



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER – 2 MAY 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...

As I write, India is in the grips of the pandemic. It is easy, as we begin to contemplate life beyond lockdown, to forget the suffering that continues elsewhere, and still more, the real possibility that the easing we are experiencing could be a temporary reprieve. When it comes to the corona virus and the current pandemic out of sight cannot be out of mind.

Over the last week our Eucharistic Ministers have begun taking communion to people at home, provided that this can be done in an outdoor setting. Soon, on the 8 and 15 May we will celebrate the confirmation Masses which should have been celebrated nearly a year ago, and in July those who should have celebrated their First Holy Communion in 2020, but have yet to do so, will have an opportunity to do so. This year's First Holy Communion programme is now under way with parents supporting their children as they work through the First Communion Programme and the parish team supporting the parents. Later this month we will begin working more directly with the small group of older children being prepared for First Holy Communion.

Going forward, I hope to reintroduce the full timetable of weekday Masses as well as the Saturday morning Holy Hour from the beginning of June. This will enable us to re-introduce Saturday morning confessions. I also hope to have communion at the more usual time from the beginning of June. We will keep the number of Sunday Masses under review and look to the re-introduction of additional Sunday Masses once we have reached capacity and the availability of volunteer stewards makes additional Masses possible. Moreover, as we approach the final easing of the current lockdown in June, and it is clear what if any restrictions remain in terms of distance and spacing, we will review our seating capacity. Finally, I am of course conscious that there have been no Masses at Marshalswick since the beginning of the very first lock down and their re-introduction is something we also need to begin thinking about in conjunction with St John Fisher School and the volunteers at Marshalswick.

During the week the Bishops of England and Wales have issued a reflection on the post-pandemic recovery and the challenges faced by the Church in encouraging people back to the Church. In a reflection entitled *The Day of the Lord*, the Bishops praise families, parish communities and those who have worked tirelessly in hospitals, care homes, schools and prisons during these challenging times of ill-health, grief and isolation.

The Bishops also turn their attention to the post-pandemic world. Recognising that it is impossible to predict the pace at which we will emerge from the pandemic they speak of 'the challenge...of bringing our communities and the practice of the faith to a still greater expression and strength', reminding us that the Mass is the lifeblood of the Church which requires our active participation and physical presence. Speaking of the Sunday Mass the Bishops encourage us to take our place alongside our brothers and sisters 'to see Sunday as the soul of the week' and 'the Sunday Eucharist as food for the unique mission with which we have been endowed.'

The full text of the Bishops' reflection can be found on the Diocese of Westminster website and can also be accessed [here](#).

Right to Life As we enter into this month dedicated to our Blessed Mother, we bring to mind all mothers. That, like Mary, they would be able to love and cherish their children from the point of conception. We pray also that these women would find support in their spouses, family and friends as they journey through the joys and trials of parenthood. Lord hear us.

SACRAMENTS AND LITURGY

Public Masses the following Masses are open to all:

- Saturday 6pm Mass
- Sunday 9.30am, 11.30am & 7pm Masses
- Monday 7pm Mass
- Tuesday 10am Mass
- Wednesday 7pm Mass
- Thursday 10am Mass

We are no longer asking people to book places at weekday or weekend masses and seats at all public masses will now be available on a first come, first served basis.

Please note that this may mean that capacity is reached at the busier masses, such as the Saturday evening mass and the 9.30am mass on Sunday morning. The situation will be kept under review and all masses will continue to be live streamed.

Please use the NHS Track and Trace App to record your presence in church. If this is not possible, please write your name and contact email address or phone number on a piece of paper and bring it with you.

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 has now begun and registration has finally closed. If you have registered and have not received the emails containing the links to the last three 'Parent In-puts' please contact the parish office on stalbins@rcdow.org.uk

Adult Confirmation If you have not yet received the sacrament of confirmation as an adult, and would like to, please contact Fr Julian at juliandavies@rcdow.org.uk, or via the parish office.

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 (care or nursing home permitting). Currently we are not allowed into Watford General Hospital (01923 244366.) If someone 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

Parish Pastoral Council Please click [here](#) for a summary report from the latest meeting of the PPC on 10 March.

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

Priests' Training Fund Thank you for your generosity to the Priest Training Fund collection last weekend. It is not too late to make a donation if you wish. Envelopes are available in the back of the church, or by contacting the parish office. Please continue to pray for vocations to the priesthood. For more information, or to make a donation, click [here](#).

