



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

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD - 9 JANUARY 2022



Contactless Giving

Parish Team: Fr Michael O'Boy (Parish Priest) Fr Andrew Bowden (Assistant Priest)
Rev. Steve Pickard (Deacon) Rev. Brendan Day (Deacon) Mrs Angela Gray (Parish Administrator)
Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbanssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059
We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr Michael writes...

Most New Years bring with them a sense of new beginnings, even if there is nothing new about the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves. Before the return to work or school it's like a collective intake of breath, clearing the decks from the year before and bracing ourselves for the year ahead. This year perhaps that sense of newness may be a little harder to come by. We had thought, we had hoped, that we would be well clear of the pandemic, but we are not. Still there is need for caution and for decisions that impact on the pattern of life at home and work, school and parish. This week for example we made the decision to cancel the last of our confirmation sessions and in the coming weeks will need to reach decisions about the exact format of this coming year's Confirmation and First Communion programmes.

That said, evidence of new beginnings is there to be found. Next weekend we hope to re-introduce the Children's Liturgy (0-5 yrs.) at the 9.30am mass, while this weekend we welcome Fr Andrew Bowden as he takes up his new appointment among us. Fr Andrew comes to us from Our Lady of Lourdes, New Southgate. I will leave it to Fr Andrew to introduce himself in due course, but I know you will make him welcome in the coming weeks. Alongside Fr Andrew, the coming week will see a new beginning for the young people who are to be confirmed next weekend by Bishop Paul McAleenan, the auxiliary bishop responsible for parishes in Hertfordshire.

Oftentimes confirmation can be looked on as the ending of something - a passing on of the baton from parent to child - as they come to a decision about the baptism they received as infants. Certainly confirmation is a turning point and there is a sense in which each of us baptised as infants are called at confirmation to own that faith for ourselves, but the sealing with the Holy Spirit received at baptism, is not like the seal on a letter, document or parcel, which closes things, implying, so to speak, that faith at the moment of confirmation can be looked on as something which is done and dusted. Rather the Holy Spirit received at Confirmation is the promise of an advocate - a guide - there to support us, to assist us in our decision making. At this stage in their lives our young people have so many decisions to make. Some of those decisions will have a decisive impact on their futures, not least the whole question of what they might do after school, college or university. The Spirit that they will receive is a gift to be used, a friend and support, to be leaned on in the times and challenges that lay ahead.

Much like the gifts we received at Christmas the question we all face as we enter into a New Year is what we will do with the Spirit we have received. Will it lay dormant, boxed up and unwrapped, or will we use this gift to shape our lives and resolutions for 2022.

With all good wishes for 2022,

Fr Michael

Friday Morning Mass - Please remember that there is no longer a regular Friday morning mass at 10am, the exception being First Fridays and Funerals.

This coming Saturday Morning - No morning mass owing to the confirmation ceremonies. Confessions at 10am.

Synod Journey Your thoughtful and much valued responses to the Synod surveys have now all been read and are being collated. They will soon be presented to the Diocese for the next stage of the listening process. Feedback to the parish will be given in the next few weeks.

Pray and participate: We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide the parish representatives throughout the country as they finalise their feedback and documentation to present to their Dioceses.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Mass Attendance As is our current practice, those attending services at St Alban and St Stephen and at St John Fisher, Marshalswick are asked to wear a face mask (unless medically exempt), to sanitise their hands on entering and leaving the building, to socially distance and to receive communion on the hand. Those who do not wish to receive on the hand should come up to Holy Communion last.

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is to be held on Saturday 26 February at 11.30am. Please email Fr Jonathan at jonstogdon@rcdow.org.uk.

Confirmation Masses this weekend The families with young people being confirmed this weekend should have received an email on Tuesday containing organisational details for the Confirmation masses. If you have not received this email, please contact Fr Michael on michaeloboy@rcdow.org.uk. Please note that the final preparation session this Saturday morning has been cancelled due to current levels of Covid infections locally. A post Confirmation session is envisaged for February or March.

First Holy Communion 2022 The classes for the children will begin on Saturday 22 January with a parent meeting on Friday 14 January at 7.45 pm. Further details will be emailed to those who have registered for the First Holy Communion.

Confirmation 2022 Confirmation classes will begin on Sunday 27 February and will take place every two weeks. Further details will be emailed to those who have registered for Confirmation.

Marriage Preparation If you are intending to get married, please note the Diocese requires at least six months' notice and couples are expected to complete a preparation course. The next preparation course is in February. Please email Fr Michael on michaeloboy@rcdow.org.uk.

Prayers for the Sick If you would like to include someone in the prayers for the sick, please contact the presbytery. Permission from the person being prayed for, or their next of kin, must be obtained before we are able to include their name in the bulletin.

PARISH NEWS

Parish Christmas Day Takeaway Lunch Thank you to Mark and Celia Roberts and family who bought, cooked and served the takeaway Christmas Day lunch. Thank you also to Virginia Danford who made the lovely dessert, to the volunteer drivers who delivered the lunches and to the organisers. Some 23 meals were cooked, delivered and appreciated this year.

