



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT - 3 APRIL 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

Lent, an opportunity to come closer to the Word of God

Fr Michael writes ... I have spent much of the last week and more holed up in my room having tested Covid positive. My symptoms were mild but I slept a lot. Lent is often cast as a time of withdrawal, a time where we go into the desert just as Christ did, not to get away from people, but to draw closer to God. Indeed, in the Scripture the desert is a place people go to encounter God. Few friendships, few relationships, will survive or grow where there is no 'encounter', no communication. Friendship with no exchange or conversation, no speaking or listening will be harder than it need be. But just as there can be hard times in our human relationships, there can be hard times in our relationship with God, where the communication isn't what it could be.

We speak to God in prayer and our praying, like our everyday speech, takes on different shapes and patterns for different times and occasions; sometimes our speaking is relaxed, unprepared and spontaneous, at other times, on more formal occasions, we may prepare what we say or use well established formulas. But communication is a two-way street. If we speak to God in prayer, where does God speak to us? Yes, we may from time to time, have a clear sense of what God is saying to us in our prayer or through others, but if we want to hear God, if we want to listen to him, our first point of reference as individuals and as a community is the Scripture, his Word, the Bible.

Verbum Domini, the Second Vatican Council's document *Word of God*, stressed the importance of knowing the Bible better. There are lots of books and courses to help us understand, to help us listen more carefully. Some good names to look out for include Scott Hahn, Jeff Cavins and Mauro Iannicelli. Another method of listening to and praying with the bible is called *Lectio Divina*. This way of praying the Scripture involves reading a short bible passage several times over, taking the opportunity to reflect on it, pray on it, and place ourselves in the scene.

Masks Conscious that the level of Covid infection in St Albans is relatively high we continue to ask parishioners to sanitise their hands as they enter and leave church and, if not medically exempt, to wear face masks.

Music in Holy Week If you would like to play or sing for the liturgies at 3pm Good Friday or 8pm Holy Saturday please contact Brendan Roche at bkroche@me.com There will be a rehearsals in church on Good Friday at 12 Noon and on Holy Saturday at 11am.

Gift Aid If you are a UK tax payer and have previously signed a gift aid declaration, but no longer pay tax, please contact the parish office and let us know. If you have stopped paying tax, we can no longer claim gift (25p in every pound). If you do not pay tax and gift aid is claimed on what you give, then HMRC may seek reimbursement.

Offertory Promise Envelopes The new Offertory Promise Envelopes have now arrived. If you responded to the letter we sent out before Christmas or to the newsletter announcements confirming that you wanted to continue using Offertory Promise Envelopes, then these are now available and can be collected from the presbytery. We cannot leave them out on open display for people to collect as the labelling includes people's personal data. You can always ask one of the priests after Mass on Sunday.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Group (JPIC) Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, touch my heart to be a builder of dialogue and peace, beginning with those whom I must forgive and ask for their forgiveness. Send, Lord, your spirit to the hearts of all who make war, so that they may be moved to question and understand that violence does not solve problems but causes greater suffering. Lord Jesus, grant me your serene peace, and then Lord, help me to transmit it to my family, relatives and enemies. Amen. (Pope JP II; edited)

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Stations of the Cross 2 and 9 April The final journey that Christ made in Faith and for Love for us will be commemorated in the Stations of the Cross on 2 April. Led by our Justice and Peace group, on 9 April at 9.30am you are invited to meditate on Christ's journey to the cross, following themes of justice, poverty, mercy, friendship and hope. Everyone is welcome to attend. Stations will be followed by Mass and exposition. You can also view the Stations online but accessing the link on the homepage of our [website](#) and the text will be available to help you reflect upon this prayerful journey through our Lord's passion and death.

Penitential Service 6 April 7pm At this special time, as we remember how Jesus died to redeem us from our sins, you are invited to participate in our Penitential Service on Wednesday 6th April at 7pm. Following prayers, reflection and an examination of conscience there will be an opportunity for individual confession and the celebration of God's forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation; priests will be available around the church. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed and the penitential service will draw to a close with Benediction at 8.20pm.

