



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT - 6 MARCH 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)
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We are a Fairtrade parish

UKRAINE The invasion of Ukraine continues and the suffering of the Ukrainian people is immense and heart breaking. At the end of our masses this weekend we will distribute a leaflet indicating how you can help and donate. We will also take up a retiring collection. If you are not able to donate this weekend but wish to, please put your donation in an envelope marked 'Ukraine' and put it through the presbytery door.

Lent - time to become more aware of our brothers and sisters living in poverty and hunger

We started Lent last Wednesday. It was encouraging to see so many people at the two masses at which the ashes were distributed. There are continued opportunities during Lent to allow God to be a bigger part of our lives through prayer, word and action.

This coming week we have several activities centred on supporting the work of CAFOD, the catholic charity which supports those in need in Africa, Asia and the Americas, as well as campaigning for global justice. Friday 11 March is Family Fast Day when the catholic church in England and Wales encourages us to eat simply and to give what we save to support those struggling to feed themselves and their children. Of course you do not need to restrict your acts of fasting to just this one day and may want to try fasting each Friday and/or Wednesday throughout Lent. Your small act of love will make a big difference to those affected by extreme hunger and malnutrition. You can donate what you save to next weekend's retiring collection Church for CAFOD or by visit the CAFOD website (cafod.org.uk/lent)

At midday on Saturday 12 March here at St Alban & St Stephen there will be a soup and bread lunch in the main hall of Sacred Heart Centre Hall. This will be followed by a showing of the film, The Star, at 1pm. There is no charge for either food or film but you are asked to make a donation to CAFOD.

Of course food poverty is not confined to distant places. It is here too in St Albans despite it being one of the wealthiest parts of England. We have placed a box in the lobby area of the church where you can make donations to the local foodbank run by the Salvation Army. Please only put packaged groceries with a reasonable shelf life into this box. These will be taken to the foodbank during the week.

Report on the Westminster Diocesan Pre-Synodal Assembly (February 2022)

Around 200 delegates (parish, school representatives and clergy) attended the recent assembly in Westminster Cathedral. It was encouraging to learn that school and parish submissions had been read and collated by a steering group of 20, comprising lay women and men, as well as clergy. Across the diocese, there were an estimated 20000 participants from the school community and 7000 returns from 100 parishes.

Extracts from this synthesis were shared, accompanied by quotes from the documentation received. It was reassuring to hear what was shared here at St Alban and St Stephen being reflected in the feedback received from other parishes. Anecdotally, at least, most delegates felt the same, however, it was stressed that the purpose was not to reach a consensus, simply to listen. Having received the feedback on what was shared from across the diocese, those attending the Assembly joined together in small groups to consider what the Holy Spirit is saying to us as parishes/communities and to the Church in our diocese. A plenary session involved feedback from the groups and summations from both the facilitator and Cardinal Vincent.

Following this assembly, the diocese will complete and submit its synthesis to the Bishops Conference of England and Wales. In accordance with the original vision of Pope Francis, each parish/community is encouraged and invited to continue the listening phase, prioritizing actions to implement the best use of its available gifts and talents. The analogy given was a good one: The Church was likened to a large loving family, with Jesus at its centre, all listening in a non-judgemental manner. Inevitably there will be both agreement and disagreement, but all within the context of a community, a family, where each hopes and wills the best of and for the other.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Stations of the Cross 12 March On 12 March at 9.30am, the Stations of the Cross will be led by the Adult Faith Formation Group; everyone is welcome to attend. This will be followed by Mass and exposition. You can also view the Stations [online](#) and the text will be available to help you reflect upon this prayerful journey through our Lord's passion and death.

Easter Garden We will be commemorating our deceased loved ones in a special way in our Easter Garden again this year. We will write their names on bamboo flower shapes and plant 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 deceased family or friends 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.

RCIA Catechists We need to build up a small group of committed adult volunteer catechists for our RCIA program to be able to successfully run our 'Journey in Faith' program. Please contact me, Deacon Steve, for an initial discussion on 01727 863925 or on stephenpickard@gmail.com. It is a ministry of love and joy that will build upon your own faith experiences. You do not need a degree or diploma, just an open heart. So please contact me and I will outline how we propose to start this 'journey' together.

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) and to sanitise their hands on entering and leaving the building. Those wishing to receive Holy Communion on the tongue should come up towards the end of Holy Communion.

