



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

**SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER - 16 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)

Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

*We are a Fairtrade parish*

### The Ascension of Our Lord

As a youngster, one of my favourites programmes was Star Trek. I was amazed each time Scotty would 'beam' Captain Kirk up and teleport him back from a different time or place to the Star Ship Enterprise.

All of this is the stuff of science fiction but it invites us to consider what we are affirming when we profess that Jesus ascended from our temporal zone into the timeless dimension of heaven. Through the resurrection appearances, the disciples had had their earth bound presupposition completely overturned. For forty days they witnessed Jesus' glorious post-resurrection body materialising and immaterialising in ways that was beyond understanding. Sometimes they recognised him, sometimes they did not. He walked through matter, yet he ate with them and allowed them to touch him. No wonder that for sheer amazement they were filled with joy because they could not believe their eyes.

We do not have their advantage of seeing the Risen Lord, but as Jesus reminded the disciples, blessed are those who believe but who have not seen. Nor did we have the privilege of being present on the Mount of Olives when Jesus finally departed from their sight to re-enter the timeless dimension of heaven, but just as we are blessed in believing what happened at the Resurrection, so we are blessed in believing the truth of the Ascension. Like the disciples we can lift up our hearts. Jesus is out of sight, but not absent. Although Jesus has disappeared from our eyes, he is even more present.

At the assumption of material realities into heaven, he is now simultaneously present in the sacrament of his real presence in his body and blood, present in us who love him individually and corporately as his Church and present at his Father's side. Our status and identity in Christ mean that we are already participants in a transfigured world. We are sacraments of his salvation, and until he returns again, we must draw ourselves and others as Pope Benedict wrote, to 'look up to heaven, to turn our minds and hearts to the inexpressible mystery of God...to look towards the divine reality, to which we have been directed from our creation. For there we find's life's ultimate meaning'.

Rejoice in the Ascension of our Lord and remember that we are not just walking mindlessly on the face of the earth but seated with him in the heavenly places. *Fr Julian.*

### Pastoral Letter for Pentecost

Cardinal Vincent Nicols, Archbishop of Westminster, has written a Pastoral Letter for the Solemnity of Pentecost. The Cardinal explains that, 'the Pastoral Letter addresses a very public theme, and concern, about our care for the created world. It does so through the perspective of our Catholic faith, which sees creation as God's work, and properly understood as our human environment. The letter comes at the time of two crucial meetings of the G7 and COP26.' He goes on to say, 'I hope you find it both relevant and encouraging to the task so clearly facing us all and requiring our response in action at diocesan, parish and personal levels.'

The full text of the Cardinal's letter can be found [here](#). The Novena of Prayer for the time from Ascension to Pentecost, on the themes of the Care for Creation, can be found [here](#).

**Right to Life** We pray for all women going through unexpected pregnancies, that they would experience peace and support in this circumstance, and recognize the many blessings that motherhood brings. 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](mailto: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 Inputs' please contact the parish office on [stalbins@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbins@rcdow.org.uk). If your child is part of the group from 2019/20 who will be celebrating First Holy Communion in July, and you have not yet submitted your date and time preferences, please do so as soon as possible.

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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

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

**Catholic Communications Network** The Catholic Church celebrates World Communications Day on 16 May. It's a day when we pray for those who work in the media and we have a second collection after Mass this weekend to support the Church's important work in this area.

**Virtual Coffee Mornings are back.** It will not be long before we can meet again for a coffee and a chat after Mass, but if you can't wait, join us on-line on Sundays 10.30 - 11.00am for an informal chat. Just copy the link below into your browser or open your Zoom App using Meeting ID 930 9372 9386 / Passcode 998690 and don't forget to bring a mug of your favourite brew! Hope to see you on Sunday!

<https://zoom.us/j/93093729386?pwd=RzNkWm5vYlp6SDlBUUN3UkxEbnZ5QT09>

**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 3 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.

**Bethlehem to Nazareth Virtual Pilgrimage - Supporting vulnerable children in the Holy Land** - A group of parishioners is 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. The pilgrimage is well underway, and Nazareth is in site!

A big thank you to everyone who has sponsored us already: over £2,000 has been raised to date and your encouragement keeps us all going! If you would like to donate to our Parish Team, please click [here](#) to access the fundraising site or by post 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, David, Helen, Melanie, Mike, Richard, Sheila, Sylvia.

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

**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. Please contact the parish office if you are able to help.

## OUR SCHOOLS & COMMUNITY

**Thy Kingdom Come: Lighting up the world in prayer - 13 to 23 May** Once again, alongside other Catholic dioceses, the Diocese of Westminster pleased to be participating in this timely ecumenical initiative to help us reflect more deeply on our journey with Christ and personal call to discipleship. A variety of rich Catholic resources are available for use in our parish communities, which can enable us to prepare more fully to celebrate the great Feast of Pentecost. Please click [here](#) for a link to the website. In a year that has been beset by many personal challenges and worries, we hope that these resources may provide a useful source of spiritual nourishment and reflection.

We would like to highlight the following key resources:

- **Pentecost Novena:** A beautiful way to prepare ourselves for the joy of Pentecost, This [resource](#) is available as a download, booklet, or podcast.
- **Journey with Mary:** This special [playlist](#) has been created for us to journey with Mary from the Ascension to Pentecost. What would we say, or share with Mary?
- **Praying for 5:** During the novena which 5 friends, family, neighbours, who may be away from the Church, or have yet to discover the love offered them by Jesus would you pray for. Simply do so throughout the day and ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit for them. A simple [Prayer Journal](#) has been produced to support our personal prayer during the novena.
- **For Families:** There are some delightful resources to help families, particularly those with young children. To explore what is on offer please click [here](#).

