



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN
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 YouTube: <https://youtube.com/c/SsAlbanandStephenCatholicChurch>
28 April 2024 - FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER



Contactless Giving

Parish Priest: Fr Michael O'Boy - Assistant Priest: Fr John Casey
 Deacon: Rev. Brendan Day
 Parish Administrator: Mrs Angela Gray - Catechetical Coordinator: Mrs Joan Egenes
 Safeguarding Lead: Mary Harber / stalbensg3@safeguardrcdow.org.uk / 07976 277059
We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr John writes...

Spring has sprung! Finally, everything in the garden is starting to grow. On Tuesday last week I experienced four seasons in one day whilst climbing three Munros in Scotland with my younger brother. Walking on the pathways, many with slippery rocks, I noticed many signs of new life. I could see how the bare twigs were just beginning to sprout little leaves, miniature flowers poking their heads out, the heather starting to change colour, the streams of water meandering down the hillsides, the leaves on the trees changing from brown to green. All of this new life was refreshing to see. A joy to behold.

The exhilaration of reaching the top of each Munro, with the wonderful panoramic views of beautiful scenery, reminded me of the changing seasons, and also gave me a moment, to reflect on the changes in my life during the past year.

Jesus in today's Gospel compares Himself to a Vine, and compared His followers – that's all of us – to branches connected to the Vine. The garden is a place of reflection for me and throughout life, as a keen gardener I have pruned and shaped many plants, whilst also being conscious that God was doing the same to me. Jesus wants us to know that we are branches who never stand alone. The importance of each of those new plants on the Glenshee hills are so integral in making up that rich tapestry of scenery, which so delighted us as we climbed. Jesus, himself is our gardener who continuously nourishes our spirit, he wants us to share in His life. If we remain faithful to Him, our life will prosper and bear much fruit.

Apart from Jesus, we can truly do nothing at all. No fruit, no ministry, no sharing, no giving, no kindness, no love. Without Jesus? Nothing. With Jesus? Sharing His life? Then, we can bear fruit, for Him.

Priests Training Fund Thank you for your generosity to the Priest Training Fund collection last weekend. It is not too late to make a donation if you wish. Envelopes are available in the back of the church, or by contacting the parish office. Please continue to pray for vocations to the priesthood. Follow this [link](#) for more information, or to make a donation.

Understanding the Mass 'One of the most basic truths about the Mass is that it is an encounter with Jesus Christ. Christianity is not a philosophy or a set of ideas, but rather a relationship with the person of Christ. In the Mass, in a privileged way, we meet Him, listen to Him, respond to Him, commune with Him' (Bishop Robert Barron). Join us in the Parish Hall as we walk through the Liturgy of the Mass with Bishop Barron on three Thursday evenings - 9, 16 and 23 May. Soup and a roll will be served at 7.30pm, followed at 7.45pm by showing the DVDs and discussion, and aiming to finish before 9pm. Everyone is welcome. Not to be missed!

A Year of Encounter With a UK general election due sometime this year, politicians will be looking for our votes. We have a responsibility as Catholics to make sure that parties commit to tackling issues such as poverty and injustice. Raising our voices and contacting parliamentary candidates as a parish community will send a strong signal to those standing for election in our local constituencies. A Year of Encounter is a joint initiative between CAFOD and St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP), equipping Catholics to ask key questions of local candidates at the key moments. Please see www.cafod.org.uk/encounter for more information, including online sessions on 25 April and 4 May to learn more.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Group Prayer We pray for all Medical Personnel, at home and abroad, that they find the compassion, strength and love to carry out their ministry to all in their care.

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.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Enquiry A group for those who wish to explore the Catholic faith further with the possibility of being baptised/received into the church or, for those of you who are already baptised Catholic, with a view to being confirmed. Please [email](#) or speak with Fr John.

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 11 May at 11.30am. To register or to arrange a date for baptism please collect a form from Fr Michael or Fr John after any of the weekend masses.