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is to be held on Saturday 16 April at 11.30am. Please email andrewbowden@rcdow.org.uk with any enquiries.

First Holy Communion Emails have been sent to parents and guardians asking for choices of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion Mass dates in July. If you have not submitted your choices online, please can you do so as soon as possible. If you have not received these emails, please contact the parish office.

Post Confirmation Celebration Those young people who recently celebrated their Confirmation have been invited to join Fr Michael and the catechists for a pizza evening on Friday 18 March 7.30-9.00pm. An email has been sent to all parents and guardians about this event. If you have not yet replied to this email, please could you do so by 11 March.

Marriage Preparation If you are intending to get married, please note the Diocese requires at least six months' notice with couples expected to complete a preparation course. 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.

Diocesan Faith Sharing Resource for Lent This resource is offered to encourage and enable the continuation of "spiritual conversations" begun during the parish listening phase of the Diocesan Synodal process. It can be used in many different ways by groups at home or at church. 'Encountering the Spirit' is now available as a [download](#).

PARISH NEWS

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.

Knit and Natter The knit and natter group will meet on Tuesdays 8 March and 22 March from 2.30-4 pm. We are in the process of knitting vests for babies in Africa, squares for blankets and hats and scarves for the homeless. Everyone welcome and please note new time..

BINGO - On Friday 11 March, by the Knights of St. Columba, in the Parish Hall in aid of The Catholic Children's Society. Admission is 50p and includes refreshments. Everyone is most welcome.

Lent CAFOD Fast Day Everyone is welcome to join us for a homemade soup and bread lunch at noon on Saturday 12 March in the Church Hall. This will be followed around 1pm by the film *The Star (U)* - a cartoon version of the Christmas Story with an unusual twist. It is a FREE event with the opportunity to make a donation to CAFOD on the day. This event has been organised by the Parish Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation Group. If you are able, you are invited to fast on Friday 11 March in solidarity with the poor of the world and donate any money saved to CAFOD in the retiring collection to be taken the weekend of 12/13 March.

St Patrick's Day Tea Party Parish Friends are holding a tea party to celebrate St. Patrick's Day in the Parish Hall on Sunday 13 March from 3-5pm. All parishioners are welcome. We are delighted that Peter and Damien Fahy will be providing the music. If you are able make a cake, offer help on the day, have a Parish DBS and can offer a lift or require a lift please contact Helen 07860 830340 or helen.bassill@ntlworld.com. Please note we will not be holding a raffle.

Men's Breakfast 19 March The parish men's group are continuing our breakfast gatherings to learn more about the creed. We will meet in the parish centre on Saturday 19 March from 8.15 for coffee, croissants and banter. At about 9am we will watch a video on the Nicene Creed, looking at some of the parts which refer to Jesus. This is 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. If you would like more details please text 07976 252309 or email d4dstalbans@gmail.com

Batchwood Prayer Group Request If you have a copy of either Fr Richard Nesbitt's Holy Week Voices from the Holy Land and/or Henri Nouwen's The Good Samaritan would you mind either selling them or lending them to the Batchwood prayer group? If so, please contact Mary on 07976 277 059.

The Spiritans Mission Appeal 2022 Thank you for your generous support for the Spiritans in the retiring collections held last weekend. The total amount donated to the Spiritans by the parish will be included in next week's newsletter.

CAFOD - Family Fast Day Lenten Appeal This Family Fast Day, on Friday 11 March, we remember that there are many people who need our love and support all around the world. Children experiencing malnutrition like Amie's daughter Lombeh did in Sierra Leone or as we are seeing now in Ukraine, families affected by conflict. Your small act of love can make big things happen. Donations to CAFOD this Lent will reach families around the world, enabling local experts to provide support to families in times of need or conflict. You can donate in church using a CAFOD envelope or by visiting the CAFOD [website](#).

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony Westminster Cathedral, Saturday 14 May 2022 at 3pm. The Cardinal is inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese, who are celebrating their 5th 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th (and every year over 60) Wedding Anniversary of Catholic Marriage in 2022. If you are celebrating an anniversary, please phone or email the parish office with the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address, phone number and email.

