



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 5 February 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 / stalbenssg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059

Fr Michael writes ...

'Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked... Then will your light shine like the dawn'. This Sunday's first reading challenges us to pay attention to the need we see around us. It is in this way, as the Gospel calls us, that we are to be salt for the earth and light for the world. But even where we manage to do this 'good' work it's tempting to do it conditionally, attaching spoken or unspoken conditions to our giving. When God created the world, he rested, he didn't wait for Adam and Eve to thank him. When the prodigal son returned to his Father, the Father didn't set out a list of pre-conditions before getting the party under way. When the woman with a haemorrhage went to Christ and touched the hem of his garment, Jesus could do nothing but heal her. There were, in all these situations, no ifs, no buts, preconditions or maybes... quite simply there was a generous and inevitable response which left the receivers of that generosity with a greater freedom, including, in Adam's case, the freedom to reject the giver of the gift. So, the person you gave money to in the street may spend it on everything but food, and the family you would like to help may have a different set of priorities to yours. This is not to say that we should give of our time, energy or resources foolishly or blindly, but it is to say that where our automatic reaction is not to get involved, or where our good works do not leave others free, then it could be time to think again.

Parish Day of Reflection A small number of people have expressed an interest in the Parish Retreat Day planned for 4 March at the Niland Centre, but not enough at this stage to make a retreat day viable. Mindful that late cancellations may incur a significant cost, I have decided to postpone the retreat day to later in the year. In doing so I am also conscious that, on the same day, we are due to celebrate First Confessions for this year's First Communion children and that the confirmation candidates are attending 'FLAME', a national gathering of young people.

Pope prays for Holy Land as 'death spiral' widens in Jerusalem Pope Francis is appealing for calm and swift solutions in the Holy Land amid a 'death spiral' of violence between Palestinians and Israelis over the past week. 'The death spiral that is increasing by the day only closes the few glimmers of trust that exist between the two peoples'. Pope Francis expressed his sorrow for the recent flare up in violence in the Holy Land. 'Since the beginning of the year, dozens of Palestinians have been killed in firefights with the Israeli army', he said. The Pope recalled the death of 10 Palestinians, including a woman, during an 'Israeli military anti-terrorist raid in Palestine.' He also lamented the deaths of 7 Israeli Jews who were killed, and 3 others who were injured, by a Palestinian as they leaving a synagogue on Friday. 'I appeal to the two Governments and the international community to find other paths – immediately and without delay – which include dialogue and the sincere search for peace'. Pope Francis urged everyone to pray for peace in the Holy Land.

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.

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) by 1pm on Monday 6 February to confirm that you still wish to use weekly planned giving envelopes.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Prayer Dear Lord, please help fair trade to flourish in order to benefit the poorest of our world.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation courses will be held on Saturday 25 February 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.

Children's Liturgy - 9.30am Mass on Sundays Little lights will be on a half term break on Sunday 12 and 19 February-back on 26 February.

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.

Warm clothing needed There is a new urgent need for winter clothing for boys. Please see the list at the back of church and by using this link. Please donate warm clothing that is clean and suitable, as for your own family, and tick the list on the table when you have left something in the box. Thank you for your help.

Not to be missed! A number of additional opportunities for deepening our faith are planned for our parish in the early part of 2023 so make a note of these in your diary. More information will follow in due course and all are welcome:

- Sharing the Light: Church, 7pm Thursday 2 March
- Parish Day of Reflection: Niland Centre, Bushey, Saturday 4 March (See below for more details)
- Lent Talks: Parish Hall 7.45pm with refreshments from 7.30pm:
 - o Pope St John Paul II's Apostolic Letter 'Salvifici Doloris - On the Christian Understanding of Human Suffering': Thursday 16 March
 - o The Cross: Thursday 23 March
- Ignatian Prayer Course: Parish Hall 7.30pm: Thursdays, 20 and 27 April; 11, 18 and 25 May.

