

NEWS BULLETIN - ST ALBAN & ST STEPHEN



Church Website

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8 February 2026 - FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



Contactless Giving

Parish Priest: Fr Michael O'Boy - Assistant Priest: Fr John Casey

Permanent Deacons: Rev. Brendan Day & Rev. Michael Larmer

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

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

We are a Fairtrade parish

Fr Michael writes... In today's reading from Isaiah we're challenged to do away with the yoke, the burden that crushes others, to give relief to the oppressed and in so doing to be a light for others. Then says Isaiah, 'shall your light break forth like the dawn'. The call to be a light for others, for the world even, is taken up in the Gospel. 'In the same way', says Jesus, 'let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father'. Here Jesus elevates things to another level altogether. If you do good things for other, do them so that others may be drawn to God, to give him, not you, the praise. In other words do what you do without expectation of return. Do it unconditionally.

When God created the world, he rested, he didn't wait around for Adam and Eve to thank him. When the Prodigal Son returned to his Father, the Father didn't issue a list of expectations before getting the party under way. When the women with a hemorrhage went to Jesus and touched the hem of his garment, Jesus could do nothing other than heal her. In all these situations there were no ifs or buts, no pre-conditions or maybes. Rather there was a generous and inevitable response which left the recipients utterly free, much as Adam was left free to turn away from the giver of the gifts that had been bestowed upon him.

So, the beggar will spend the money you have given him on things you would rather he didn't, the children will waste it on this or that, and people won't necessarily reflect your priorities in the spending of what you have given. It's tempting in these situations to be disappointed and to become cynical, so much so, that when the 'genuine' case comes along we find ourselves hardened and cold.

In all of this, I'm not saying give foolishly or blindly. What I am saying is that we should think carefully about what we do. That we should stop and reflect when the refusal to be generous with our help and in our judgements becomes ingrained and we find ourselves asking what's in it for me. Above all we need to remember what God has done freely and without reservation for us; that, when he created us he gave us the freedom to choose between right and wrong, and that even though we get it wrong, even though we misuse that gift, he doesn't withdraw it. On the contrary he invites us time and again issues to remodel ourselves in the image of the last Adam - the life giving-spirit who is Jesus Christ.

Archbishop Richard Moth Next Saturday morning there will be no Exposition, Benediction or Confessions as the parish clergy will be attending the installation of our new bishop, Archbishop Richard Moth. We are advised that there is spare capacity at the Welcome Vespers at 5.30pm on Friday 13 February and that people are welcome to attend. Both vespers and Archbishop Richard's installation as Archbishop of Westminster on Saturday 14 at 12 Noon will be live streamed via the Cathedral website. Please visit www.westminstercathedral.org.uk. The video of the Mass of Installation will remain on the site to view on-demand.

Fire Marshals This weekend there is an appeal for volunteer Fire Marshals as we need more in order to run a rota and be absolutely certain of our having the required number at each mass. Volunteer Fire Marshals will only be required to do something in the unlikely event of a fire. There are instructions and there will be training. Please think seriously and generously when listening to this weekend's appeal.

Fire Safety For the duration of the current works if the number of people in church exceeds 230 we will need to utilise the main hall as an overflow. Furthermore, following additional advice from the Fire Safety Advisor, we would ask anyone with impaired mobility, or who would need assistance to evacuate the building and who is unaccompanied, to make themselves known to the welcomers or the priest and to sit in the area and benches nearest to the confessionals.

Lent 2026 Course: 'The Creed' . On the 1700 anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, a film series which explores the Nicene Creed to reveal the intellectual and spiritual depths of Christian faith will be shown on Thursday evenings during Lent. Please come and understand our core Catholic doctrine, beyond just facts, to a personal, transformative belief. All welcome to join us on 12 and 26 Feb; 5, 12,19 and 26 March at 7.30-9pm in the hall. Refreshments available.

LITURGY AND SACRAMENTS

PALM CROSSES Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent will soon be with us. Please could you return your Palm Crosses from last year so that they can be burnt and the ashes used for Ash Wednesday.

Way of the Cross during Lent Every Saturday in Lent at 9.30am, before 10am Exposition, the Way of the Cross will be followed in Church with a different emphasis each week. You can also view the Stations online and 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 by composing a set of Stations or reading out a prepared text from the lectern.

Sacrament of Baptism The next baptism preparation course is Saturday 7 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.

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 for everyone after mass.

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.

RCIA Group 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.

Youth Mass dates 2025/26 Our Parish Youth Masses take place at 6pm on Sunday evening on the following dates: 8 February, 22 March, 10 May, 14 June and 5 July.

OUR PARISH COMMUNITY

Coffee and Tea After Mass Refreshments are available in the Parish Centre 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 so please do come along.