Parish Assembly dates for your diary As you may recall, our Parish Assembly is scheduled to be held virtually via Zoom on Saturday, 12 June from 11am. Depending on pandemic restrictions, it may also be possible to hold the Assembly as a physical meeting on Saturday, 3rd July from 11am in the Parish Centre. We would be grateful if you could keep both dates in your diary at present. Detailed arrangements will be confirmed nearer the time, as government regulations evolve.

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 per month) Richard Exact 07976 252309
- Alternate Tuesdays 2-3.30pm Mike and Sylvia White (01727 854596; whitew@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 (email parish office.)
- Saturday 9am Parish Men's Group (Richard Exact - 07976 252309; D4dstalbins@gmail.com)

APF (Missio) local secretary for the parish The present local secretary (Tony Hughes) is stepping down after eight years because of mobility problems and we would like to hear from anyone who is interested in taking over from him. The role of the local secretary is to distribute the Mission Today magazine to promoters and to receive and bank the money collected by promoters from the red boxes. There are three issues of the magazine each year and we currently have nine promoters and around 65 red box holders. Before the pandemic the amount collected in a year from the red boxes was just over £2,000. If you are interested in helping the missions by becoming local secretary for the parish, please contact the parish office.

Bethlehem to Nazareth Virtual Pilgrimage - Supporting vulnerable children in the Holy Land - A group of parishioners are walking 84 miles following a virtual pilgrimage route from Bethlehem to Nazareth before Pentecost Sunday. The walk is to raise funds for the Friends of the Holy Land appeal to enable vulnerable children to receive an education, without which, they can end up living on the streets. A big thank you to everyone who has sponsored already: over £1,500 has been raised to date.

If you would like to contribute, please donate to our Parish Team by clicking [here](#) to access the fundraising site or by posting a donation in an envelope through the presbytery door, marked 'FHL Virtual Pilgrimage'. If you would like to join the pilgrimage team and help raise funds, please click on the link above and follow the guide. You will be able to walk at your own pace and you will be most welcome.

Thank you - Anne Myles, David Myles, Helen Bassill, Melanie O'Neill, Mike White, Richard O'Neill, Sheila Clegg, Sylvia White.

Knit and Natter Group The Parish Friends Group would appreciate donations of new double knit wool in any colour to make blankets for the Catholic Workers Farm. Offers to knit squares to make the blankets would also be appreciated. Please contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

OUR SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY

Hospital Chaplaincy Volunteer Visitors Course The Chaplaincy at Watford General Hospital is preparing to run a six-session chaplaincy volunteer taster training course for people who might consider becoming a local Hospital Chaplaincy Volunteer Visitor. The first session of the taster training course is to commence from 7.30 to 8.30pm on 11 May via ZOOM. Numbers are limited so if interested please [email](#) the Head of Chaplaincy & Pastoral Care.

School Crossing Patrol We are looking for someone interested in becoming the school crossing patrol for Ss Alban and Stephen Infant and Junior Schools. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact the Active and Safer Travel team on 01992 556816 / 556803. The pay is £9 per hour and a job share would be considered.

St Columba's Prep School Open Afternoon and 'Stay and Play' Sessions Families are invited to our virtual Prep School Open Afternoon on 18 May from 4.30 - 5.30pm. Mr. Richard McCann, the Headteacher, will give a short welcome, followed by videos from our students and parents. There will then be the opportunity to ask our teachers questions about life in the Prep School in a Q&A session. We also hold 'Stay and Play' sessions on Friday mornings from 9 to 10am for children aged 3+, where they join our Reception class for activities whilst their parents have a private tour of the school, which we would be delighted to welcome you to. St Columba's College is an independent Catholic day school for ages 4 to 18 in St Albans. We currently have girls in Reception, and will also welcome girls into Reception, Years 1, 2 and 12 from September 2021 as we begin a phased transition to co-education. Families can register online [here](#) or can [email](#) Bella Frost or call 01727 892060 for information.

Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse - Tuesday 4 May. Additional information about this day of prayer can be found on the Bishops' Conference [website](#).

Diocese of Westminster Justice and Peace Commission - Annual Mass for Migrants 1 May This year's Migrants Mass will be hosted by the Archdiocese of Southwark and will take place at St William of York Catholic Church, Lewisham. Owing to coronavirus restrictions, only a small number of invited guests will be able to attend in person but the Mass will be live-streamed online so that all can participate from their homes. The Mass is an annual celebration of the contribution made in the UK by all our migrant communities, held jointly by the Dioceses of Brentwood, Southwark and Westminster, with support from London Citizens. The link to the service can be found [here](#). There will be short video greetings screened from 11.20am before Mass at 11.30am.

