



Church Website

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN

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2 March 2025 - EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



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

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We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr John writes ... Inaugurating this Holy Year Pope Francis opened the Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica in Rome. Since then other Holy Doors have opened across Rome and the world. In this diocese Cardinal Vincent has nominated six Jubilee churches, each with their own Holy Door: Westminster Cathedral in Central London, Corpus Christi in Covent Garden, St Mary and St Joseph, Poplar, The Shrine of Our Lady in Willesden, St Gregory the Great, South Ruislip and, closer to home, Our Lady, Queen of Apostles, Welwyn Garden City. We cannot all go on pilgrimage to Rome, but we can still walk through a Holy Door.

In walking through a 'Holy Door' the pilgrim declares their intention to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, receive the Eucharist, pray for the Pope, perform acts of mercy, and do penance. In other words, this Holy Year, this time of Jubilee, is an opportunity to experience the Mercy and Grace of God. It is also an opportunity to gain the favour, or indulgence, associated with doing these things which we can gain for ourselves or for someone who has died.

During the week the Parish Councils of St Alban & St Stephen and St Bartholomew's met together. It was an enjoyable largely social gathering, but we did use the opportunity to share experiences and impressions of how the pairing of our parishes is going. During our meeting Fr Michael expressed the hope that the parishioners of both parishes might mark this Holy Year by making a joint pilgrimage to the Jubilee Church at Welwyn and walking through its Holy Door. More on this in due course.

When launching this Holy Year, Pope Francis called us to be Pilgrims of Hope, journeying towards Hope. We journey towards hope because hope, in its fullest sense, is not something we can fully possess here and now. We travel towards hope, determined to see it embodied here and now, yet knowing that its full reality lies ahead. As pilgrims we live by the promise of heaven embodying the virtue of hope. As the catechism reminds us, 'the theological virtue of hope is the power by which we desire the Kingdom of Heaven as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises and relying not on our own strength, but on the grace of the Holy Spirit.'

In his book 'Doorways to Hope' <https://canterburypress.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9781786226099/doorways-to-hope> Christopher Chapman explores the nature of hope and offers ways of cultivating and practicing it. He offers a hope rooted in a God whose dynamic, creative breath is always bringing the new into being. This hope is incarnate and redemptive, forever coming along side us to renew what is broken. It is relational, drawing all into a life of giving and receiving. The door of hope is open and God steps through it with purpose and compassion. Here is a spirituality of hope that engages with what is real and brings about change. Doorways to Hope invites us to join in the flow of hope and step out in God into all that needs healing. This is a liberating, encouraging book for all who feel powerless in the face of the pain of the world or hemmed in by personal circumstance.

Writing recently Cardinal Vincent reminds us that 'the heart of the Jubilee Year is to bring this virtue of hope, rooted in faith, expressed in service, into wider circulation'. In other words that being a pilgrim of hope is not a doing better or trying harder to solve the problems of this world, rather it is a doing better and trying harder because our eyes are fixed on what lays ahead, and in the belief, expressed in the Jubilee Prayer, that the Holy Spirit, the grace of God in action, will 'spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth.'

So, let us walk through a Holy Door in this Holy Year. Let us celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, receive the Eucharist, pray for the Pope, perform works of mercy and do penance, and do all of this in hope, knowing that the Grace of God which heals and purifies, has the power to lift us up from the cares and attachments of this world, so as to live as saints with God in Heaven.

Ash Wednesday This Wednesday 5 March is Ash Wednesday. There will be Masses at 7am, 10am & 7pm at St Alban & St Stephen and at 9.30am, 12 Noon and 7pm at St Bartholomew's.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

Way of the Cross during Lent Every Saturday in Lent at 9.30am, the Way of the Cross will be followed in Church before 10am Mass. Each week will have a different emphasis. On 8 March we consider the Way of the Cross in Time of Conflict. You can participate in the Stations [online](#) where the text will be available to help you reflect on this journey through our Lord's passion and death. Please contact the parish office if you would like to help lead the Stations by reading out the prepared text from the lectern .

Easter Garden We will commemorate our deceased loved ones in a special way in our Easter Garden again this year by writing their names on butterfly shapes and planting them around the rose garden in front of the presbytery. These will be close to the three empty crosses, a symbol of the new life Christ won for us in his resurrection. If you would like to remember deceased family or friends in this way, please send their names into the office clearly marked 'Easter Garden' either by emailing the parish office at stalbins@rcdow.org.uk or by posting the details through the presbytery door.

