



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](https://www.youtube.com/c/SsAlbanandStephenCatholicChurch)

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT - 21 FEBRUARY 2021



VirginMoneyGiving

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

Towards a Vision Statement

Looking towards the Parish Assembly 2021, I would like to share some initial thoughts on a vision for the future. The Church exists to evangelize, but how we prioritize our limited time and resources needs to be considered. By and large the priorities I set out here are not new or innovative. Much is owed to the hard work and dedication of the MSCs and the parish community already here, but times are changing, and today, as we take in and look beyond our experience of the current pandemic, there is the challenge and opportunity of looking at things afresh.

Towards a Vision - 'Being & Building the Body of Christ through the quality of our welcome, the beauty of our worship, the conviction of our witness.'

Welcome - Imagine a really welcoming forecourt, perhaps with glass doors that draw in passers-by. Everyone should feel welcome, not just at the church door, but through being understood and appreciated. A welcoming community offers a safe environment where safeguarding is paramount. It takes the time to know its newcomers, promotes and fosters their participation, and thinks twice before saying 'this is how "we" do things'. It is a community that communicates. It is transparent about what is happening. It is a church that understands the importance of its online presence and that knows that the website and YouTube are also doorways into our parish.

Faced with an increasing shortage of priests we cannot be certain how long we will be able to retain the Mass Centre at Marshalswick, but what is certain is the need to ensure that the sense of welcome, community and participation so palpable at Marshalswick is as real and tangible in the main church. Everyone should be encouraged to have some form of ministry within the parish, recognising the connectedness of this ministry to the 'missionary' front line in service of God and neighbour that takes place at work, at home and in the community at large.

Worship - At the heart of every parish is the Mass, where we meet with God and are fed by Jesus himself. It is the source and summit of our Christian lives. I long for everyone to be fully involved in and to understand what we do when we celebrate the Mass, and for ministers of all kinds to be fully trained and equipped, working together. I imagine a building that physically expresses what takes place in the Eucharist, in terms of layout, decoration, fixtures and fittings; not by being overly ornate, but with a noble simplicity which, for example, clearly states the importance of the font in which we are baptised and the ambo where the word of God is proclaimed, and the relationship between the altar and the tabernacle where the bread, once consecrated, is reserved. I'd like to see a building that in every way looks and feels like a house of prayer, a place of devotion, where the Blessed Sacrament is adored and which of its very self, day in and day out, will help raise the hearts and minds of people, believing and non-believing, to God.

Witness - To proclaim Christ, to make disciples, we must know Christ. Being witnesses means being rooted in a deepening personal and communal relationship with God. I see a parish committed to lay formation, to our being a school of prayer, a place of teaching, where small groups, talks and programmes such as Alpha & CaFE, Catechesis, RCIA and sacramental preparation thrive. This formation will inform and enrich a love of neighbour which expresses itself in a growing social conscience and capacity for service. Being open to Christ means being open to others, it means serving those he would serve. Let people know us by our love! On the road to Emmaus Jesus walked with and accompanied the disciples who were walking away from the church. Let people find in our parish a place of welcome, worship and witness - a place which responds to people's needs, where they are accompanied in good times and the bad, where love conquers loneliness. Let it be a place for all, new and seasoned, young and old, families, bereaved, elderly and housebound.

Conclusion - So, this is the start of a vision, much of which is already there but much of which is yet to do. It's our parish and now is the time to think afresh. Preparing for the parish assembly in June is the opportunity to review the priorities for the parish and to define a plan to implement them. I can imagine, together, by God's grace we can share a vision and bring it to life! So what do *you* think? Email me at michaeloboy@rcdow.org.uk with the subject 'Vision'. A fuller version of this document can be found on our website, under 'Parish News' and hard copies will be available in the porch. *Fr Michael.*

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Stations of the Cross for Lent Stations of the Cross will be live-streamed from our Church on Saturday mornings at 10am during Lent. The text of the service will be available via the home page of our website to enable people to pray and reflect on a different theme each week. The Stations for the first Saturday in Lent will focus on 'Reflecting on a Pandemic' Stations for the following week have been prepared by the Mission Group and will focus on "Christ has died, Christ is Risen, Christ will come again".

Baptisms Please contact Fr Julian for baptism enquiries by emailing him at juliandavies@rcdow.org.uk.

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.

First Holy Communion This year's programme will begin after Easter and an email has been sent to the parents of all candidates with details of the programme. Please email the parish office if you have not received this communication.