Monthly Youth Mass, first Sunday of the month at 6pm Calling all young people year 7 to year 12 who would like to participate in any capacity (musicians, singers, readers, collecting, welcoming, offertory) at the monthly youth mass. Please email stalbanscc@rcdow.org.uk with your name and parents' email address to contact going forward.

Monthly 9.30am Family Mass on the last Sunday of the month. There is no Children's Liturgy on the last Sunday of each month. Instead, the children are invited to sit on the carpet at the front of the church while the Mass itself is geared towards their participation. There is a short social afterwards and we need volunteers to help. If you can help please speak with Deacon Brendan.

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. Please [email](#) Fr Michael for details.

Prayers for the Sick If you would like to include someone in the prayers for the sick, please contact the [parish office](#). Permission from the person being prayed for, or their next of kin, must be obtained before being added to the bulletin. Those added to the sick list will be included for eight weeks and then will be removed, unless the request to have their name included is renewed.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Migrants' toiletries collection We need donations of toiletries, shampoos, deodorants and sanitary [towels](#) for local migrants. Please leave in the box in the Church porch labelled 'For Migrants'.

St Albans Food Bank Donations of non-perishable food items (cans and dried goods) can be left in the box in the porch. All donations are very welcome, but there is a particular need for long life milk, long life juice and tinned fruit at the moment. More details of the St Albans Food bank can be found using this [link](#). There will also be a food collection box at Marshalswick Mass Centre the first Sunday of the month.

OUR PARISH GROUPS AND EVENTS

Parish Groups and Events Please see our the ['Parish News'](#) webpage for details of parish groups and events.

Coffee and Tea After Mass Coffee and tea are available in the Parish Centre coffee bar after 9.30am Sunday Mass during school term time, after 11.30am Mass on the first Sunday of the month and after 6pm Saturday evening Mass. Coffee and tea is also available after 10am Mass each Monday. All are welcome.

Faith and Family Group The 'Faith & Family group' meets in the parish hall on the first Tuesday of each month (not August) at 10.45am. Activities for under 5s. 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, contact David Markham on 07543 400650.

Bring and Buy sale for Mary's Meals St. Mark's church hall, Church Street, Colney Heath. Tuesday 30 April 2-4pm. Please bring all your unwanted items. Relax with a coffee and cake, and find yourself a bargain. To donate items in advance please contact David Markham 07543 400650

C.W.L. 2pm Thursday 2 May A talk from Father John "A Journey of Discovery" All welcome members, guests and visitors. Cost £3 to include refreshments.

Fairtrade Our monthly Fairtrade stall will be available after all Masses at the church over the weekend of 4/5 May and after Mass on 12 May at Marshalswick Mass centre. We continue to add new lines, so please take a moment to look at the range we have available. By supporting Fairtrade you can directly help farmers and their families across the world lead a better life.

The Parish Friends Knit and Natter Group We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on Tuesdays 7 and 21 May from 2.15 to 4pm. All are welcome to join us. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

Bingo Many thanks for the support to our recent Bingo evening. The amount raised, and donations, for The Catholic Children's Society, came to £150.00. Our next Bingo evening will be on Friday 10 May at 8pm in the Parish Hall.

Men's Breakfast Saturday 11 May The first Men's Breakfast after Easter will be on Saturday 11 May. The theme this year is how science supports our Christian faith, rather than undermines it. We will be watching a talk given by Professor Francis Collins, who led the Human Genome Project which led the decoding of DNA. Professor Collins began his path to becoming a Christian after talking to a hospital patient. We will meet in the Parish Centre from 8.15am for coffee, croissants and conversation, followed by the video on Francis Collins followed by an opportunity to conclude with a short discussion on the themes emerging. If

you would like more details please just turn up on the Saturday morning or email d4dstalbans@gmail.com.