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 8 March 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.

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.

Help needed setting up the altar Thanks to all those who have volunteered to help set up the Altar and tidy it up after Mass. However, there are still some Masses that are not covered. It is not an onerous task and there are guidelines and photos which make it clear what to do. If you think you could help ease this burden on our priests please talk to Fr Michael or Fr John or email the parish office.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

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).

Thank you from Centre 33 Many thanks to everyone who has donated items of warm clothing to Centre 33. We now have enough jackets, jumpers, gloves and hats to keep us going for some time so we will pause our collection for the

time being. Thank you again for your generosity. Melanie, on behalf of Centre 33's trustees.

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 5pm 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)

The Chosen The Adult Faith Formation Group will show the first series of 'The Chosen' in the Parish Centre on Thursday mornings after 10am mass, beginning on 27 February and finishing after 6 episodes on 3 April. Each session will last about an hour and a half, including refreshments and discussion. If you would like to join, please contact the parish office.

Fair trade Stall Open after all Masses at Church on 1/2 March and after Mass on 9 March at Marshalswick Mass Centre. Fair-trade Easter Eggs with a special Easter Activity Book are available, plus our usual selection of products. All proceeds are donated to CAFOD.

Men's Breakfast - Saturday 1 March just before the start of Lent. We will gather in the Parish Centre from 8.15am for coffee, croissants and conversation, followed at 9am by a 30 minute video on the Lent journey that we are about to begin, we will follow this with a short discussion on the themes emerging, finishing just before 10am.

C.W.L - 2pm Thursday 6 March 2pm A talk entitled " A Scandal in the Church" The story of Cornelia Connelly SHC]. All welcome. Cost £3 to cover tea and refreshments.

CTM Sunday 2 March 7pm at Marshalswick Baptist Free Church Priest-artist Revd Alan Stewart vicar at St Andrew's Church Hertford. Based on a picture Fr Alan has drawn 'Christ at the Last Supper' the service is entitled 'The Blind Jesus, Reflections for Lent on the hospitality of Christ'

AFF Group - Lenten talks 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, the speaker, is a senior lecturer at St Mary's University, Twickenham, and a lecturer at Allen Hall, our Diocesan Seminary, in Chelsea.

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

Nicholas Breakspear School Annual Careers Fair Thursday 13 March, from 9am-3.15pm If you are willing to participate, or would like further information regarding the fair, please [contact](#) our Careers Lead, Shannon O'Toole.

BINGO - Many thanks for the support and donations for our recent Bingo evening. The final total, raised for World Youth Day in Rome, came to £105.00. Our next Bingo evening will be on Friday evening 14 March.

St Patrick's Day Tea Party - Sunday 16 March Parish Friends are having a St Patrick's Tea Party on Sunday 16 March 3-5pm. Once again Peter and Damian Fahy will be entertaining us so we are guaranteed a great afternoon's entertainment. Everyone is welcome. Offers of homemade cakes and drivers to give lifts will be appreciated. Please note that the lift to the hall is not currently working. We will be asking for donations for CAFOD instead of having our usual raffle this time.

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 March in the Parish Centre. All welcome.

Justice & Peace Group Film and soup lunch - Saturday 22 March Lunch at noon, film at 1pm. This Lent, everyone is invited to have a simple bread and soup lunch and watch Cathy come home [PG] - a moving film about homelessness, unemployment and mother's rights. The event is FREE, but donations [cash or card] to the CAFOD fast day appeal will be taken on the day. - if you can help in any way, please let us know via the Parish Office.

Jubilee Pilgrimage to Walsingham for the Feast of the Annunciation 25 March Holy Mass will be celebrated in Walsingham at 12 noon in the Basilica, followed by Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction. We will walk or ride (if preferred) the Holy Mile and visit the site of the original Holy House and pray the Prayer for England. Coach leaving from St Bartholomew's. £25 for adults, free for children. Details from Margaret Leahy margleahy@gmail.com or Rosemary Roscoe 07723 546642.

