, Jonah 3:1-5,10, Responsorial Psalm, 25

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 7:29-31, Gospel, Mark 1:14-20

### **Monday 25 January – THE CONVERSION OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

10am Mass Karen Brennan (RIP) \*

7pm Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 22:3-16

Responsorial Psalm, 117, Gospel Mark 16:15-18

### **Tuesday 26 January – Ss Timothy and Titus**

10am Mass Thomas Taylor (Ann)

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 1:1-8 or Titus 1:1-5

Responsorial Psalm, 96, Gospel, Mark 3:31-35

### **Wednesday 27 January – St Angela Merici**

10am Funeral Mass for Mollie Screene \*

7pm Mass Patrick & Katie Conefrey and Matthew Conefrey (Ann)

Reading 1, Hebrews 10:11-18

Responsorial Psalm, 110, Gospel, Mark 4:1-20

### **Thursday 28 January – St Thomas Aquinas**

10am Mass Funeral Mass for Tony Boyle \*

Reading 1, Hebrews 10:19-25

Responsorial Psalm, 24, Gospel, Mark 4:21-25

### **Friday 29 January – Feria**

10am Mass Hutchins family (Ints) \*

7pm Mass Tom Bagge (RIP) \*

Reading 1, Hebrews 10:32-39

Responsorial Psalm, 37, Gospel, Mark 4:26-34

### **Saturday 30 January – Memoria BVM**

10am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament \*

Reading 1, Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19

Responsorial Psalm, Luke 1:69-75, Gospel, Mark 4:35-41

### **Sunday 31 January – 4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME**

6pm Vigil Mass Stan Penstone (RIP) \*

9.30am Mass People of the Parish \*

11.30am Mass Paddy Moffitt (RIP) \*

7pm Mass Annie Coakley (RIP) \*

\* Live streamed only, no public attendance.

## PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches together in St Albans, this week we join together for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick including

For those who have died recently including Charles and Nellie Attard, Honora Barrett, Tony Boyle, Cynthia Chrimes, John Darby, Carmen Del Romero, Sheila Doohan, , Thomas Doyle, Concettina Giubba, Giuseppe Giubba, Willie Hardy, Encarnacion Gonzales Jurado, Patrick Mcconnell, Sandra Mosley, Miguel Ortega, Patricia Porter, John Rowland, Renee Rumble, Mollie Screene, Peter Smith, John Stevens and Bernadette Witchard. (Attendance at funeral masses is currently limited to 30 invited mourners.)

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Roy McGoochan, Thomas Taylor, Giovanni Batista Fabrizi, Lewis and Frances Lumber, Patrick & Katie Conefrey and Matthew Conefrey.

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

## CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Please click [here](#) for this week's 'Liturgy of the Word' for Children leaflet from the Diocese of Westminster.

**Virtual Children's Liturgy from CAFOD** CAFOD already have downloadable children's liturgy resources available for most Sundays during the year. They are currently also offering a virtual Children's Liturgy of the Word at 10am on Sunday as a webinar. Parents and children are encouraged to join online for prayers and reflection on Sunday's Gospel. The liturgy is led by catechists who usually lead children's liturgy in their parish and will be based on CAFOD children's liturgy resources. Click [here](#) for the link to register. After registering you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

**The Conversion of Saint Paul – 25 January** Saul, the young man who looked after the cloaks of the men who were stoning St Stephen, grew into a dedicated and efficient persecutor of Christians. Today's feast celebrates the day that Christ appeared to him in a vision as he was on the way to Damascus, reproached him for his persecutions and converted him to the true faith.

**Saints Timothy and Titus – 26 January** Timothy and Titus were converted to Christianity by St Paul and became his companions and helpers. Paul entrusted Timothy with the care of the Christians in Ephesus and sent Titus to Crete to look after the Christians there. He wrote them the so-called "pastoral" epistles, giving advice for pastors and people alike.