Concert for Christian Aid 7.30pm Saturday 11 May Marshalswick Baptist Free Church, Sherwood Avenue, St Albans, An evening of diverse entertainment with a retiring collection for the work of Christian Aid.

Clarence Park walk & picnic - Saturday 18 May Everyone is invited to meet by the bandstand and join the friendly group walk from noon, 'Bring Your Own' picnic at 1pm and finish around 2pm. Leave picnic, chairs etc. with our group; walk as much or as little as you like or see if you can find Fr Tom's bench by the cricket field. Please check the [Parish News](#) page of the website on the evening of Friday 17 to see if the walk has been called off due to bad weather. All ages welcome and please supervise your own children. Suggested £5 per family donation to CAFOD on the day.

Guild of Our Lady of Ransom 7.30pm Friday 17 May St Patricks' Catholic Church, Soho Fr Patrick van der Vorst, a recently ordained priest of the Archdiocese of Westminster, former Director of Sotheby's Europe, and founder of the evangelistic initiative www.Christian.Art, will deliver our Marian Lecture on [How Beauty Draws us Closer to God](#). Fr. Patrick will explore how beauty elevates us to encounter the Divine, how the Church has historically sought to create art that facilitates this meeting, and how this can happen in our visually overstimulated world.

Christian Aid Week Market Saturday 18 May Churches Together in Marshalswick 10am -1.30pm St Mary's Church Sherwood Avenue - Refreshments, Lunch, Live Music, Book, Plants, Cakes, Children's Activities, Fairtrade Raffle.

Help Your Marriage Retrouvaille supports couples with difficulties in their marriage. The programme helps spouses re-awaken their love, trust and commitment. There is no group work or therapy. 14-16 June in Welwyn Garden City. Contact us on 07887 296983 or 07973 380443, retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com or www.retrouvaille.org.uk

The Alban Pilgrimage Saturday 22 June Please join the community at St Albans Abbey for this spectacular celebration of Britain's first saint! With 12ft puppets and pilgrims re-enacting Alban's life and martyrdom through the streets of St Albans, all are welcome to join us.

Walsingham Pilgrimage 21 September A coach will be going to the Shrine at Walsingham as part of the Diocesan Pilgrimage, picking up from Christ Church, Radlett and St Mary's, London Colney. Cardinal Vincent will be presiding at Mass at Noon. For further details please see the poster in the porch or email radlett@rcdow.org.uk

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Mass Intentions Mass intentions can be booked by phoning or visiting the parish office from 9am to 1pm any weekday. Outside of these times, please [email](#) the parish office to

request a mass intention. 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 masses can be booked up to a year in advance and the next masses available for booking are in October 2024** Intentions may have to be moved with little notice to accommodate funerals. The suggested diocesan donation, which contributes to the stipends of the priests of our parish, is £10 per mass.

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 hire charges and the range of facilities available.

Gift Aid If you are a UK taxpayer and have previously signed a gift aid declaration, but no longer pay UK 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 sufficient UK tax and gift aid is claimed on what you give, then HMRC may seek reimbursement from the parish. 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.

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, as we cannot claim gift aid on your giving (25p in every pound). If you do not pay tax and gift aid is claimed on what you give, HMRC may seek reimbursement. If you have signed a gift aid form, your offertory or building fund donations need to come from a bank account in your name only or a joint bank account on which you are also named. The 2023/24 tax year ended on 5 April 2024 and we will be submitting our gift aid claim for 2023/24 shortly. Please phone or email the parish office with any queries or to notify us of any changes in circumstance.