Migrants' toiletries and clothing collections We currently need donations of sanitary towels (not tampons), shower gel, toothpaste, shampoo, baby wipes, adult toothbrushes, deodorant, bars of soap, baby shower gel and shampoo. Donations of men's clothing are also needed for local migrants. Please only donate items which you would be happy to give to a family member or friend. While the building works are taking place, there will be a collecting point for these items on the third Sunday of each month.

St Albans Food Bank We currently have a food collection point at all masses, including the St John Fisher Mass centre, on the first Sunday of each month. The principal demand remains for long life items (milk and fruit juice), tinned items (fruit, veg, meat, fish and puddings), cooking sauces, coffee, teabags, cereals and jam. More details of the St Albans Food bank can be found [here](#).

PARISH GROUPS & EVENTS

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

Faith and Family Group We meet in the parish hall on the first Tuesday of the 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. Contact David Markham on 07543 400650.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation group We meet on the third Thursday of each month in the Parish Centre, starting at 7.30pm. All welcome. See [here](#) for future events.

St Bart's Baby and Toddler Group The St Barts baby and toddler group meets every Thursday morning in St Barts hall 11am-12.30pm. Lizzie Lizzio (efkelly88@gmail.com)

St Albans URC Memory Café Sociable afternoon for those with dementia and accompanied by their live-in carers - Chiswell Green URC Hall, Watford Road, Chiswell Green on the first Thursday of the month - 1.30-3.30pm. Email [here](#) for information.

Fair-trade. The monthly parish fair-trade stall will be open after Mass at Marshalswick Mass Centre on 8 February. Fair-trade is designed to allow producers to obtain a fair price for their products and gives them a little extra to help towards community projects such as schooling, developing local amenities and healthcare - all of which we so easily take for granted here. The fair-trade stalls are run by volunteers: if you could spare an hour once a month to help keep this vital support for those in the Developing World going, please speak to a volunteer or email grabecki@hotmail.com.

The Parish Friends Knit & Natter Group We will be meeting in the Parish Centre on 10 February 2.15-3.45pm. Please note change of time, All are welcome. Contact Helen Bassill 07860 830340.

St John Henry Newman Talk 2.30pm 11 February - Pronounced a Doctor of the Church on 1 November 2025, St John Henry Newman has been enormously influential in 20th and 21st century theology. The Herts Circle of the Newman Association invites you to a series of talks on his theology, which are being presented by the Margaret Beaufort Institute. The first: Prophet, Priest and King: Christ, the Christian and the Church, will be shown at 2.30 pm on Wednesday 11 February at Ss Alban and Stephen Parish Centre. All welcome.

BINGO Friday 13 February At 8pm in the Parish Hall in aid of "Mary's Meals". Admission is 50p and includes refreshments. Everyone is welcome.

Care homes, creativity and celebrating St Francis - would you like to be involved? Anna Chaplaincy with both St Alban & St Stephen and St Barts, are creating a group to work on an exciting project this year. Working alongside care homes and local Catholic schools we will be celebrating the life of St Francis through an inter-generational project connecting the schools with local care homes. We are looking for a group of people to be involved with helping to create some large-scale artwork and help organise some informal creative worship sessions in care homes. If you'd like to know more please email Maggie, mrsmaggiedodd@gmail.com, St Albans Anna Chaplaincy Lead or contact Sara Nash (SSAS) stalbans@rcdow.org.uk or Christine Lambert (St Barts) cmljdl@aol.com Please respond by 15 February.

CAFOD Soup and Film event Saturday 21 February Everyone is invited to the Hall to have a simple lunch [from noon] and watch The Penguin Lessons [12] from 1pm - a comedy based on the story of a disillusioned Englishman going to work in Argentina in 1976. Donations in support of the Lent CAFOD family fast day.

CAFOD Lent Family Fast Day Friday 27 February Everyone is invited to join in this fast day through prayer, fasting and giving. The theme this year is loving your neighbour as yourself [Mark 12: 31]. If possible, try to only have one main meal and consider donating the money saved to those facing hunger because of droughts and floods. There will be a retiring collection the weekend of 28 February/1 March. Gift aid envelopes will be available; you can make a contactless donation on the day; use the QR code on the posters; donate here [CAFOD Lent appeal 2026](#)

Westminster Diocese Justice & Peace Lecture The second annual Justice and Peace Lecture which will be given by Charles Wookey, formerly CEO of Blueprint for Business, and for the last three decades advisor on social and ethical issues to archbishops of Westminster and BCE&W. He will speak on the topic ' Living out Catholic Social Teaching in Today's Britain'. A response will be given by the young scholar, Dr Charlotte Bray of the University of Manchester. The lecture will take place at Farm Street Church of the Immaculate Conception, 114 Mount Street, London W1K 3AH, on 25 March at 7pm. Access to the church is from Farm Street or Mount Street. After the lecture in the church all are invited to a buffet reception in the Arrupe Hall. All are welcome. Please email justiceandpeace@rcdow.org.uk by 1 March to attend.