Holy Week and Easter Cards These cards now available in the church porch give the times of services for Holy Week and Easter. Let us respond to the Cardinal's encouragement to reach out to those who no longer attend Mass by taking a few and delivering them to neighbours and family. Many of you in our recent Synod process also stressed the need to reach out to those who no longer attend church - this is one way we can do just that!

Holy Week Posters These are now available in the Porch. Please take one to put in a window and help spread the meaning of Holy Week.

Mass Attendance 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.

Marshalswick Mass Volunteer Rota The new rota is now available for volunteers to download from the parish website. It can be found under 'groups' then 'liturgy group'.

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 - Reconciliation A new date is being arranged for those children who were unable to attend their First Reconciliation service last weekend. Parents and guardians will receive an email with the new date shortly.

First Holy Communion Masses - July 2022 Parents and Guardians have received an email giving details of the date on which their child will celebrate First Holy Communion.

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.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Ukraine Appeal If you would like to make a donation, it is not too late. Please post an envelope through the presbytery door marked 'Ukraine Appeal'. An amazing £3,500 has so far been donated by parishioners.

Food Bank If you would like to support the foodbank currently being run by the Salvation Army here in St Albans donations of non-perishable food items (cans and dried goods) can be left in the cardboard box in the porch.

Churches Together Lent Series of Talks (Marshalswick Baptist Free Church 7pm) Hope in a Time of Change 3 April: Hope through Christ - Fr Michael O'Boy.

Refreshments after Mass - Monday 4 April Please join us for coffee or tea after mass on Monday morning.

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 A wide range of fairly-traded goods will be available after all Masses this weekend and after Mass at Marshalswick Mass Centre on 10 April. The sales help producers and their communities in the developing world gain access to better education, food, housing and health. All the profits made by the parish are donated to CAFOD. To place an order - Maureen 765549, grabecki@hotmail.com.

Catholic Women's League The CWL will be meeting in the Parish Centre on Tuesday 5 April after the 10am Mass. Gill and Barry Goodman will be giving an interesting and lively talk on 'Unusual English Customs'. (£2 entrance towards speaker's fee). Parishioners and friends very welcome.

St Albans Market Stall Wed 6 April: Help needed We will be inviting people to share our Easter celebrations by distributing Easter cards at the market on Wed 6 April. Volunteers are needed to attend for a half hour on the day. To volunteer please call Mary on 07976 277059.

Mercy Associates We will be holding our next meeting on Wednesday 6 April from 5 until 7pm in room 1 of the Parish centre. Sr. Maura will be with us.

BINGO On Friday 8 April, by the Knights of St. Columba, at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall, in aid of Help Ukraine. Admission is 50p and includes refreshments. All welcome.

Knit and Natter There will be no knit and natter meeting next week. The next meetings will be on 12 and 26 April 2.30-4 pm. We meet in Room 1 of the Sacred Heart Centre and new members are always very welcome.

Parent and Toddler Group St Alban and St Stephen would love to restart our very successful parent and toddler group; however we need more volunteers who are willing to help on Monday mornings to serve the drinks and biscuits. We operate from 10am until mid-day and all volunteers must be willing to apply for DBS checks. Mary Harber, our safeguarding lead, is very helpful and the procedure isn't difficult. If you are interested either phone the presbytery or contact Sheila on 01727 853100 or 07957 281248.

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Refugees Check the C TSA [web page](#) for details on how you can help refugees. This page marshals information from the key agencies. In particular check out about Noke Bikes: there are 120 refugees living at the Noke Hotel, Chiswell Green. They can't afford bus fares but would love to ride bikes. We are sourcing 10 second hand bikes, hi-vis jackets, helmets and locks with keys. Can you support us by maintaining the bikes or teaching safe cycling? Or do you have spare bikes or equipment that we could use? Please contact Teresa Clarke by [email](#) or on 01727 855026.

St Columba's College Prep School Open Morning - Thursday 28 April St Columba's College and Preparatory School is an independent Catholic day school for pupils aged 4 - 18 in St Albans. Last year, we welcomed our first girls into Lower Prep (Reception, Year 1, and Year 2) and the Sixth Form, and this September we will also welcome girls into Years 3 and 4 in Upper Prep, and Year 7 in the Senior School.

