



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - 22 January 2023



Contactless Giving

Parish Priest: Fr Michael O'Boy - Assistant Priest: Fr Andrew Bowden

Deacons: Rev. Brendan Day and Rev. Steve Pickard (*Retired*)

Parish Administrator: Mrs Angela Gray - Catechetical Coordinator: Mrs Joan Egenes

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

Fr Michael writes...

Last weekend saw the beginning of our First Communion and Confirmation Programmes for 2023. This week we will offer our marriage preparation course for those planning to get married in the coming months and next weekend we will have this month's Baptism preparation course. So, the Parish Office and Parish Centre have been hives of activity and another year gets under way. It's easy at busy times like this to feel that life and its demands are running you, rather than your getting to live it. So, what to do?

I am conscious that Easter is fairly early this year, not the earliest it can be, but early. Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent falls on 22nd February. Just a month away. Mindful that people's diaries can get booked up quite a way in advance, I want to highlight one date for the diary. On **Saturday 4th March** there will be a **Parish Day of Reflection** at the Niland Centre in Bushey, open to everyone 18+. This will be an opportunity to stop and reflect on Lent and our journey to Holy Week and Easter. With Covid there have been relatively few opportunities like this, but spaces are limited. So, if you want to do something positive about Lent, if you want to 'live' Lent rather than its happening to you, why not block out the day and sign up for our Day of Recollection? We will be asking people to make their own way to the Niland Centre (there is ample parking) and to bring a packed lunch. I do not want cost to be an obstacle so we will be asking people for donations rather than making a specific charge.

Pope announces Ecumenical Prayer Vigil for Synod Addressing the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square for the Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis looked ahead to the traditional Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, which takes place each year from 18 to 25 January. This year's theme, he noted, is taken from the prophet Isaiah: "Do good, seek justice" (1:17). In light of this, Pope Francis asked that we each give thanks to the Lord "who faithfully and patiently guides His people towards full communion, and let us ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten and sustain us with His gifts". Pope Francis went on to note that the path to Christian unity and the Church's Synodal conversion are linked. For this reason, he announced an Ecumenical Prayer Vigil, set to take place in St Peter's Square on Saturday 30 September. At the Vigil, he explained, "we will entrust to God the work of the 16th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops". The Pope added that for the young people who will come to the Vigil there will be a special programme throughout that weekend, organised by the Taizé Community. "As of now", the Pope concluded, "I invite brothers and sisters of all Christian denominations to participate in this gathering of the People of God".

Retiring Collection Next Sunday there will a retiring collection in support of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children whose aim is to protect unborn babies and women from abortion. Every new life is a wonderful gift from God and tragically, the threats facing the unborn in our country are great. Since 1967 over ten million unborn children have lost their lives through abortion. SPUC is currently raising awareness of abortion coercion where women are pressurised into having abortion and is asking people to appeal to the Prime Minister by supporting its post-card campaign (please see the postcards in the church porch). SPUC is also protesting against the criminalisation of prayer vigils held outside of abortion clinics. If you would like to support its work financially there will be an opportunity to do so next weekend.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Prayer In this annual week of prayer for Christian unity with its theme of belonging and praying for unity amidst injustice, we pray that we may challenge prejudice, discrimination and hatred wherever it is found and act justly before all.

Holocaust Memorial Day - 27 January God, our loving Father, give your eternal peace to those who died & , in your mercy, give comfort & strength to their families. Lord, in your gentleness, hear our prayer.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation courses will be held on Saturday 28 January 2023 at 11.30am. Please see our [website](#) or [email](#) Fr Andrew at andrewbowden@rcdow.org.uk with any enquiries.

Marriage Preparation If you are intending to get married, please note the Diocese requires at least six months' notice. Couples are expected to complete a marriage preparation course. If you hope to marry in 2023 please [email](#) Fr Michael at 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 being added to the bulletin.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Call for Welcomers, Ministers of the Eucharist and Ministers of the Word If you would like more information please contact the Parish Office on stalbins@rcdow.org.uk.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Food Bank 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.

Clothing collection for Migrants Many thanks to all who helped in any way with last week's clothing collection for migrants who are being housed locally. We received nearly everything which we had been asked to supply and delivered 50 bags. The local charity StAR (St Albans for Refugees) were very surprised at the speed with which the parish had addressed this need and have said: 'Wow! What you have done in such a short period is truly wonderful. Please let your parishioners know how grateful we at StAR are for the kindness they have shown for the people in the ... Hotel'. The sorting team were grateful that donors had largely supplied only what was on the lists as that is all that we could deliver. Pictures can be seen on the parish website. StAR say that they would welcome volunteers NB: to assist with sorting which they do on a Thursday afternoon; they can be contacted at volunteering@stalbinsforrefugees.org.

