



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - 7 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

Fr Michael Writes... Christmas is barely over and all too soon it will be Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent, and maybe, if you are anything like me, Ash Wednesday - which this year falls on 17 February - will take you by surprise and you will be scrambling about for a Lenten resolution. One danger is that our Lenten resolutions can be more about us, than Christ - the giving up of chocolate, alcohol and smoking, dieting and the doing of exercise being more about individual health or the body beautiful than our growing closer to Christ. It's not that these are 'bad' resolutions; paying attention to our health and well-being is one way of thanking God for the gift of life we have received from him, but if the desire underpinning these resolutions is not for a deeper relationship with Christ or with following his example of service to others, then we need to think again. To help I would like to highlight the following opportunities to deepen your faith and would encourage you to think about participating in one of them.

1. Join a **Faith Sharing Group** which 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 <https://rcdow.org.uk/faith/news/holy-week-voices/> and are priced at £7.99.
2. Participate in a four session CaFE course called **Strength to Strength** looking at the practical benefits of daily prayer. The course offers practical help to anyone wishing to pray more in their daily lives. 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.
3. Journey with us on the **Lenten Bible Series**, led by Mauro Iannicelli from *Come and See* evangelisation ministry. Mauro will walk you through the forthcoming Sunday Gospel with in-depth teaching and stimulating questions. You will experience Sunday Mass in a new way! Starting on Wednesday 10 February with a talk on 'Prayer - with a rule of life' and followed by six weekly sessions breaking open each Lenten Sunday Gospel. All talks online from 7pm - 8.30pm. To register and for further details, visit www.comeandsee.org/lent.

Finally, although we cannot meet physically for coffee after Mass it is possible to meet virtually, from the comfort of your own home, and do the next best thing. It's a great way of maintaining contacts and, if you are new to the parish, getting to know others. Click on the following link and use the Meeting ID 930 9372 9386 and Passcode 998690 when prompted to do so. <https://zoom.us/j/93093729386?pwd=RzNkWm5vYlp6SDIBUUN3UkxEbnZ5QT09>.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols spoke to LBC Radio on 30 January 2021 (click [here](#) for audio link) , just after the tragic news that the UK's death toll from Covid-19 had passed the 100,000 mark. Each death leaves a family bereaved; each hospital admission results in a person facing a fight, and loved ones anxiously hoping for the best from a distance. Cardinal Vincent talks about isolation, poverty, sickness, death and mourning in this time of pandemic, and how we must build back better with a sense of renewed purpose when we come out of the pandemic. He shares his own experiences of loss and bereavement and encourages us to pray and hold on to the hope of eternal life. 'The hope that faith brings is that this death is not the end of the person's life it's an entry into a fuller life; we will be together again. That's the promise of the Christian faith.'

Right to Life We pray for all women going through unexpected pregnancies, that they would experience peace and support in their situations, and experience the many blessings that motherhood brings. Lord hear us.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

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.

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.

PARISH LIFE

Parish Virtual Coffee Morning Sundays 10.30 - 11.00am

Come and join a parish coffee morning for a chat each Sunday. By necessity 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 and enter the Meeting ID and Passcode when prompted. Hope to see you on Sunday!

<https://zoom.us/j/93093729386?pwd=RzNkNm5vY1p6SDIBUUN3UkxEbnZ5QT09>

Meeting ID: 930 9372 9386 Passcode: 998690

Join a virtual on-line prayer group Several parish groups have continued to meet on-line using Zoom, since the start of the pandemic. All would welcome new members. These include several of the 'Small Groups' which will be sharing on scripture/other faith topics, typically every two weeks.

Details of groups currently meeting:

- Mondays 8pm (2 x per month) Richard Exact 07976 252309
- Alternate Tuesdays 2-3.30pm Mike and Sylvia White (01727 854596; whitemw@talktalk.net)
- Alternate Tuesdays 7.30pm Stan Grabecki (01727 765549; grabecki@hotmail.com)
- Wednesdays 7.30pm Brendan Roche - A new group set up at the start of the pandemic (contact parish office stalbans@rcdow.org.uk).
- Saturday 9am Parish Men's Group currently sharing on the lives of the Saints. (Richard Exact - 07976 252309; D4dstalbans@gmail.com)

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

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. The course has been 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.

Westminster Record This publication provides news and features about all areas of Catholic life -in homes, parishes and schools - which take place in North, West, Central and East London as well as Hertfordshire. Produced by the Diocese of Westminster Communications Office, the Lent 2020 issue contains photos of Brendan Day's institution as Lector and all issues can be read for free online [here](#).

Traidcraft update. Despite COVID-19, sales of Traidcraft goods came to approximately £3,000 in 2020 and this allowed us to send £500 to CAFOD, which is particularly pleasing as their income dropped enormously last year. It is still possible to buy Traidcraft goods and this can be done in a Covid-secure way by ordering through Maureen at grabecki@hotmail.com or on 765549. We aim to place an order twice a month, so if your item is not immediately available from our stock, it hopefully will not be long before it can be obtained. Thank you to all those parishioners who have kept us, Traidcraft and CAFOD going in these troubled times.