Prospective families are warmly invited to St Columba's Prep School Open Morning on Thursday 28 April from 9:15-11:30am. Families can register for this event by contacting us by [email](#) or going to the 'Visit Us' page on our website, clicking on 'Prep School Open Morning' and completing the online registration form.

Churches Together in Marshalswick Food Collection for Vineyard Church Bridge Project Please support us. We will be outside Budgens 9.30-11.30am Saturday 9 April.

Heinrich Schutz St Matthew's Passion sung by The Fairfax Consort at St Saviour's Parish Church Palm Sunday 5pm on 10 April, with a retiring collection for refugees in St Albans.

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 before the end of the current tax year.

Planned Giving Envelopes Planned Giving Envelopes for the year commencing 10 April 2022 are now available from the parish office for those parishioners who have advised us that they wish to continue using them to make their Offering. Please collect your envelopes from the parish office between 9am and 1pm any weekday. If you are not able to collect between these times, please call the parish office on 01727 853585 to make other arrangements.

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.

Mass Intentions The best way to book mass intentions is to do so by emailing the parish office or phoning 9am - 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 July 2022 and that intentions may have to be moved with little notice to accommodate funerals. The suggested diocesan donation is currently £10 per mass.

Welcoming all new parishioners!

Please see the [page](#) on our website with useful information for those who are new to our parish. Please complete our online **New Parishioner Registration 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.

Rosary Prayer Let us remember to pray the rosary for peace during this time of conflict. Even one decade of the rosary prayed from the heart will be heard by Our Lady Queen of peace. Pray as you can.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 2 April - VIGIL 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

6pm Mass Elaine Gatta (RIP)

Sunday 3 April - 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT

8am Mass Patrick Geraghty (RIP)

9am Mass Bridie Barry (Ints)

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

9.30am Mass Eleanor Dean (Ints)

11.30am Mass People of the Parish

6pm Mass Sheila Whyte (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 43:16-21, Responsorial Psalm, 126

Reading 2, Philippians 3:8-14,

Gospel, John 8:1-11

Monday 4 April - Lent feria

10am Mass Bridget Kearney (Ints)

7pm Mass Eric Harber (RIP)

Reading 1, Daniel 13:1-9, 15-17,19-30,33-62

Responsorial Psalm, 23, Gospel, John 8:12-20

Tuesday 5 April - Lent feria

10am Sr Mary Dominic (Ints)

Reading 1, Numbers 21:4-9

Responsorial Psalm, 102, Gospel, John 8:21-30

Wednesday 6 April - Lent feria

10am Fr Francis Antwi- Darkwah (Ints)

7pm Penitential Service for Lent

Reading 1, Daniel 3:14-20,91-92,95

Responsorial Psalm, Daniel 3, Gospel, John 8:31-42

Thursday 7 April - Lent feria

10am Mass Funeral Mass for Francesco Ciaccio

Reading 1, Genesis 17:3-9

Responsorial Psalm 105, Gospel, John 5:51-59

Friday 8 April - Lent feria

12pm Funeral Mass for Edward Sumner

7pm Mass Carmel Scahill (RIP)

Reading 1, Jeremiah 20:10-13

Responsorial Psalm, 18, Gospel, John 10:31-42

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

Saturday 9 April - Lent feria

9.30am Stations of the Cross - Justice and Peace

10am Mass Tom Bagge (RIP)

10.30-11.30am Exposition with opportunity for Confession

Reading 1, Ezekiel 37:21-28

Responsorial Psalm, Jeremiah 31,

Gospel, John 11:45-56

Saturday 9 April - VIGIL of PALM SUNDAY

6pm Mass Holy Souls

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Sunday 10 April - PALM SUNDAY

8am Mass Janette Dedi (Ints)

9am Mass Anthony Barry (RIP)

(St John Fisher School, Marshalswick, begins in playground)

9.30am Mass Michael Finucane (Ann) *

11.30am Mass Patrick Mannion (RIP) *

6pm Mass People of the Parish

* Begins in car park

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches Together in St Albans we pray for everyone involved with Churches Together in Britain and Ireland.

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 Francesco Ciaccio, Elaine Murphy, Edward Sumner and P J Renehan.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Michael Finucane, Patricia Markham, Kate Moran and Joe Moran.

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.