Cafod Big Lent Walk Maureen & Stan Grabecki will walk 200km during Lent this year to raise awareness of poverty and the climate crisis. Any money raised will go to CAFOD who are offering people in the developing world the skills and tools they have asked for to fight the climate crisis. If you would like to donate, please give [here](#). If you are unable

to donate online, please drop an envelope marked "Cafod Big Lent Walk" with your donation into the presbytery.

CAFOD Lent family fast day Friday 3 March Everyone is invited to fast and pray in solidarity with the poor of the world. By eating a simple meal and donating any money saved to CAFOD you can help farmers cope with the effects of climate change. There will be a collection over the weekend of 4/5 March after all Masses. You can also donate at cafod.org.uk/give or by using the QR code on the posters and CAFOD gift-aid collection envelopes in the church. Please consider using the gift-aid envelopes if you are a UK taxpayer - CAFOD will receive 25% more for your donation.

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.

Mothers' Prayers We will meet on Monday 13 February at 8pm in room 2. Anyone wishing to pray for children is welcome. Information: office@mothersprayers.org

Knit and Natter Group The knit and natter group will be meeting from 2.15- 4pm on 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.

Traidcraft Goods will be available after all Masses at the church over the weekend of 4/5 February, and at John Fisher Mass centre on 12 February. Sadly, Traidcraft plc has gone into administration and consequently obtaining stock may be a problem. We still have a good range of items on sale and hope to source some popular items elsewhere for the time being. Fairtrade is a wonderful way of helping poorer farmers and producers earn a decent income. Please try and buy fair traded items whenever you can, in supermarket for instance.

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 10 February by the Knights of St. Columba At 8.00pm in the Parish Hall in aid of "The Friends of the Holy Land". Admission is 50p and includes refreshments. Everyone is most welcome.

Soup and film lunch in support of CAFOD Lenten fast day Saturday 18 February Lunch at noon, Hidden Figures [PG] at 1pm in the Church hall - the story of African-American female mathematicians in the 1960s space programme. All welcome. Free and donations to CAFOD taken on the day. Please come and support our annual Lenten appeal. Please park in Loreto car park as there is a wedding at the Church. Organised by the parish Justice & Peace group.

CELEBRATE : Parenting for Faith - A new online course starting for those with Babies and Toddlers Thursday 23 Feb for 5 weeks at 8pm for approximately 45 minutes. It's on zoom so no need for babysitters! It's never too early to teach our children about prayer. This bitesize course will inspire and equip parents, grandparents and carers of those with babies and toddlers through a short video, testimonies and small group chats. If you are expecting a baby, just had one, or are at the toddler group stage then sign up and bring some friends. If you are a Catechist who runs the parish baptism programme, the children's liturgy, or if you run a toddler group at church let everyone know as this will help families to grow in faith. To register follow [this link](#). There is a £5 fee to cover admin costs and then the opportunity to make a further optional donation during the course.

OUR WIDER COMMUNITY

Bikes & equipment Do you have adult men's bikes in good condition and helmets, bike locks or lights that can be given to local asylum seekers? Thanks. Teresa Clarke 01727 855026

Mentoring skills needed Emmaus is looking for people who can offer mentoring & skills to their companions rebuilding their lives after being homeless. It will not be onerous but will be deeply rewarding. To find out more, go to emmaus.org.uk/hertfordshire/support-us/volunteer.

Taizé Service Do you enjoy Taizé-style worship? You are very welcome to join us at St Mary's Church Marshalswick (Sherwood Avenue, opposite the Quadrant: ample parking) for our monthly short Taizé services, lasting about 30 minutes. Our next one is on Wednesday, February 15 at 7.30pm. We'd love to see you!

FCJ Young Adult Network Evening at the FCJ Spirituality Centre, Somers Town, London A monthly series for young adults aged 18-35 7 - 8.30pm 16 February - Renewal: What's the point of Lent. For more information email [here](#).

Friends in Tune There will be a concert at Dagnall Street Baptist Church on Saturday 18 February at 7.30 pm with a retiring collection for Christian Aid.

Dagnall Street Baptist Church Lent 2023 Lent Course Starting on Shrove Tuesday running on Tuesdays at either 2.30pm or 7.30pm. Any of your congregation who would like to join us would be very welcome. See poster in porch.