Confirmation We hope to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation for last year's confirmands (postponed due to the lockdown) on May 8th and 15th, at 11.30 am and 2.30 pm on both. A digital form will be sent out before long inviting date preferences.

Marriages Please contact Fr Michael for marriage enquiries by emailing him at michaeloboy@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.

Prayers for the Sick If you would like to include someone in the prayers for the sick please contact the presbytery.

PARISH LIFE

Cardinal's Lenten Appeal 2021 The Cardinal thanks you for your generous support for the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal, especially throughout the unprecedented events of 2020. Your donations help fund initiatives in parishes, schools and charities in four mission areas which are more critical than ever. **Marriage and Family Life:** enriching and supporting marriages, the essential building block of society and the Church. **Youth and Evangelisation:** helping young people, the future of the Church, as they grow in their relationship with God and deepen their Catholic faith. **Caritas Westminster:** putting our faith into

action by serving those in need. **Education Service:** supporting our schools. This year, the Cardinal is asking us to think about families who are struggling to put food on the table. Poverty is deepening across our Diocese and the need for foodbanks and supermarket vouchers has accelerated. Through your generosity we are continuing to provide food for those people most in need. Donation envelopes are not being used this year. Please click [here](#) to donate online or download a donation form [here](#).

Parish Virtual Coffee Morning Sundays 10.30 - 11.00am Come and join a parish coffee morning for a chat each Sunday. At present we'll have to meet virtually using Zoom, so please use the details below. If you haven't used Zoom before, just click [here](#) or copy the link below into your browser. Please enter the Meeting ID 930 9372 9386 and Passcode 998690 when prompted.
<https://zoom.us/j/93093729386?pwd=RzNkWm5vYlp6SDIBUUN3UkxEbnZ5QT09>

Join a Faith Sharing Group this Lent These will meet virtually and journey through the weeks of Lent using *Holy Week Voices from the Holy Land* a resource for individual or group reflection. If you would like to find out more please contact Mike & Sylvia at whitemw@talktalk.net. Hard and digital copies of the resource can be ordered using the following [link](#) and are priced at £7.99.

Strength to Strength: The practical benefits of daily prayer This four session CaFE course aims to give practical help to anyone who wishes to pray more in their daily lives and is inspired by the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It is hoped to run the course as a parish group via Zoom on Monday evenings at 8pm during Lent beginning on 22 February. Each session lasts approximately 40 mins with mid-point group discussion. If you would like to join please email Melanie at mjoneill5@btinternet.com.

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.

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

CAFOD Lent fast day - Friday 26 February This Lent, the focus of the appeal is on the supply of clean drinking water, something we all take for granted. Abdella lives in a remote part of Ethiopia where it took him 10 hours a day to collect water for his family - see short video at cafod.org.uk/lent. His village has now benefitted from a solar water pump. CAFOD would like to reach more vulnerable communities around the world and to provide other vital support. If you would like to donate, please text LENT to 70460 [£10 plus

standard rate message or go to cafod.org.uk/give. More details from Stan at grabecki@hotmail.com or 765549.

CAFOD Walk for Water 40-day challenge. To help walk alongside Abdella this Lent, Maureen and Stan Grabecki have challenged themselves to each walk 10,000 steps every day, for 40 days from Ash Wednesday. If you would like to sponsor them, please drop an envelope marked 'CAFOD challenge' into the presbytery, with a cheque made payable to CAFOD. Alternatively you can donate and find more information at justgiving.com/maureen-stan-grabecki.

CAFOD Daily Walk Something positive this lent Could you walk 10000 steps either on one day or everyday this Lent? The walk could be a sign of your solidarity with all those who do not have access to a safe water source and who have to walk for water each day. Find out more [here](#) to help to end water poverty.

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.

Churches Together in Marshalswick Lent Lectures and Discussion Weekly meetings will take place via Zoom at 6.45pm on Sundays during Lent. Click [here](#) to join using Meeting ID: 846 7123 1405 and password: 060730. Alternatively you can watch on [YouTube](#). More information can be obtained from www.ssaviours.org.

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH

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.

Contactless and Virgin Money Giving A contactless giving point is now located in the Church porch. To make an offering, select the amount you wish to donate and tap the top of the machine with your phone or card. If you would like to donate using Virgin Money Giving, please click [here](#) or use the QR code at the top of the newsletter.