Churches Together Lent Series of Talks (Marshalswick Baptist Free Church 7pm) Hope in a Time of Change 6 March: Hope through Change - Rev Iain Lane, 13 March: Hope through Discipline- Fr Corniel Quak, 20 March: Hope through Tears-Rev G D Watt, 27 March: Hope through Vision- Fr Richard Watson and Rabbi Zagoria Moffet, 3 April: Hope through Christ- Fr Michael O'Boy

Diocese of Westminster Network meeting for all who welcome and support asylum seekers, migrants and refugees Thursday 10 March 2022, 2pm-3:30pm - online. Join a community of support, hosted by Caritas Westminster. Join a community of support, hosted by Caritas Westminster, to share ideas and skills to help your parish and school become even more of a place of welcome and inclusion for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. At this session we will be hearing from Megan from Schools of Sanctuary, Anjali from Newman Catholic College, as well as Ines from the Notre Dame Refugee Centre and Ed from ESOL provider, Twin. Please sign up on this [website](#).

CAFOD's Walk Against Hunger Lent challenge There are 200 million children in the world whose lives are at risk from malnutrition. This Lent, challenge yourself to walk 200km, and help give hunger its marching orders. Do 5k a day, your way, for 40 days, get sponsored and you'll conquer your 200km target in time for Easter - and help people around the world to live free from hunger. Click [here](#) to find out more.

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Hiring the 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 is currently 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 or emailing 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 June 2022 and that intentions may have to be moved with little notice to accommodate funerals. The suggested diocesan donation is currently £10 per mass.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Group (JPIC)
We pray for our Slavic sisters and brothers this day, as we stand together with them in their suffering, fear and grief.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 5 March VIGIL 1ST SUNDAY OF LENT
6pm Mass Terence Till (RIP)

Sunday 6 March 1ST SUNDAY OF LENT

8am Mass Norah Doran (Ann)

9am Mass People of the Parish

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

9.30am Mass Stan and Teresa McDonald (Ann)

11.30am Ciro, Giuseppa, Isadora and Mario Realmuto (RIP)

6pm Mass Noreen Carolan (Ann)

Reading 1, Deuteronomy 26:4-10, Responsorial Psalm, 91

Reading 2, Romans 10:8-13, Gospel, Luke 4:1-13

Monday 7 March - Lent feria

10am Mass Maria Luiza de Souza (RIP)

7pm Mass Deceased members of the Moore family

Reading 1, Leviticus 19:1-2,11-18

Responsorial Psalm, 19, Gospel, Matthew 25:31-46

Tuesday 8 March - Lent feria

10am Mass George Brennan (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 55:10-11

Responsorial Psalm, 34, Gospel, Matthew 6:7-15

Wednesday 9 March - Lent feria

10am Funeral Mass for Michele Citrano

7pm Mass Jean Yves Theanne (Ann)

Reading 1, Jonah 3:1-10, Responsorial Psalm, 51,

Gospel, Luke 11:29-32

Thursday 10 March - Lent feria

10am Mass Funeral Mass for James Morrissey

Reading 1, Esther 4:17

Responsorial Psalm 138, Gospel Matthew 7:7-12

Friday 11 March - Lent feria

7pm Mass Ann Purcell (RIP)

Reading 1, Ezekiel 18:21-28

Responsorial Psalm, 130, Gospel, Matthew 5:20-26

(On Friday Mass is celebrated at St Albans Cathedral at 12 Noon)

Saturday 12 March - Lent feria

9.30am Way of the Cross led by Adult Faith Formation

Group

10am Mass Taylor family (Ints)

10.30-11.30am Exposition with opportunity for Confession

Reading 1, Deuteronomy 26:16-19

Responsorial Psalm, 119, Gospel, Matthew 5:43-48

Saturday 12 March VIGIL 2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

6pm Mass Noel Halton (RIP)

Sunday 13 March 2ND SUNDAY OF LENT

8am Mass Ellen Small (RIP)

9am Mass Milly Yarwood (Ann)

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

9.30am Mass Ellen Mary Small (RIP)

11.30am Mass Albert Joseph Castelino (RIP)

6pm Mass People of the Parish

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches Together in St Albans we pray for Churches Together in Marshalswick.

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 John Baker, Michele Citrano, Ian Fincham, Anne (Nancy) Hudson, James Morrissey.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Noreen Carolan, Wesley Cleary, Norah Doran, Stan and Teresa McDonald, Mary McHugh, Fr Sandy Murray, Jean Yves Theanne, Milly Yarwood.

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.