



Church Website

## NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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2 February 2025 - THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD



Contactless Giving

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*We are a Fairtrade parish*

*Fr Michael writes...*

In the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple Simeon's hope is fulfilled, his wait is over, 'for my eyes have seen your salvation', he says, 'that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles'. At the same time the prophetess Anna who had spent much of her life in the Temple 'worshipping with fasting and prayer night and day' is rewarded for her fidelity.

If the gifts at the Epiphany were the Kings' gifts to an infant Christ, the gift we celebrate today is the gift of Christ, a gift that is given for all - for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to the people of Israel. Celebrating this gift, today's liturgy includes the lighting and blessing of candles, a foretaste if you like of the Paschal Candle we will light at Easter. They are a reminder to us that the Christ brought to the Temple by Mary and Joseph is the light.

Keeping those candles lit can be something of a task, we will cup or cradle them in our hands, shielding them from draughts, much as we might an infant child. Of course our mission is more than this. Our mission is to ensure that the light that is Christ is brought into the world, that all might know the fulfilment and thanksgiving of Simeon and Anna.

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**Pope's Social Communications Day message: 'Disarm communication' to foster hope and unity** On the World Day of Social Communications, Pope Francis released his annual Message, in which he calls for a transformation in the way we communicate. In a world "characterised by disinformation and polarisation, as a few centres of power control an unprecedented mass of data and information," it is ever more urgent, writes Pope Francis, to "disarm communication" and purify it of aggression. He notes that "Too often today, communication generates not hope, but fear and despair, prejudice and resentment, fanaticism, and even hatred." Lamenting the fact that communication often simplifies reality to provoke instinctive reactions, using words as weapons and spreading false or distorted information, he warns that such practices create division and prevent the possibility of building genuine hope.

"All conflicts start when individual faces melt away and disappear'. We must not surrender to this mindset." "I dream of a communication capable of making us fellow travellers," Pope Francis writes, describing an approach that walks alongside others, especially in moments of struggle. Such communication, he adds, should focus on beauty and hope, generating empathy and commitment even in seemingly desperate situations. In this Jubilee Year, in which we are all called to become pilgrims of hope, Pope Francis draws his message to a close by urging communicators to "spread hope, even when it is difficult."

"The Jubilee reminds us that those who are peacemakers 'will be called children of God'" he says, adding that "in this way it inspires hope, points us to the need for attentive, gentle, and reflective communication, capable of pointing out paths of dialogue." The full text of Pope Francis' Message for the 59th World Day of Social Communications is available [online](#).

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*Please note that weekday and weekend mass times have now changed as the result of the recent pairing of our parish with St Bartholomew's. Please visit our parish [website](#) for details of our new mass times.*

**Welcome to 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

**Sacrament of Baptism** The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 8 February at 11.30am. To register or to arrange a date for baptism please speak to Fr Michael or Fr John after any of the weekend masses.

**Monthly 10am Family Mass on the last Sunday of the month.** There is no Children's Liturgy on the last Sunday of each month. Instead, children are invited to sit on the carpet at the front of the church and the Mass itself is geared towards their participation. There is then a short social. If you can help please speak with Deacon Brendan.

**Monthly Youth Mass, third Sunday of the month at 6pm** Calling all musicians who would like to be involved in the monthly Youth Masses. We would like to build a band of regular singers and musicians. The commitment is playing at Sunday 6pm Mass most third Sundays of the month and attending an 8pm practice in the church the Thursday evening before. Please email [stalbanscc@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbanscc@rcdow.org.uk) if interested or if you would like more information.

**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](mailto:) 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 list. Names will be included for eight weeks, unless the request to have their name included is renewed.

**Sunday Sung Masses** From when the Mass schedule changes on the weekend 18/19 January, musicians who currently serve the 11.30 Mass will serve the 12 noon Mass on Sundays, with choir and organ on 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month, and cantor and organ on 2nd, 4th and, when applicable, 5th Sundays, as previously.

## OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

**AFF Group - Save the date** Our Lenten talk schedule is something you are not going to want to miss. Dr Pia Matthews will be speaking : 7.30pm to 9pm as follows:

Friday 7 March 2025 – Assisted Suicide

Friday 21 March 2025 – A Just War?

Friday 28 March 2025 – Conscience in a Modern World

Dr Pia Matthews is a senior lecturer at St Mary's University, Twickenham, and a lecturer at Allen Hall, our Diocesan Seminary, in Chelsea. She gained a BA/MA in Law from Cambridge University, a BTh (Theology) from St John's Seminary and Surrey University, and an MA in Bioethics from St Mary's. She currently teaches on the MA Bioethics and Medical Law programme, and on the FD Healthcare Practitioners Ethics, Theology and Care at St Mary's; and in

marriage and family life at Allen Hall. In 2015, she was appointed an expert to the XIV Ordinary General Assembly Synod of Bishops by Pope Francis.