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 go to cafod.org.uk/give or text LENT to 70460 [£10 plus standard rate message]. More details from Stan on 765549 or at grabecki@hotmail.com

CAFOD Walk for Water 40-day challenge. To help walk alongside Abdella this Lent, Maureen and Stan Grabecki have challenged themselves to walk 10,000 steps each, 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 at cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Walk-for-Water and go the distance this Lent to help to end water poverty.

Sheila Doohan (RIP) Sheila was born in Adeleide Street, St Albans in 1929 and was baptized at Ss Alban and Stephen, where she remained an active parishioner for the rest of her life. She was a supporter of Pro Life, a eucharistic minister, a member of the Neo Cats and she also cooked and shopped for Fr Michael Fitzgibbon, during his time as a priest in the parish. Sheila passed away on 18 January and her funeral will take place at Ss Alban and Stephen on 22 February.

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.

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.

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 St Albans AGM and Winter Forum on Monday 8 February at 8pm on Zoom. Learn about other churches - Baptist, Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal and more... and share your experiences at the Winter Forum. There will be short clips from other churches shown but you are also encouraged to try the Unity Challenge to visit another church online. There are some useful links on the Unity Challenge page. Please visit <https://ctstalbans.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.

SearchandStudy.org There is a wealth of Catholic material out there but it can be quite hard to find. Searchandstudy.org is a Catholic website which helps you to browse, search or reference Catholic stuff from the Bible to popes, councils, the Catechism saints and more. Click on searchandstudy.org.

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.

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.

Please note that we are currently booking mass intentions for masses taking place from the beginning of June 2021.

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 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.

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

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 7 February - FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORD TIME

6pm Vigil Mass Tony Moran (RIP) *

9.30am Mass People of the Parish *

11.30am Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (RIP) *

7pm Mass Padraig Butler (RIP) *

Reading 1, Job 7:1-7, Responsorial Psalm, 147

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23

Gospel, Mark 1:29-39

Monday 8 February - St Jerome Emiliani

10am Mass Anna and Francesca Yeadon (Ints) *

1pm Funeral Mass for Renee Rumble *

7pm Mass Deceased members of the Moore family (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 1:1-19,

Responsorial Psalm, 104, Gospel, Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday 9 February - - Feria

10am Funeral Mass for Cynthia Chrimes *

Reading 1, Genesis 1:20-2:4

Responsorial Psalm, 8, Gospel, Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday 10 February - St Scholastica

10am Mass Josephine Barry (Ints) *

7pm Mass Christina Conefrey (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 2:4-9, 15-17

Responsorial Psalm, 104, Gospel, Mark 7:14-23

Thursday 11 February - Our Lady of Lourdes

10am Mass Christina Connors (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 2:18-25

Responsorial Psalm, 128, Gospel, Mark 7:24-30

Friday 12 February - Feria

10am Mass Ellen Huckle (Ann) *

7pm Mass Celia Dunne (Ann) *

Reading 1, Genesis 3:1-8

Responsorial Psalm, 32, Gospel, Mark 7:31-37

Saturday 13 February - Memoria BVM

10am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament *

Reading 1, Genesis 3:9-24

Responsorial Psalm 90, Gospel, Mark 8:1-10

Sunday 14 February -SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORD TIME

6pm Vigil Mass Mario D'Andrea (Ann)*

9.30am Mass John Bernard Freed (RIP) *

11.30am Mass Christopher and Melissa Ryan (Ints) *

7pm Mass People of the Parish *

* Live streamed only, no public attendance.

PLEASE PRAY

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

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick including

For those who have died recently including Charles and Nellie Attard, Doreen Butler, Cynthia Chrimes, John Darby, Carmen Del Romero, Sheila Doohan, Thomas Doyle, David Anthony Francis, Concettina Giubba, Giuseppe Giubba, , Encarnacion Gonzales Jurado, Hermie Haniff, Winifred King, Patrick Anthony Mcconnell, Miguel Ortega, Ciara McMahon, Renee Rumble, Daphne Snaith, Francis Steven, John Stevens, Dolores Walsh and Bernadette Witchard.

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

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Greg Brice, Mario D'Andrea, Celia Dunne, Harold Elliott, Jessie Harris, Eric Hopkins, Ellen Huckle, Nora King, Lily Nicholson and Stan Phillips.

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 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.

St Scholastica (480 - 547) - 10 February Scholastica was born in Nursia, the twin sister of St Benedict. She was dedicated to God from an early age and followed her brother to Cassino, where she founded and governed a monastery of nuns, about five miles from that of St Benedict. She died there and Benedict is thought to have died shortly afterwards.

Our Lady of Lourdes - 11 February In 1858, the immaculate Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous, near Lourdes in France, in the cavern called "de Massabielle." Through this poor, 14-year-old girl, Mary calls on sinners to change their lives. She has inspired in the Church a great love of prayer and good works, especially in the service of the poor and sick.