Offertory Promise Envelopes The new Offertory Promise Envelopes are now available for collection from the presbytery. We cannot leave them on open display because the labels include personal data. Please ask one of the priests after Mass on Sunday for your box of envelopes if you can't get to the parish office during the week.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 27 April - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass Roger Hagger (Ann)

Sunday 28 April - FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

8am Mass Annie Cawley and Mary Bergin (RIP)

9am Mass People of the parish

(John Fisher School Marshalswick)

9.30am Mass Martin and Bridget Cloherty (RIP)

11.30am Mass Patrick and Bridget Scully (Ann)

6pm Mass Isabel Ball (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 9:26-31, Psalm 21(22)

Reading 2, 1 John 3:18-24, Gospel, John 15:1-8

Monday 29 April - ST CATHERINE OF SIENA

10am Mass Sarah Aiguanfo (Ints)

7pm Mass Callum Gathard (Ann)

Reading 1, 1 John 1:5-2:2, Psalm 102(103)

Gospel, Matthew 11:25-30

Tuesday 30 April - Easter feria

10am Mass Tony Micallef (Ints)

Reading 1, Acts 14:19-28, Psalm 144(145)

Gospel, John 14:27-31

Wednesday 1 May - Easter feria

10am Mass Rev Stephen Pickard (RIP)

7pm Mass Alice Healy (Ann)

Reading 1, Acts 15:1-6, Psalm 121(122)

Gospel, John 15:1-8

Thursday 2 May - St Athanasius

10am Mass Sheila Taylor (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 15:7-21, Psalm 95(96)

Gospel, John 15:9-11

Friday 3 May - ST PHILIP AND ST JAMES

10am Mass Teresa Buckler (RIP)

7pm Mass Fr Marcellus (Ints)

Reading 1, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8, Psalm 18(19)

Gospel, John 14:6-14

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

Saturday 4 May - THE ENGLISH MARTYRS

10am Mass Leisha Dobson (Ints)

10.30am Confessions and Exposition

Reading 1, Acts 7:55-60, Psalm, 30(31)

Gospel, Matthew 10:17-20

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 4 May - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

6pm Mass Consecration of the Church in 1977

Sunday 5 May - SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

8am Mass Paul and Mary Watkins (Ints)

9am Mass People of the parish

(John Fisher School Marshalswick)

9.30am Mass Karen Brennan (Ann)

11.30am Mass Evelio Azcona (RIP)

6pm Mass Margaret Mann (RIP)

Reading 1, Acts 10:25-26,34-35, 44-48, Psalm 97(98)

Reading 2, 1 John 4:7-10, Gospel, John 15:9-17

PLEASE PRAY

With Churches Together in St Albans this week we pray for all we pray for all the members of St Albans United Reformed 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 all those who have died recently including Pat Brennan, Felicity French, David Grundy, Colin Macdonald and Seiglinde Wilson.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Karen Brennan, Fr Joe Colbert MSC, Callum Gathard, Roger Hagger, Tony Harding, Alice Healy, Ita and Jack Omahoney, Fr Michael O' Leary MSC and Patrick & Bridget Scully.

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

Forthcoming Funerals:

Pat Brennan - Funeral Mass 10am Wednesday 8 May

Felicity French - Funeral Mass 10am Thursday 16 May

Colin Macdonald - Funeral Service Noon Friday 17 May

Seiglinde Wilson - TBA

Mass in Cantonese Once a month at 2pm at Our Lady of Lourdes in Sawston, Cambridge, CB22 3HJ. Dates in 2024: 18 May, 15 June, 6 July, 11 August, 14 September, 13 October, 16 November, 21 December. All welcome. For more details, please see the flyer at the back of the church or email cantonmassea@gmail.com.

Family Resources Please join us at Little Lights (under sevens) and Children's Liturgy (seven and above) during 9.30am Mass on Sundays (term time only). If you can help with Little Lights please get in touch with Laura via laura.cox.london@gmail.com. Please click [here](#) for this week's 'Liturgy of the Word' for Children leaflet from the Diocese of Westminster. The [Wednesday Word](#) is another excellent resource that can be used by families to reflect on the issues and messages present in Sunday Liturgy each week. Cardinal Vincent Nichols recommends these materials saying they bring "remarkable graces to many."