Pilgrimage to Walsingham Come and celebrate the joyful Feast of the Annunciation in Walsingham on Wednesday 25 March. Join us on a coach leaving from St Bartholomew's, St Albans, at 7.45am for a beautiful pilgrimage experience. 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. The cost is £27 for adults and it is free for children. Please contact Rosemary Roscoe 07723 546642 Rosemary.roscoe@gmail.com or Margaret Leahy 01727 763832 margleahy@gmail.com for further details.

Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony, Westminster Cathedral, 2.30pm Saturday

23 May The Archbishop is inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese, who are celebrating their 5th 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th (and every year over 60) wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage in 2026. If you are celebrating an anniversary, please email the parish office by Friday 17 April with the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal and email addresses (or telephone number, if no email).

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Mass Intentions Mass intentions can be booked by phoning or visiting the parish office from 9am to 1pm any weekday. Outside these times, please email the 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 one year in advance and the first masses we now have free for booking are in May/June 2026. Please also be aware that weekday morning masses (excluding Mondays) will be held at St Barts for the duration of the building works.** 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, is needed. Names will normally be included for eight weeks, unless the request is renewed.

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.

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.

MASS INTENTIONS & READINGS

Saturday 7 February - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Andrew Dobson (Ints)

Sunday 8 February - FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME

8am Mass Pauline Dobler (nee Haynes) (RIP)

8.30am Mass Sheila Aylward (Ann)

(*St John Fisher School, Marshalswick*)

10am Mass Frances Boak (RIP)

12 Noon Mass People of the parish

6pm Mass Anne Margaret Green (Ann)

Reading 1, Isaiah 58:6-10, Psalm 111(112)

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

Monday 9 February - feria

10am Mass Liam Cavanagh (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Kings 8:1-7,9-13, Psalm 131(132)

Gospel, Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday 10 February - St Scholastica

10am Mass * John Stack (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Kings 8:22-23,27-30, Psalm 83(84)

Gospel, Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday 11 February - feria

10.30am * Confessions, Exposition & Benediction at St Barts

7pm Mass Anne Smet (RIP)

7pm Reading 1, 1 Kings 10:1-10, Psalm 36(37)

Gospel, Mark 7:14-23

Thursday 12 February - St Agatha

10am Mass * Deacon Steve Pickard (Ann) and Celia

Dunne (Ann)

Reading 1, 1 Kings 11:4-13, Psalm, 105(106)

Gospel, Mark 7:24-30

Friday 13 February - feria

7pm Mass Peter Celestine Okoro (RIP)

Reading 1, 1 Kings 11:29-32,12:19, Psalm 80(81))

Gospel, Mark 7:31-37

On Fridays Mass is celebrated in St Albans Cathedral at Noon

Saturday 14 February - St Cyril and St Methodius

No Exposition, Benediction or Confessions as the parish clergy will be attending the installation of Archbishop Richard Moth as Archbishop of Westminster

Saturday 14 February - VIGIL MASS OF SUNDAY

5pm Mass Angelika Hughes (Ann)

Sunday 15 February - SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORD. TIME

8am Mass People of the parish

8.30am Mass Ainsley Lambert (Ann) (*St John Fisher School*)

10am Mass Antonio Gramengna (Ann)

12 Noon Mass Salvatore Realmuto (First Anniversary)

6pm Mass Anne Smet (RIP)

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

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

* Mass takes place at St Bartholomew's Church, Vesta Avenue

PLEASE PRAY

United with Churches together in St Albans on 8 February, the feast day of St Josephine Bakhita, the Patron Saint of victims of human trafficking, we remember and pray for the 50 million victims of this evil trade in human beings.

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 Jack Geldard, Kevin Markham, Mary O'Reilly and Mathilde Weaver.

For all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Sheila Aylward, Fr Pat Courtney MSC, Celia Dunne, Harold Elliott, Antonio Gramengna, Anne Margaret Green, Jessie Harris, Angelika Hughes, Eileen Kane, Ainsley Lambert, Robert Markham, Sean Murphy, Deacon Steve Pickard, Salvatore Realmuto, Teresa Trzeciak, Leonardo Venetico, David Webb and Rory Webb.

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

St Bartholomew's Parish Information Please see the St Bartholomew's website at [St Bartholomew - Roman Catholic Parish of St Albans South](http://www.stbartholomew.org.uk) for details of mass times and events or to read a copy of the St Bartholomew's weekly newsletter.

Pope's prayer of the month Each year, the Holy Father asks for our prayers for a specific intention each month. In February, let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation Prayer As we begin National Marriage week, we pray for all couples - those hoping to be married, recently married, established couples, those unmarried, struggling couples, broken couples, those bereaved - that they can be beacons of love to all they know and meet; that they will reflect God's love for us to the world at large.

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 cantonmassessea@gmail.com.

Mass in Polish Mass in Polish takes place here at 4pm on the second and fourth Sundays of each month.

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.