Coffee and Tea After Weekend Mass Coffee and tea will be available in the Parish Centre coffee bar after 11.30am Mass

on the first Sunday of the month. Coffee and tea is also available after the 6pm Saturday evening Mass. Can you help make and serve the refreshments, once a month? If so, please contact the parish office.

Traidcraft - this weekend after all Masses. All proceeds to CAFOD. Please try and support this Christian business venture. We are now able to accept credit/debit cards. More details from Maureen, 765549, grabecki@hotmail.com.

Knit and Natter Due to the high numbers of omicron cases at the moment knit and natter will not resume before February at the earliest. When we do meet up please will everyone do a lateral flow test before they come. If anyone has difficulty obtaining lateral flow test kits please contact Helen 07860 830340 and I will try to get them for you.

Bingo - by the Knights of St. Columba, at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall on Friday 14 January in aid of "CAFOD - Afghanistan Crisis Appeal" Admission is 50p, and includes refreshments. All are welcome.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Group The next gathering of the Justice, Peace & Integrity team (JPIC) will be in the Sacred Heart Centre on 20 January.

Men's Breakfast 22 January Following on from our breakfast gatherings in the autumn, we are restarting these post-Christmas, with the first one planned for Saturday 22 January. We will meet in the parish centre from 8.15am for coffee, croissants and banter. We will use the main hall, rather than the rooms downstairs as this is better ventilated. At about 9am we will watch a video on the Nicene Creed, part of a series narrated by Bishop Robert Barron, and aim to finish at 10am. This is a great opportunity to learn more about this prayer which is central to the Sunday mass and to the key parts of our catholic beliefs.

Developing Our Faith as Adults Our Parish Assembly highlighted the need to promote and facilitate ongoing faith formation for adults beyond sacramental preparation. A key aspect of formation is the need to deepen our understanding of the Mass. The Adult Faith Formation group will investigate ways to address this, in addition to organising parish retreats and pilgrimages, coordinating Lent and Advent courses, and promoting the small prayer communities in our parish. The AFF group will meet for 1.5 hours each month either via Zoom or by face to face meeting in the Parish Centre. If you are interested in planning adult faith formation in our parish, please email the parish office on stalbins@rcdow.org.uk heading the email 'AFF'.

Loreto College (St Albans) Admissions Criteria 2023/24 -

PARISH SCHOOLS

St. Alban & St. Stephen Catholic Primary School & Nursery The application process for Reception & Nursery admissions in 2022-23 is still open. Full details on how to apply can be found on our website www.ssas.herts.sch.uk.

Loreto College, St Albans Consultation The Governors of Loreto College recently agreed to propose some changes to the admissions criteria for 2023/24 – the full details are available on the school website on the Secondary Transfer [page](#). The school would welcome any written comments that you may wish to make. These should be sent to Mrs S Williams at the address above (or via email to swilliams@loreto.herts.sch.uk) by the closing date of the formal consultation, 9am on 31 January 2022. The school will not be able to acknowledge or respond individually to comments, however, they will be taken into account when the Full Governing Body meet at the end of the period of consultation, the 2023/24 Admissions Criteria will be determined by 28 February.

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Peace Sunday 16 January Next Sunday, is Peace Sunday and this year Pope Francis asks us to think about 'Education, work and dialogue between generations: tools for building lasting peace'. The need for peace in the world is obvious. People are struggling against violence and conflict, growing inequalities, the effects of climate change and the covid pandemic. How can we harness the gifts and energy of all generations in the work of peace making? Which 'tools for building lasting peace' do you think Pope Francis might be talking about? In this country we have an active Catholic peace movement in Pax Christi, which does a great deal of good work to promote peace and nonviolence through parishes, schools and social media. Their website suggests many ways we can all become better peacemakers. There are activities for families to do at home, including a [peace liturgy for young children](#). Pax Christi needs our support to keep going. If you'd like to make a donation, small or large, here is the [link](#). If you'd like your personal donation to be counted towards your parish contribution, please give your parish name and town in the 'Additional Information – Order Notes' box on the checkout page. Cheques made payable to 'Pax Christi' can be sent to Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY.

London Jesuit Centre Courses for 2022 Welcome to your regular update from the London Jesuit Centre, with some of the highlights of our Term 2 programme, which may be of interest to your parishioners. The information is also available in poster form and can be downloaded via this [link](#). The courses and events highlighted include:

- Luke: A Very Jewish Gospel (Saturday 22 January)
- Science & Theology (begins Tuesday 11 January)
- Five Medieval Islamic Thinkers (begins Tuesday 11 January)
- School of Ignatian Prayer (begins Thursday 13 January)
- Moral Theology: where are we, and how did we get here? (begins Tuesday 11 January)

Christian Bookshop The 'Way Inn' bookshop in Berkhamsted is keeping the presence of a specialist independent Christian shop in our High Street. We are pleased to welcome old friends & new at our shop behind the Post Office, where we offer gifts & a wide range of cards for every occasion including Baptism, Holy Communion & Confirmation. We are also happy to order in items for you.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Parish Centre Please email the parish office with booking requests or queries and visit the [Parish Centre Hire](#) page of our website for more details of facilities available.