**St Barts HCPT Group** Huge thanks to all those generous St Alban and St Stephen/St Bart's parishioners who helped/donated/supported our recent jumble sale - a brilliant £926.23 on the day was raised towards our 2025 pilgrimage, taking children and young people with additional needs to Lourdes next Easter. The next jumble sale will be in May.

**Migrants' toiletries collection** We currently need donations of toiletries, shampoos and baby wipes, adult toothbrushes, deodorants for women, bars of soap, baby shower gel and shampoo. Please only donate requested items.

**St Albans Food Bank** Donations should be non-perishable food and can be left in the box in the porch. There is a particular need for long life milk, long life juice and tinned fruit. More details of the St Albans Food bank can be found using this [link](#). There is also a food collection at Marshalswick Mass Centre (first Sunday of the month).

**Clothing Collection** Donations of warm men's clothing is needed for local migrants. Donations can be left in the Migrants' Collection box at the back of the church. Please only donate items which you would be happy to give to a family member or friend. Many thanks for all that you do to support the local migrant community.

## OUR PARISH GROUPS AND EVENTS

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

**Coffee and Tea After Mass** Coffee and tea are available in the Parish Centre coffee bar after 10am Sunday Mass during school term time, after 12 noon Mass on the first Sunday of the month and after 6pm Saturday evening Mass. Coffee and tea are also available after the 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, term time only. Join us in the hall for toys, books, games, singing, drinks & snacks. To help, contact David Markham on 07543 400650.

**Prayer Group on Wednesday evenings** A number of parishioners meet on Wednesday evenings via Zoom to reflect on the scripture readings for mass the following weekend and to say the evening prayers of the church. If you would like to join our friendly and informal group, please [email](#) the parish office or call Melanie (07900 051956)

**Men's Breakfast Saturday 1 February** The first Men's Breakfast for 2025 is on Saturday 1 February. We will gather in the Parish Centre from 8.15 for coffee, croissants and conversation, followed at 9am by a 30 minute video on the background to the Gospel of St Luke and the recent passages covered in the Sunday Gospels, and conclude with a short discussion on the themes emerging, finishing just before 10am. If you would like more details please email [d4dstalbins@gmail.com](mailto:d4dstalbins@gmail.com), message Richard on 07976 252309 or just turn up on the Saturday morning.

**Fair trade** Our parish fair trade stall will be available after all Masses at church over the weekend of 1/2 February and after Mass at Marshalswick Mass Centre on 9 February. This endeavour has been running in the parish for over 30 years and has offered a small lifeline to those suffering in the Developing World enabling many people to escape poverty though their own work. Please try to look at the stall and see if there is anything you could buy to support those so much less well-off than we are. All sales make a difference.

**C.W.L.** We meet on Thursday 6 February for 10am mass followed by coffee and refreshments and general discussion.

**Mothers' Prayers** We will meet in Room 2 on Monday 10 February at 8pm. Anyone wishing to pray for children is welcome. Information from; [office@mothersprayers.org](mailto:office@mothersprayers.org).

**The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group** We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 11 February 1.30-3.30pm. All are welcome. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

**BINGO Friday 14 February at 8pm in the Parish Centre** to help support World Youth Day in Rome. Admission is 50p and includes refreshments. Everyone is most welcome.

**Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation group** We meet on the third Thursday of each month. Our next meeting is at 7.30pm on 20 February in the Parish Centre. All welcome.

**The Chosen** 'The Chosen' is a historical drama series based on the lives of Jesus and those who knew him, set against the backdrop of Roman oppression in 1st century Israel. It draws on our knowledge of Jesus from the gospels and suggests what may have been some of the back stories of the characters around at that time. A deeply moving Christmas episode was shown in the parish in December. If there is sufficient interest in watching the drama and some discussion afterwards, the Adult Faith Formation Group proposes to show the first series of The Chosen on Thursday mornings after 10am mass, beginning on 27 February and finishing after 6 episodes on 3 April. Each session will last approx. 90 minutes, including tea and coffee. If you would like to join in, please give your name to the parish office by email [stalbins@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stalbins@rcdow.org.uk) or telephone 01727 853585 9am - 1pm Monday to Fridays.

**Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for Matrimony** On Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> May at 2.30pm the Cardinal will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving for couples celebrating their 5th, 10th,

25th, 30th, 40th, 50th, and 60th (and any year over 60) anniversary of Catholic marriage. If you would like to attend please inform the Parish Office by Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April and include husband and wife's names, wedding date, number of years married, postal address, email (or phone number, if no email).