HCPT Lourdes Pilgrimage For a good many years now, in the week after Easter, a group of parishioners from St Bartholomew's have taken children to Lourdes with the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust. In previous years the group have taken requests for Candles and Intentions to Lourdes. The Intentions will be posted in the Prayer Box sited at the Grotto and the Candles will be lit at the group's service of Light and Reconciliation also at the Grotto. If you would like St Bart's HCPT group to take a private intention to Lourdes please write out your intention (please anonymise your intention using a first name or initial only) and place it in an envelope addressed to 'St Barts - Private Intention HCPT'. If you want a Candle to be lit at the Service of Light and Reconciliation please put an offering in a different envelope and mark it 'St Barts - Lourdes Candles HCPT'. These envelopes can be posted through the Presbytery Door on Beaconsfield Road. They will then be delivered to St Bart's.

The All Saints Catholic Academy Trust (ASCAT) is seeking to recruit Governors for local Governing Boards in Watford, Rickmansworth, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and St Albans. The Trust has vacancies for Foundation Governors; Co-opted Governors and Community Governors. For information please contact Christina Reffold, Director of Governance & Compliance at governance@ascat.co.uk or complete the form [here](#).

St Barts Baby and Toddler Group A group is being set up at St Barts at 11am-12.30pm on Thursdays for children aged 0-4yrs. This will allow parents/carers with young children up to school age to socialise and share activities in a safe setting, e.g. singing, story time and play. This group will be open to all with no charge. Start date to be confirmed shortly. If you are interested in attending or helping out please contact Lizzie Lizzio at efkelly88@gmail.com.

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 first masses available for booking are in May 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.

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.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 1 March - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (Ann)

Sunday 2 March - EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

8am Mass Tom Brosnan (RIP)

8.30am Mass Patricia McCarthy (Ann)

(John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

10.00am Mass Bartłomiej Piekarski and family (Ints)

12 Noon Mass Martina Doolan (Ints)

6pm Mass Noreen Carolan (Ann)

Reading 1, Ecclesiasticus 27:4-7, Psalm 91(92)

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 15:54-58, Gospel, Luke 6:39-45

Monday 3 March - feria

10am Mass Isabella Westrup-Aparicio (First Anniversary)

7pm Mass John and Bridie Gildea (Ints)

Reading 1, Ecclesiasticus 17:20-28, Psalm 31(32)

Gospel, Mark 10:17-27

Tuesday 4 March - feria

10am Mass Jim Warrilow (RIP)

Reading 1, Ecclesiasticus 35:1-15, Psalm 49(50)

Gospel, Mark 10:28-31

Wednesday 5 March - ASH WEDNESDAY

7am Mass People of the parish

10am Mass Holy Souls

7pm Mass Departed members of the Pereira family

Reading 1, Joel 2:12-18, Psalm 50(51)

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 5:20-6:2, Gospel, Mark 6:1-6,16-18

Thursday 6 March - Lent feria

10am Mass Holy Souls - For deceased spouses

Reading 1, Deuteronomy 30:15-20, Psalm 1

Gospel, Luke 9:22-25

Friday 7 March - Lent feria

10am No Morning Mass

7pm Mass Johnny and Bridgie Joyce (Ints)

Reading 1, Isaiah 58:1-9, Psalm 50(51)

Gospel, Matthew 9:14-15

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

Saturday 8 March - Blessed Virgin Mary on a Saturday

9.30am Stations of the Cross

10am Mass Jean-Yves Theanne (Ann)

10.30am Confessions and Exposition

Reading 1, Isaiah 58:9-14, Psalm 85(86)

Gospel, Luke 5:27-32

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 8 March - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Pat Roache (Ann)

Sunday 9 March - FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

8am Mass Carys Newton (First Anniversary)

8.30am Mass People of the parish

(John Fisher School, Marshalswick)

10.00am Mass Andrew Fernandes (Ann)

12 Noon Mass Mary Walsh (Ann)

6pm Mass Evelio Azcona (RIP)

Reading 1, Deuteronomy 26:4-10, Psalm 90(91)

Reading 2, Romans 10:8-13, Gospel, Luke 4:1-13

PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Albans we celebrate the World Day of Prayer - the global, ecumenical movement observed on the first Friday in March.

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 Angelica Hughes and Salvatore Realmuto.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Noreen Carolan, Andrew Fernandes, Patricia McCarthy, Carys Newton, Peter Celestine Okoro, Pat Roache, Jean-Yves Theanne, Mary Walsh and Isabella Westrup-Aparicio.

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

Justice, Peace & the Integrity of Creation Prayer Loving Father, please guide & inspire all leaders to find peaceful solutions for the good of everyone and help us to be instruments of your Peace in our daily lives. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

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 cantonmassesea@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. 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.