Please click [here](#) for more information on related events in Hertfordshire including an ecumenical online service of prayer on 19 May with prayers led by Bishop Paul.

Churches Together in St Albans are also taking part with our annual 24-hour prayer marathon – can you help? Visit <https://ctstalbans.org.uk/> and book a slot to add your prayer time in, and/or join one of the zoom prayer events. There is so much to pray for! Thank you!

**Christian Aid Week 2021** This focused on the climate crisis, which is already having a big impact on the poorest countries and their citizens. For instance, there are communities in Kenya where right now families struggle to survive without a reliable water source. Every day, they walk further, dig deeper and build stronger to survive. Donations can be made via this [link](#). Or grab a cuppa and say the [tea-time prayer](#) in support of Christian Aid.

**Vaccinations** By now, many of us will have had one or two jabs. We are lucky. Yet much of the world remains unvaccinated. If possible, please consider donating the cost of your jabs to help others in need. Please click [here](#) to donate or google COVAX for further information.

**CAFOD** As coronavirus brings devastation across India, CAFOD is working with experienced local Church agency, Caritas India, to provide vital support to poor and marginalised communities. Donations to CAFOD's Coronavirus Appeal will help Caritas India distribute PPE kits to frontline health workers, promote COVID & vaccine awareness campaigns, and set up isolation & quarantine centres. You can donate online [here](#). Please keep praying for the people of India and all affected by the pandemic.

**Update from the London Jesuit Centre** The London Jesuit Centre offers:

- an opportunity for prayer, Saturday Retreats at 2.00-4.30pm. The next one is 19 June.
- Retreats in Daily Life in June and in July.
- Brian Purfield's 'Introduction to the Bible' beginning on 21 June. He is offering morning or evening classes. Booking has opened - please click this [link](#) for details.

We are also delighted to announce that, following the easing of lockdown restrictions, the Heythrop Library, one of the largest specialist theology and philosophy libraries in Europe, is now open Mondays to Thursdays.

## SUPPORTING OUR PARISH

**Donating to our Parish** In view of the current restrictions on attending Sunday mass, 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 [stalbans@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbans@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 16 MAY - SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

6pm Vigil Mass Fran Beard (RIP)  
9.30am Mass Bernadette Witchard (RIP)  
11.30am Mass Sheila Doohan (RIP)  
7pm Mass People of the Parish  
Reading 1, Acts 1:15-17,20-26, Responsorial Psalm, 103  
Reading 2, 1 John 4:11-16, Gospel, John 17:11-19

### Monday 17 May - Easter feria

10am Mass Sr Mary Aelred (Ints) \*  
7pm RCIA 2020 Thanksgiving Mass  
Reading 1, Acts 19:1-8  
Responsorial Psalm, 68, Gospel, John 16:29-33

### Tuesday 18 May - St John I

10am Mass Eddie Patino (RIP)  
Reading 1, Acts 20:17-27  
Responsorial Psalm, 68, Gospel, John 17:1-11

### Wednesday 19 May - Easter feria

10am Funeral Mass for Derite Whyte \*  
7pm Mass Elizabeth Ingman (Ann)  
Reading 1, Acts 20:28-38  
Responsorial Psalm, 68, Gospel, John 17:11-19

### Thursday 20 May - Easter feria

10am Mass Paddy Mackin (RIP)  
Reading 1, Acts 22:30,23:6-11  
Responsorial Psalm, 16, Gospel, John 17:20-26

### Friday 21 May - Easter feria

10am Mass Terri McCabe (RIP) \*  
7pm Mass Patrick Bagge (Ann) \*  
Reading 1, Acts 25:13-21  
Responsorial Psalm, 103, Gospel, John 21:15-19

### Saturday 22 May - St Rita of Cascia

Reading 1, Acts 28:16-20, 30-31  
Responsorial Psalm, 11, Gospel, John 21:20-25

### Sunday 23 May - PENTECOST SUNDAY

6pm Vigil Mass Freda & Margaret Clancy (Ann)  
9.30am Mass Antonia and Francis Loh (Ints)  
11.30am Mass People of the Parish  
7pm Mass Terry Mahabir (RIP)  
Live streamed only, no public attendance. \*

**Saint Rita of Cascia (1377 - 1447) - 22 May** Born near Cascia, Italy, Rita was married at the age of 12 despite her wish to become a nun. Her husband had many enemies. She endured his abuse for 18 years and bore him two sons, who grew to be like him. Towards the end of his life she helped to convert her husband but after he was murdered by his enemies, her sons planned to avenge their father's death. When Rita's pleas were unheard, she prayed that God should take their lives if that was the only way to stop them committing murder. They died of natural causes a year later. Rita's request to join the convent of St Mary Magdalen at Cascia was initially rejected but later, after reconciling her family with her husband's murderers, she was allowed to enter the convent aged 36 where she remained until her death aged 70. She is widely honoured as a patron saint of impossible or lost causes.

## PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches together in St Albans, this week we pray for Christian Aid Week and everyone affected by the climate crisis.

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick including

For those who have died recently including Cesar Lapuente, Marion Nash, Angela Tocknell, Derite Whyte and Richard Paul.

(Please note that, from 17 May, attendance at funerals is determined by the capacity of the Church which is under review but currently fixed at 78.)

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Patrick Bagge, Frank Burke, Freda and Margaret Clancy, Elizabeth Ingman, Mira Murawski.

*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.

Pope Francis has invited Catholics and Marian Shrines around the world to dedicate the month of May to a marathon of prayer for an end to the Covid-19 pandemic. Let us join in prayer with Pope Francis and with people across the globe to dedicate the Marian month of May to praying for an end to the pandemic.