**Nicholas Breakspear School Annual Careers Fair** Thursday 13 March, from 9am-3.15pm This event aims to expose our students to multiple professions from various industries. Our aim is to inform and inspire our students, and demonstrate how they could contribute and help 'Build a Better World' through their future career. If you are willing to participate, or would like some further information regarding the fair, please contact our Careers Lead, Shannon O'Toole at [otooles@nbs.herts.sch.uk](mailto:otooles@nbs.herts.sch.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 April 2025.** 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.

**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. 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.

**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.

## MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

### **Saturday 1 February - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY**

5pm Mass Paddy Neary (RIP)

### **Sunday 2 February - PRESENTATION OF THE LORD**

8am Mass Mary-Jo Heanue (RIP)

8.30am Mass Mary Quinn (RIP)

*(John Fisher School, Marshalswick)*

10.00am Mass Kathleen (Cathy) Purcell (RIP)

12 Noon Mass Andrew Sumner and family (Ints)

6pm Mass Ray Ingman (Ann)

Reading 1, Malachi 3:1-4, Psalm 23(24)

Reading 2, Hebrews 2:14-18, Gospel, Luke 2:22-40

### **Monday 3 February - Saints Laurence and Theodore**

10am Mass Willie and Ina Martin (Ints)

7pm Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (RIP)

Reading 1, Hebrews 11:32-40, Psalm 30(31)

Gospel, Mark 5:1-20

### **Tuesday 4 February - feria**

10am Mass Leila Keating (Ints)

Reading 1, Hebrews 12:1-4, Psalm 21(22)

Gospel, Mark 5:21-43

### **Wednesday 5 February - St Agatha**

*10am No Morning Mass*

7pm Mass Evelio Azcona (Ann)

Reading 1, Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15, Psalm 102(103)

Gospel, Mark 6:1-6

### **Thursday 6 February - St Paul Miki and Companions**

10am Mass Kathleen Fahy (RIP)

Reading 1, Hebrews 12:18-24, Psalm 47(48)

Gospel, Mark 6:7-13

### **Friday 7 February - feria**

*10am No morning Mass*

7pm Mass Stephen Duignan (RIP)

Reading 1, Hebrews 13:1-8, Psalm 26(27)

Gospel, Mark 6:14-29 *(On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon)*

### **Saturday 8 February - Blessed Virgin Mary on a Saturday**

10am Mass Philippa Doris (RIP) and Peter Doris (Ints)

*10.30am Confessions and Exposition*

Reading 1, Hebrews 13:15-17,20-21, Psalm 22(23)

Gospel, Mark 6:30-34

**Mass in Cantonese** Once a month at 2pm at Our Lady of Lourdes in Sawston, Cambridge, CB22 3HJ. All welcome. For more details, please see the porch flyer or email [cantonmassea@gmail.com](mailto:cantonmassea@gmail.com).

**Family Resources** Please join us at Little Lights (under sevens) and Children's Liturgy (seven and above) during 10am Mass on Sundays (term time only). If you can help with Little Lights please get in touch with Laura by emailing her on [laura.cox.london@gmail.com](mailto: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.

## MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

### **Saturday 8 February - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY**

5pm Mass Kathy Fahy (RIP)

### **Sunday 9 February - FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME**

8am Mass People of the parish

8.30am Mass Mario D'Andrea (Ann)

*(John Fisher School, Marshalswick)*

10.00am Mass Luigi Bragoli (RIP)

12 Noon Mass Mandy Swales (RIP)

6pm Mass Henry Green (RIP)

Reading 1, Isaiah 6:1-8, Psalm 137(138)

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11, Gospel, Luke 5:1-11

## PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Alban we pray for all members of St Julian's church.

For all the sick including Lorraine Ahern, Stephen Matthew Geraghty, Callum Roberts, Rita Walsh and Mary Watkins.

For all those who have died recently including Eric Darby, John Joseph Kilbane, Ena Phelan and Thomas Screene.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Evelio Azcona, James Casey, Fr Pat Courtney MSC, Mario D'Andrea, Harold Elliott, Jessie Harris, Ray Ingman, Sean Murphy, Stan Phillips, David Webb and Rory Webb.

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

**Pope Francis's Prayer Intention for February** Let us pray that the ecclesial community may welcome the desires and doubts of young people who feel called to serve Christ's mission in priestly and religious life.

**Diocese of Westminster Annual Report and Accounts 2023** A copy of the Diocesan annual report and accounts is available to view in the parish office. Copies can also be viewed [online](#).