Heart to Heart Newsletter The latest newsletter from the MSC Lay Associates of St Albans is now available in the porch and [online](#). This includes news of some of the former MSC priests from St Alban & St Stephen. They continue their mission to make God's love known wherever and whenever it is needed most. If you want to learn more about the Spirituality of the Heart and the Chevalier family check out our online resources on www.hearttoheartstalbins.org.

OUR PARISH SCHOOLS

Primary, Secondary and Nursery School Certificates of Catholic Practice For those parents and guardians who need to obtain a certificate of Catholic Practice to accompany their child's application for a school or nursery place, Fr Michael will be at the presbytery on Friday 3 February 7.30-9.00pm. Children need not attend and no appointment needed.

PARISH GROUPS AND EVENTS

Faith and Family Group The 'Faith & Family group' meets in the parish hall on the first Tuesday of each month at 10.45am. Activities for under 5s. All welcome.

Coffee and Tea After Mass Coffee and tea is available in the Parish Centre coffee bar after 11.30am Mass on the first Sunday of the month and after 6pm Saturday evening Mass. Coffee and tea is also available in the Parish Centre coffee bar after 10am Mass each Monday. All welcome.

Toddlers' Playgroup - Monday 10.30am - midday For pre-school age children and their carers, termtime only. Join us in the hall for toys, books, games, singing, drinks & snacks. To help, please contact David Markham on 07543 400650.

Men's Breakfast Saturday 28 January We are continuing the Men's Breakfasts this winter on Saturday 28 January by looking at some of the most influential Catholic saints in the 20th century. The first one that we are considering is Father Maximilian Kolbe who volunteered to die the place of another prisoner in Auschwitz in WW2. We will meet in the Parish Centre from 8.15 for coffee, croissants and conversation, followed by a video on St Maximilian and discussion on the themes emerging. Please email d4dstalbins@gmail.com for more details.

Knit and Natter Group The knit and natter group will be meeting from 2.15- 4pm on 31 January and 14 and 28 February. Everyone welcome. For more details please contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340. The knit and natter group are currently making bright orange baby hats for new born babies who require special attention, vests for babies in Africa and also blankets of varying sizes. Four of our blankets are going to babies of refugees in St Albans.

Parish Friends meeting We will be meeting on Thursday 9 February at 7.45 in Room 1 of the Parish Centre. New members would be very welcome. Please come along and find out what we do and maybe suggest some new activities for our more senior parishioners to enjoy. For further information contact Helen at helen.bassill@ntlworld.com or phone 07860 830340.

Bingo Evening 10 February Many, many thanks for the support to our recent Bingo evening. £200-00 was raised for The Catholic Children's Society. Our next Bingo evening will be on Friday 10 February at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall.

Lourdes 2023 The next Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes will run from 21 - 28 July 2023. If you are interested in making the pilgrimage as part of a parish group (no commitment at this stage), please contact the parish office.

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Week of prayer for Christian Unity is 18 - 25 January There will be a special Service of Prayer for Christian Unity at 4pm on Sunday 22 January at the United Reformed Church Homewood Road. We are delighted to have as our preacher The Very Reverend Jo Kelly-Moore, Dean of St Albans. Please come, pray and support this event, so close to Jesus's heart as he prayed, "May they be one" John 17:20. <https://ctstalbens.org.uk/>

JUMBLE SALE - Saturday, 21 January 2023 - 10am - St Bart's Parish Centre, Vesta Avenue, St Albans - proceeds to St Bart's HCPT Group 2023 Pilgrimage to Lourdes - donations welcome [no electrical or large items, thank you] - please leave in the parish centre entrance hall on Friday, 20 January 2023. Queries to Barbara Bliss 01717 873672.

Vespers for the Pope Emeritus, Tuesday 24 January Next Tuesday at 5pm there will a service of Vespers in the Cathedral to honour the life of the late Pope Emeritus Benedict, and to pray for the repose of his soul. Many of the Bishops of England and Wales will be attending, as well as ecumenical guests. Lord Williams of Oystermouth, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, will give an address. All are welcome to attend.

The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London There will be a Divine Mercy Retreat on Saturday 28 January 2023 from 2 pm - 4:30 pm at St Georges Cathedral, Cathedral House, Westminster Bridge Road London SE1 7HY. The Retreat will include teachings on the Message of Mercy, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. All Welcome. Please call Millie on 07957 594646 for more information.

Charity Concert at Westminster Cathedral Catenians, their families and friends are very significant supporters of Friends of the Holy Land and our mission to preserve a Christian Community in the Land where Our Lord was born, ministered, died and was resurrected. With an increasing need among families in the Holy Land, FHL are holding our largest fundraising event to date, a Charity Concert featuring the London Welsh Male Voice Choir and the 'Three Priests,' at Westminster Cathedral on Thursday 16 February at 7.30pm - 10.00pm. Tickets, from just £20, can be bought through Eventbrite, *search LWMVC Concert at Westminster Cathedral*, go to <http://bit.ly/3i0ath2> or call the FHL office 01926 512980.