Right to Life As we begin this season of Lent, we offer up the merits of our daily sacrifices to the needs of the most vulnerable in society. We offer them especially for the poor, the lonely and the unborn. That the Lord would see their needs and pour out his love and blessing upon them. 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 to contact the parish office at the moment is by emailing stalbins@rcdow.org.uk.

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](#) or post an envelope through the presbytery door with the details of the Mass intention (who it is for and why), your name, a contact phone number or email address and your donation. If you would prefer a weekend or a morning/ evening weekday mass, please note that also. We will then contact you with a suggested mass date.

Please note that we are currently booking mass intentions for masses taking place from June/July 2021. The diocesan suggested Mass offering is £10.

Weekly bulletin During this lockdown period, the 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 weekly bulletin by email, please email the parish office.

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.

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 now has 387 members. You can join this group by clicking [here](#) or by searching Facebook for SS Alban and Stephen Catholic Church.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 21 February - FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

6pm Vigil Mass Stan Penstone (RIP) *
9.30am Mass People of the Parish *
11.30am Mass Jacque Leonard (RIP) *
7pm Mass Zbigniew Frosztega (Ann)*
Reading 1, Genesis 9:8-15, Responsorial Psalm, 25
Reading 2, 1 Peter 3:18-22, Gospel, Mark 1:12-15

Monday 22 February - THE CHAIR OF ST PETER THE APOSTLE

10am Funeral Mass for Sheila Doohan *
7pm Mass Mollie Lerwill (RIP)
Reading 1, 1 Peter 5:1-4
Responsorial Psalm, 23, Gospel, Matthew 16:13-19

Tuesday 23 February - Lent feria

10am Funeral Mass for Thomas Doyle *
Reading 1, Isaiah 55:10-11
Responsorial Psalm, 34, Gospel, Matthew 6:7-15

Wednesday 24 February - Lent feria

10am Mass Antoinette Igoe (RIP) *
7pm Mass Mary Curran (RIP)
Reading 1, Jonah 3:1-10
Responsorial Psalm, 51, Gospel, Luke 11:29-33

Thursday 25 February - Lent feria

10am Mass Frank Donohue (Ann)
Reading 1, Esther 4:17
Responsorial Psalm, 138, Gospel, Matthew 7:7-12

Friday 26 February - Lent feria

10am Funeral Mass for Charles and Nellie Attard *
7pm Mass Owen and Margaret Watters (Ann) *
Reading 1, Isaiah 58:1-9
Responsorial Psalm, 51, Gospel, Matthew 9:14-15

Saturday 27 February - Lent feria

10am Stations of the Cross - Week 2: 'Christ has died,
Christ is Risen, Christ will come again *
Reading 1, Deuteronomy 26:16-19
Responsorial Psalm, 119, Gospel, Matthew 5:43-48

Sunday 28 February - SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

6pm Vigil Mass PJ Conefrey and family (Ints) *
9.30am Mass Essie Cotter (RIP) *
11.30am Mass People of the Parish *
7pm Mass Michael Theanne (Ann)*

* Live streamed only, no public attendance.

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches together in St Albans, this week we pray for the officers and members of the Salvation Army.

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick including

For those who have died recently including Charles and Nellie Attard, Joe Borg, Doreen Butler, Carmen Del Romero, Sheila Doohan, Thomas Doyle, David Anthony Francis, Hermie Haniff, Winifred King, Bob Markham, Ciara McMahon, Lourdes Pons, Kathleen Quinn, Daphne Snaith, Francis Steven, Peter Taylor, Dolores Walsh.

(Attendance at funeral masses is currently limited to 30 invited mourners.)

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Sheila Aylward, John Baxter, Frank Donohue, Zbigniew Frosztega, Ernest Gaufruid, Hermina Gaufruid, Elizabeth Harding, Eric Hopkins, Angela Mary Kent, Oswald McCarthy, William Miller, Lily Nicholson, William Rigg, Michael Theanne, Owen and Margaret Watters.

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 and worksheet from the Diocese of Westminster.

Virtual Children's Liturgy from CAFOD in addition to their downloadable weekly children's liturgy resources, CAFOD 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.

Children's Stations of the Cross If you would like to pray the Stations of the Cross as a family with children, there are various options available on the internet. EWTN publish a service for primary age children entitled [The Way of the Cross for Kids](#) in a cartoon format. CAFOD have also produced [Resources and Prayers for Lent for Catholic schools](#) and include a simple service featuring photographs and information from some of the projects that CAFOD has supported. Please click [here](#) to view this.