'Faces of the Cross' - A Retreat & Quiet Day 10.00am - 4.00pm Saturday 18 February at St. Stephen's Church, St. Albans. To Book: Tel 01727 854211 (Cost £5)

Veritas Catholic Lecture series, Roman Catholic Parish of Hemel West (St Mary & St Joseph Church HP1 1NR) We will be hosting the Catholic Theology lecture series starting in February. The lecture is free to attend but we would appreciate a pot of food to share and a donation for the lecturers. All lectures are held at the parish hall at St Mary & St Joseph, Saturdays 10am - 3pm including lunch. For more details, please visit the Hemel West Parish [website](#). The first four lectures are:

- 18 February Early Church History, lecturer Fr Peter Dwyer
- 22 April Later Church History, lecturer Fr Peter Dwyer
- 29 April New Testament, Fr John Deehan (Kentish Town)
- 20 May Old Testament, lecturer, Fr John Hemer (Mill Hill)

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.

**MASS INTENTIONS
& READINGS**

Saturday 4 February - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass Tony Hayward (RIP)

Sunday 5 February - FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

8am Mass John Feeney (RIP)

9am Mass Sheila Aylward (Ann) (*John Fisher School, M'wick*)

9.30am Mass People of the Parish

11.30am Mass Evelio Azcona (Ann)

6pm Mass Holy Souls

Reading 1, Isaiah 58:7-10, Psalm 111(112)

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Gospel, Matthew 5:13-16

Monday 6 February - St Paul Miki and Companions

10am Mass Mary Corbett (RIP)

7pm Mass Catherine Mico (Ints)

Reading 1, Galatians 2: 19-20

Psalm 125(126), Gospel, Matthew 28:16-20

Tuesday 7 February - feria

10am Mass Theresa (Terry) Rivers (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 1:20-2:4

Psalm 8, Gospel, Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday 8 February - feria

10am Mass Holy Souls

7pm Mass John Green (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 2:4-9,15-17

Psalm 103(104), Gospel, Mark 7:14-23

Thursday 9 February - feria

10am Mass Rita Anderson (RIP)

Reading 1, Genesis 2:18-25

Psalm 127(128), Gospel, Mark 7:24-30

Friday 10 February - St Scholastica

10am Funeral Mass for Gretta McGovern

1pm Funeral Mass for Gioconda Brando

7pm Mass Father Henry Twohig MSC (RIP)

Reading 1, Song of Songs 8:6-7

Psalm 148, Gospel, Luke 10:38-42

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

Saturday 11 February - Our Lady of Lourdes

10am Mass Priest's Intention

10.30 - 11.30am Exposition with opportunity for Confession

Reading 1, Reading 1, Genesis 3:9-24

Psalm 89(90), Gospel, Mark 8:1-10

Saturday 11 February - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass John and Emilia Collins (Ints)

Sunday 12 February - SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

8am Mass People of the parish

9am Mass Ainsley Lambert (Ann) (*John Fisher School, M'wick*)

9.30am Mass Diego Denaro (RIP)

11.30am Mass Kathleen Quinn (Ann)

6pm Mass James Smith (Ann)

Reading 1, Ecclesiasticus 15:16-21, Psalm 118(119)

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 2:6-10, Gospel, Matthew 5:17-37

PLEASE PRAY

Together with Churches Together in St Albans this week we remember in the minister and members of St Julian's Church.

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 Gioconda Brando, Maria Breg, Mary Corbett, Norman Dunn, Gretta McGovern, Chris (Cronan) Murphy, Anthony Spelman and Stephen Walsh.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Sheila Aylward, Evelio Azcona, Fr Pat Courtney MSC, Harold Elliot, Antonio Gramegna, Jessie Harris, Ainsley Lambert, Lily Nicholson, Kathleen Quinn, James Smith, David Webb and Rory Webb.

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 25 February at 2pm, with refreshments afterwards. All are warmly invited. Please email cantonmasea@gmail.com for details or see the flyer at the back of the church.