Annual Mass for Matrimony The annual Mass for Matrimony will be celebrated in the Cathedral by the Cardinal on Saturday 13 May at 2.30pm for couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries.

New Year's resolution - Volunteering for CAFOD We are looking people join us in our mission here in the Westminster diocese. Could you help us raise awareness in either parishes or schools about our work across the developing world tackling poverty and injustice. Find out more by joining one of our volunteer meetings in Lambeth London on Saturday 21 January or Oakwood, North London on Wed 1 February. Please contact Tony for further details. westminster@cafod.org.uk or 0208 449 6970

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.

Mass Intentions The best way to book mass intentions is to email 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 2023 and that intentions may have to be moved with little notice to accommodate funerals. The suggested diocesan donation is currently £10 per mass.

Gift Aid If you are a UK taxpayer 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. If you have signed a gift aid form, your offertory donations need to come from a bank account in your name only or a joint bank account on which you are also named.

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.

Contactless Donations If you register as a gift aiding donor on one of our two contactless devices, please ensure you add both your first and surname, in full, and your full address, including road name, so that your gift aid declaration meets the standards for gift aid reclaim required by HMRC.

Planned Giving Envelopes We are now looking to order offertory promise envelopes for the tax year 2023/24, beginning in April 2023. To ensure that we only order envelopes for those parishioners who still wish to use them, please could you contact the parish office by emailing stalbens@rcdow.org.uk or by phoning 01727 853585 (9am to 1pm, weekdays) to confirm that you still wish to use weekly planned giving envelopes.

**MASS INTENTIONS
& READINGS**

Saturday 21 January - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass Paddy Hough (RIP)

Sunday 22 January - THIRD SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME

8am Mass People of the Parish

9am Mass Tom Timmins (RIP) (*St John Fisher School, M'wick*)

9.30am Mass Zbigniew Frosztega (Ann)

11.30am Mass Holy Souls

6pm Mass Peggy Rankin (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 8:23-9:3, Psalm 26(27)

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 1:10-13,17, Gospel, Matthew 4:12-23

Monday 23 January - Feria

10am Mass Chris (Cronin) Murphy (RIP)

7pm Mass Gretta McGovern (RIP)

Reading 1, Hebrews 9:15,24-28

Psalm 97(98), Gospel, Mark 3:22-30

Tuesday 24 January - St Francis de Sales

10am Funeral Mass for June Corry

Reading 1, Hebrews 10:1-10

Psalm 39(40), Gospel, Mark 3:31-35

**Wednesday 25 January- THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL
THE APOSTLE**

10am Mass Sadie Godfrey (RIP)

7pm Mass Kath and Patrick Moran (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 22:3-16

Psalm 116(117), Gospel, Mark 16:15-18

Thursday 26 January - Ss Timothy and Titus

10am Mass Richard Richardson (RIP)

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 1:1-8

Psalm 95(96), Gospel, Mark 4:21-25

Friday 27 January - Feria

7pm Mass Sheila O'Sullivan and family (Ints)

Reading 1, Hebrews 10:32-39

Psalm 36(37), Gospel, Mark 4:26-34

(*On Fridays Mass is celebrated at St Albans Cathedral at Noon*)

Saturday 28 January - St Thomas Aquinas

10am Mass Larry Hughes (RIP)

10.30 - 11.30am Exposition with opportunity for Confession

Reading 1, Hebrews 11:1-2,8-19,

Psalm Luke 1:69-75, Gospel, Mark 4:35-41

Saturday 28 January - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass Frank Clegg (RIP)

Sunday 29 January - FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME

8am Mass Susanna Mole (RIP)

9am Mass Stan Phillips (Ann) (*St John Fisher School, M'wick*)

9.30am Mass Thomas McGovern (Ann)

11.30am Mass Rita Anderson (RIP)

6pm Mass People of the Parish

Reading 1, Zephaniah 2:3,3:12-13, Psalm 145(146)

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31, Gospel, Matthew 5:1-12

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches Together in St Albans this week we participate in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

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 Maria Breg, Lavina Brown, June Corry, Gretta McGovern, Chris (Cronin) Murphy, Sarah Louise Smith, Anthony Spellman, Czeslawa Tuczynska and Stephen Walsh.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Zbigniew Frosztega, Roy McGoohan, Stan Phillips, Peggy Rankin and Daphne Snaith.

May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace

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.

Little Lights - Children's Liturgy - 9.30am Mass (Sun)

If you can help with the Children's Liturgy please get in touch with Marta via yeadonmarta@gmail.com.

Please click [here](#) for this week's 'Liturgy of the Word' for Children leaflet and the latest worksheet from the Diocese of Westminster.

Mass in Cantonese

This will be held once a month at Our Lady of Lourdes in Sawston, Cambridge, CB22 3HJ The next mass will be celebrated on Saturday 10 December at 2pm, with refreshments afterwards. All are warmly invited. Please email cantonmassea@gmail.com for details or see the flyer at the back of the church.