May Devotion to Our Lady at the Shrine of our Lady of Willesden This will take place on Sunday 9 May at 3.30pm at the Shrine of Our Lady of Willesden. It will include Holy Rosary and Benediction, with music from the Shrine Singers. Due to Covid Restrictions only a limited number of seats will be available for reservation. The Devotion will be livestreamed. For a link to the livestream and booking of available seats, please click [here](#).

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

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Contacting the parish office In line with current government advice, our parish administrator is working mainly from home. This means that office phone may not always be manned and you may not get a reply to a voicemail immediately. The best way to contact the parish office at the moment is by emailing stalbins@rcdow.org.uk.

Mass Intentions 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. We will contact you with a suggested date. Please note that we are currently booking mass intentions for masses taking place from the end of September 2021. The diocesan suggested Mass offering is £10.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 2 MAY - FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

6pm Vigil Mass John Brennan (Ann)

9.30am Mass People of the Parish

11.30am Mass John Stevens (RIP)

7pm Mass Terry Mahabir (Ann)

Reading 1, Acts 9:26-31, Responsorial Psalm, 22

Reading 2, 1 John 3:18-24, Gospel, John 15:1-8

Monday 3 May - SS PHILIP AND JAMES

10am Mass Terry Moran (RIP) *

7pm No evening mass

Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

Responsorial Psalm, 19, Gospel, John 14:6-14

Tuesday 4 May THE ENGLISH MARTYRS

10am Mass Sumner family (Ints)

Reading 1, Acts 7:55-60 Responsorial Psalm, 31

Gospel, Matthew 10:17-20

Wednesday 5 May - Easter feria

10am Mass Karen Brennan (first ann) *

7pm Mass Cynthia Chrimes (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 15:1-6

Responsorial Psalm, 122, Gospel, John 15:1-8

Thursday 6 May - Easter feria

10am Mass People of the Parish

Reading 1, Acts 15:7-12

Responsorial Psalm, 96, Gospel, John 15:9-11

Friday 7 May - Easter feria

10am Mass Sandra Mosley (RIP) *

7pm Mass Brian Moore (first ann) *

Reading 1, Acts 15:22-31

Responsorial Psalm, 57, Gospel, John 15:12-17

Saturday 8 May - Easter feria

Reading 1, Acts 16:1-10 Responsorial Psalm, 100

Gospel, John 15:18-21

Sunday 9 May - SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

6pm Vigil Mass Barrie Witchard (RIP)

9.30am Mass Christina Conefrey (RIP)

11.30am Mass Nancy and Timothy Donoghue (first ann)

7pm Mass Patrick Mcconnell (RIP)

Live streamed only, no public attendance. *

PLEASE PRAY

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

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick including

For those who have died recently including Kathleen Angela Barnes, John McDaid, Mirosław Korwin-Kulesza, Michael Riches and Derite Whyte.

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

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including John Brennan, Karen Brennan, Michael Castiello, Annie Coakley, Nancy Donoghue, Claudio Frascchetti, Mary Gallagher, Terry Mahabir, Brian Moore and Ana Paz.

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 the latest 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.

Ss Philip and James - Philip, born at Bethsaida, was originally a disciple of John the Baptist. After the Baptist's death he followed Christ. James the son of Alphaeus is called "James the Less", to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee. James "the brother of the Lord" ruled the Church at Jerusalem; wrote an epistle; led an austere life; and converted many Jews to the Faith. He was martyred in the year 62. Jerome held these two Jameses to be the same person, and this was certainly the prevailing opinion when the feast of Philip and James was instituted in 560. Nowadays scholars prefer to divide them, in which case we might think of today as being the feast of Philip and James and James.

The English Martyrs On 4 May 1535, at Tyburn in London, three Carthusian monks died, the first of many martyrs of the English Reformation. Of these, 42 have been canonised, and a further 242 have been declared Blessed; but the true number who died or were tortured or persecuted for their faith cannot be reckoned. The persecution lasted 150 years. The martyrs are remembered for the example they gave of constancy in their faith and courage in the face of persecution. From 2001, this day has also commemorated the 40 martyrs of England and Wales, canonised on 25 October 1970.