Gift Aid If you have previously gift aided your standing order or envelope donations but no longer pay tax or are now unable to gift aid your contributions, please contact the parish office so that we can amend our records.

Donating to our Parish Please consider making your offertory contribution by standing order and gift aiding your donations, if you do not already do so. Please see our [website](#) or click [here](#) for a standing order, gift aid form and our bank details. Thank you for your generosity.

Virgin Media Giving VMG, the online donation platform used by the diocese, closed at the end of November. The diocese will be setting up new online giving tools but the best way to support the parish is by standing order. A standing order form can be downloaded [here](#).

Mass Intentions The best way to book mass intentions at the moment is to do so by phoning the parish office between 9am and 1pm any weekday. Donations can be made by posting an envelope through the presbytery door or by making a payment via bank transfer. Our bank account details can be accessed [here](#). Please note that we are currently booking intentions for masses from April 2022 and that intentions may have to be moved with little notice, if a funeral needs to take place on that date. The suggested diocesan donation is currently £10 per mass.

Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Team (JPIC) As we enter the New Year, so often a time for resolutions, let us recall the Pope's plea that we might learn to dream together so as to help create a more unified world.

Right to Life As we begin this new year, we pray for all who may be considering an abortion. We pray that 2022 would see a decrease in cases of abortion, and instead a year of increased support, both practical and emotional, from all of us in society, bettering the care for all expectant mothers. Lord hear us.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 8 January VIGIL THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
6pm Mass Thomas McGovern (Ann)

Sunday 9 January THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD
8am Mass John Burke (RIP)
9am Mass People of the Parish
(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)
9.30am Mass Anna Yeadon (Ints)
11.30am Mass Jane Grandesso (RIP)
6pm Mass Margaret Brian (Ann)
Reading 1, Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11, Responsorial Psalm 104
Reading 2, Titus 2:11-14, 3:4-7, Gospel Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Monday 10 January - feria
10am Funeral Mass for John 'Jack' O'Mahony
7pm Mass Thomas Doyle (Ann)
Reading 1, 1 Samuel 1:1-8
Responsorial Psalm, 116, Gospel, Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday 11 January - feria
10am Mass Joan Edwards (Ann)
Reading 1, 1 Samuel 1:9-20
Responsorial Psalm, 1 Samuel 2, Gospel, Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday 12 January - feria
10am Mass Harry Vasey (Ann)
7pm Mass Carol Cahill (Ann)
Reading 1, 1 Samuel 3:1-10, 19-20
Responsorial Psalm, 40, Gospel, Mark 1:29-39

Thursday 13 January - feria
10am Funeral Mass for Michael Fennessey
Reading 1, 1 Samuel 4:1-11
Responsorial Psalm 44, Gospel Mark 1:40-45

Friday 14 January - feria*
7pm Mass Maria Luiza de Souza (RIP)
Reading 1, 1 Samuel 8:4-7, 10-22
Responsorial Psalm, 89, Gospel, Mark 2:1-12
* *On Fridays Mass is celebrated at St Albans Cathedral at 12 Noon*

Saturday 15 January - Memoria of Blessed Virgin Mary
There is no morning mass this morning owing to the confirmation masses being celebrated today. A priest will be available for Confessions at the earlier time of 10.00am.

Saturday 15 January VIGIL 2ND SUNDAY IN ORD TIME
6pm Mass Deceased members of the Connely family

Sunday 16 January 2ND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
8am Mass Mary Curran (RIP)
9am Mass Ken and Mary Neal (Ann)
(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)
9.30am Mass Conway and Mary Lee Berners-Lee (Ann)
11.30am Mass Marcelline Clarke (RIP)
6pm Mass People of the Parish
Reading 1, Isaiah 62:1-5, Responsorial Psalm 96
Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Gospel John 2:1-11

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches Together in St Albans we pray for all those participating in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

For those suffering with Coronavirus and for all the Sick including

The names of those we have been asked to pray for are not included in the web version of the parish bulletin for reasons of data protection.

For those who have died recently, including Michael Fennessey, Adhemar Funes, Ursula Graddon, Julie Hadnutt, Ruth O'Gorman, Jack O'Mahony, Edward 'Ted' Pearce.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Conway and Mary Lee Berners-Lee, Margaret Brian, Carol Cahill, Cynthia Chrimes, Thomas Doyle, Joan Edwards, Fr Tom Hewitt MCS, Thomas McGovern, Ken and Mary Neal, Harry Vasey.

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.

Welcoming all new parishioners!

Please see the [page](#) on our website with useful information for those who are new to our parish. An online **New Parishioner Registration Form** can be found on the webpage. Please complete this form if you have not already registered as a new parishioner so that we can add you to our parish records and welcome you to our parish community. Thank you to all those who have registered as new parishioners since the start of the pandemic. As soon as we are able, we look forward to being able to have an event to welcome you and your families properly into our parish community.