



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT - 7 MARCH 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 Julian writes...

Apparently when St Bernadette Soubirous first saw the iconic statue of Our Lady of Lourdes based upon her depiction of the vision, she disliked it and told the sculptor that it bore little resemblance to what she had seen. Should we be surprised? How could any work of art capture the essence of that encounter or depict the internal grace of the Immaculate Mother? Yet the inadequacy of religious art to fully depict the truth does not mean that the aim is futile. Christian imagery has sought to lead the devotion of the heart from the outward form towards the deeper reality beyond.

The Church in its catholicity and orthodoxy has distinguished the veneration of religious art from its worship. The worship of statues or icons is strictly forbidden but the veneration of the same is to be encouraged. Thus Mother Church sees the prohibition against making graven images in the ten commandments, which we hear today, as a prohibition against idolatry not against expressions of art which lead one to worship. It is the difference between making an object for worship in place of God and making something to lead us reverentially towards the worship of God. This interpretation draws upon scriptural passages which encourage the use of art especially for that purpose, such as within the sanctuary of the Temple.

Throughout the ages some Christians have refused this interpretation, which led to episodes such as the Byzantine iconoclasm in the East and the Reformation iconoclasm in the West. This caused the wholesale destruction of works of great beauty which had been the vehicles of faith for countless souls. The conviction was that it was better not to have these works of art at all so that the possibility of idolatry was minimised. But idolatry is born in the human heart and not just through the eyes. Art which could be used to glorify God, once subverted, tends instead to glorify degenerate humanity. We human beings fail to give God his due.

In the cleansing of the Temple, Jesus reminds us that if we are to root out idolatry then we need to begin with our pockets and recognise the ground upon which we tread. The Temple was built for the worship of God and not for the exploitation or greed of man. That Temple was only a shadow of the reality of the sanctuary of Heaven. It was there to guarantee access into the presence of God, but its physical life was transitional. After his death and resurrection his own body would give access into the presence of God.

Christ is the perfect likeness of his Father. Amazingly every human being is made in his image, and we are called to reflect his glory. Through our sins we have marred that image but, in our repentance, by our acceptance of his saving work of redemption on the cross, we can be gloriously restored. He is the Master Restorer. If we are saddened at the destruction of his image in art, how much more should we be saddened by the destruction of another human being who bears the imprint of his image?

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.

Right to Life Tomorrow we celebrate International Women's Day. We pray especially for all pregnant women that they too would be championed and supported by all of us in society, not only tomorrow, but always. Lord hear us.

SACRAMENTS AND LITURGY

Stations of the Cross for Lent Stations of the Cross will be live-streamed from our Church on Saturday mornings at 10am throughout Lent. The text of the service will be available on the website to enable people to pray and reflect on a different theme each week.

The Stations for the Third Saturday in Lent will feature the Way of the Cross in time of pandemic from the book "Holy Week Voices from the Holy Land". The focus for the following week, on the day before Mothering Sunday, is Mary's Way of the Cross.

Easter Garden Conscious that so many of us have lost loved ones to coronavirus and other causes this year, we would like to commemorate them in a special way in our Easter Garden. We will be planting bamboo flower shapes with the names of our deceased loved ones written on them around the rose garden in front of the presbytery. These will be close to the three crosses and will be a symbol of the new life with Christ promised by the resurrection. If you would like to remember your loved ones in this way, please send their names into the office clearly marked 'Easter Garden' either by emailing the parish office at stalbins@rcdow.org.uk or by posting the details through the presbytery door.

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 The 2020/21 programme will begin after Easter and an email will be sent out this coming week to the parents of all candidates with further details on the programme. Those 2019/20 candidates who are yet to make their First Holy Communion have been emailed this week. Please contact the parish office on stalbins@rcdow.org.uk if you feel you should have received this email but have not done so.

Confirmation We hope to celebrate the sacrament of confirmation for last year's confirmands (postponed due to the lockdown) on 8 and 15 May, at 11.30am and 2.30pm on both. A digital form has been sent out 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.

PARISH NEWS

Vision Statement Looking towards the forthcoming Parish Assembly Fr Michael has set out a vision statement for our pastoral priorities going ahead. The full version of this can be found on our website, under '[Parish News](#)'. For the summary version, published in last week's bulletin, please click [here](#). Fr Michael would welcome your comments and feedback. Please email him directly, using the subject header 'Vision', at michaeloboy@rcdow.org.uk.

Cardinal's Lenten Appeal 2021 Cardinal Nichols thanks you for your generous support for the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal, which helps to fund initiatives in parishes, schools and charities, strengthening and advancing the Catholic faith throughout the church, and putting faith into action. Thanks to your generosity we are able to continue this work throughout our Diocese. You can view two short films about the impact of your donations on the [website](#).

Parish Virtual Coffee Morning Sundays 10.30 - 11.00am Click [here](#) to join a parish coffee morning for a Zoom chat each Sunday. Just copy the link below into your browser, using Meeting ID 930 9372 9386 / Passcode 998690:
<https://zoom.us/j/93093729386?pwd=RzNkWm5vY1p6SDlBUUN3UkxEbnZ5QT09>

Lenten Study Programmes Please see the 'Parish News' page of our website for details of some opportunities for parishioners to take part in study programmes and faith sharing groups during Lent.

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 and grabecki@hotmail.com);
- Wednesdays 7.30pm Brendan Roche - A new group set up at the start of the pandemic (contact parish office stalbins@rcdow.org.uk).
- Saturday 9am Parish Men's Group currently sharing on the lives of the Saints. (Richard Exact - 07976 252309; D4dstalbins@gmail.com)

CAFOD Lenten Family Fast Day Thank you so much for your generous donations to the fast day, especially at this strange time. This will go towards making a huge difference to communities in remote parts of the third

world where access to safe drinking water is so difficult. If you would still like to donate, please either drop an envelope marked "CAFOD fast day collection" into the presbytery or donate [online](#) or text LENT to 70460 [£10].

CAFOD "Big Walk for Water" By 6 March Maureen and Stan will hopefully have completed 16 days of their 40-day challenge to walk 400 miles in solidarity with so many millions around the world who do not have access to safe drinking water. So far donations have reached £1200, including Gift aid. Your support makes a massive difference to families and communities in the Third World. Maureen and Stan wish to thank all their sponsors. To make a donation, please go to justgiving.com/maureen-stan-grabecki or drop a cheque made out to CAFOD into the presbytery in an envelope marked "CAFOD challenge". Please see the [Parish News](#) section of our website for an article on Stan and Maureen's challenge.

TRAIDCRAFT: all of our regular items are still on sale in a Covid-secure way. A range of Easter cards and eggs are also available for special order as we cannot afford to buy these in advance. Please look at the [Traidcraft](#) website for more details. We can buy packs of 6 religious Easter cards for £4.50, a discount of about 10% - perhaps an alternative to giving an Easter egg this year? Also, if enough Easter eggs [about £5 each] were needed, then they might be a little cheaper, too. To allow for delivery from Traidcraft, we will place an order on Saturday 20 March. More details from Maureen, grabecki@hotmail.com. 765549

OUR SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY

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 December 2020 this had increased to £9,221.10 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.

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 stalbands@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 contact you with a suggested mass date.

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

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

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.

You can also find support and useful resources on the Liturgy Group section of our [website](#).

All of our masses are livestreamed via our YouTube channel which can be accessed via our website or by clicking [here](#).

The parish also has a Facebook group providing support and updates and which now has 392 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 March - THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

6pm Vigil Mass People of the Parish *
9.30am Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (RIP) *
11.30am Mass Noreen Carolan (Ann) *
7pm Mass Renee Yvonne Lucas (First Ann) *
Reading 1, Exodus 20:1-17, Responsorial Psalm, 19
Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 1: 22-25, Gospel, John 2: 13-25

Monday 8 March - Lent feria

10am Mass Elaine Clarke (RIP) *
7pm Mass Jean Yves Theanne (First Ann)
Reading 1, 2 Kings 5:1-15
Responsorial Psalm, 42, Gospel, Luke 4:24-30

Tuesday 9 March - Lent feria

10am Mary Canning (Ints)
Reading 1, Daniel 3:25,34-43
Responsorial Psalm, 25, Gospel, Matthew 18:21-35

Wednesday 10 March - Lent feria

10am Funeral Mass for Winifred King *
7pm Mass Amy Smith (RIP)
Reading 1, Deuteronomy 4:1,5-9
Responsorial Psalm, 147, Gospel, Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday 11 March - Lent feria

10am Mass Thanksgiving (Donor Ints)
Reading 1, Jeremiah 7:23-28
Responsorial Psalm, 95, Gospel, Luke 11:14-23

Friday 12 March - Lent feria

10am Funeral Mass for Peter Taylor *
7pm Mass Una, Dermot & Ella O'Grady (Ints) *
Reading 1, Hosea 14:2-10
Responsorial Psalm, 81, Gospel, Mark 12:28-34

Saturday 13 March - Lent feria

10am Stations of the Cross - Week 4: 'Mary's Way of the Cross' *
Reading 1, Hosea 5:15-6:6
Responsorial Psalm, 51 Gospel, Luke 18:9-14

Sunday 14 March - FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Laetare Sunday)

6pm Vigil Mass Gerard Dunne (RIP) *
9.30am Mass People of the Parish *
11.30am Mass Sarah Duggan (Ints) *
7pm Mass Tom Bagge (RIP) *

* Live streamed only, no public attendance.

Safeguarding DBS Administrator (part time position) - Diocese of Westminster An opportunity has arisen for a suitably experienced and qualified individual to join the diocesan Safeguarding team. The post holder will assist the DBS Officer and the Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Please click [here](#) for a job specification and to apply online. The closing date for applications is 26 March.

PLEASE PRAY

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

Ahead of Pope Francis' historic visit to Iraq, the first of any Pope to the country, from 5 to 8 March, Cardinal Vincent has called for prayers for the Holy Father and for the people of Iraq, that these may be days of great joy and spiritually fruitful.

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick including

For those who have died recently including Winifred King, Susan Lannon, Bob Markham, Lourdes Pons, Daphne Snaith and Peter Taylor.

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

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Noreen Carolan, Renee Yvonne Lucas, John Taylor, Jean Yves Theanne and Michael Theanne.

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 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.