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# Talkabout

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MARCH 2021

St. John Fisher Parish Magazine 



**Cover:** From a Pre-Raphaelite painting in Tate Modern of 'Christ in the House of His Parents' (1849-1850)

You can read more about Millais' painting on page 40

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# WELCOME TO TALKABOUT

Dear Parishioners and all readers of *Talkabout*,

It is now more than a year since the COVID 19 pandemic started and almost one year since the last publication of this Magazine. A lot has happened during that time and our Parish life is not what it used to be. Several parishioners have died, some of them as a result of COVID 19. We commend their souls to God and extend sincere sympathy to all the bereaved families. Apart from those who have lost their loved ones, many others have been severely affected by the pandemic, financially, socially, and emotionally. Among them are those that have lost their jobs and businesses. We commiserate with you all.

No doubt, each one of us has been affected in one way or the other by this pandemic. Many of us had made great plans and wonderful resolutions at the beginning of 2020 which of course could not be achieved. I think we all relate in some way to the words of the Hollywood director who said, 'if you want to make God laugh tell Him your plans'. How many of us could have foreseen that they would have to cancel their holidays in 2020 which they had planned and anticipated many months before? How many could have predicted that schools and churches would be closed for the big part of the year 2020 which led to the cancellation of ceremonies like weddings, baptisms and even Easter, a very central feast on the Christian calendar? How many would have thought that they would be deprived of the opportunity to meet their friends and families for almost a full year because of shielding? The list can go on, to prove how this pandemic has affected us all and the unexpected challenges it has thrown at us.

It is helpful though to bear in mind that this being a global pandemic we are in it all together. Perhaps some others elsewhere have even suffered far worse consequences of the pandemic than us. We take consolation from the fact that when it comes to such global issues like this, we all stick together as a family. Our faith as Christians also contributes a lot to our healing, knowing that God loves us and still cares about us despite the challenges we face. The greatest gift we should give each other at this moment is the gift of prayer, asking God to strengthen our faith in His ever-abiding presence, for He promised to be with us till the end of time and is always close to the broken-hearted.

I would like to thank all the parishioners who have been involved in any ministry of reaching out to those who need help. Many have assisted in doing shopping, delivering the Parish newsletter and prescriptions to

those who are shielding. There are some who have kept in touch with others through phone calls or emails. We are grateful to St. John Fisher School Community for the Christmas love boxes and the cards made in February 2021 which brought a smile on the faces of all the recipients, most of whom are the senior citizens in our Parish.

In all areas of Parish life, there is a lot of voluntary work done that enhances the Parish Community and makes it a better place for us all to live in. I wish to express a particular word of thanks to all the stewards who during this difficult period have ensured that the Church is cleaned after every celebration of Mass.

I would like to commend the services of all our catechists who have worked extra hard during these unprecedented times to prepare the young people in St. John Fisher Parish for the celebration of Sacraments. Congratulations to all who received the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation last year. These were all happy occasions that brought joy and blessings to the individuals, their families, and our Parish Community.

I should not forget your generous financial contributions as parishioners that have enabled our Parish Community to remain active and strong during this difficult period.

For health and safety reasons, our Church attendance is different from what it used to be. I pray that as the vaccinations take place and the infections decline, we shall soon get back to normal and worship together. May God grant us His peace during this time and may He manifest His love and presence to us in abundant ways.

Fr Matthias Kizito



# YOUR PRAYERS ARE REQUESTED FOR

## *All those recently Baptised*

Kerry Shields  
 Clarissa Cordani  
 Eliza Mcauley  
 Charlotte Morgan  
 Oliver Banning  
 Peter Moulton  
 Oscar Said  
 Evie Said  
 Tyler Sheppard  
 Amelie Sheppard  
 Benjamin Sheppard



Imogen Sheppard  
 Gracie Cunningham

Zadie Fisher  
 Georgie Laffer  
 Brian Blake  
 Evelyn Carroll  
 Mason Jeffery  
 Isabel Lekstakaj  
 Emily Lekstakaj  
 Grace Pali  
 Zeke Jose-Winny  
 Jacob Leacock



## *All those children preparing for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion*

## *All those recently called home to Heaven*

Anne Condon  
 Francisco Belmonte  
 Edward Bergin  
 Mary Chubb  
 David Collins  
 Austin Davis  
 Tom Davis  
 Eugene Desmier  
 Angela D'Silva  
 Patrick Doyle  
 Douglas Esaw  
 Thomas Farrell  
 Benny Fernandes  
 Jane Flatley  
 Romeo Francis  
 Patricia Gaffan  
 Giuseppe Ginex  
 Vincent Hacksaw

Lorraine Henry  
 Bridget Howard  
 Beryl Yvonne Ann Hows  
 George 'Ted' Huggett  
 Kathleen Hughes  
 Moira Hughes  
 Patricia Humphries  
 Maria Keaveney-Jessiman  
 Logan Leahy  
 Mary Leahy  
 Francis Peters Lepcha  
 Mary Lewis  
 Trevor Lobo  
 Nora Locke  
 Kevin Maher  
 Michael Mannion  
 Con McElhinney  
 Catherine McGullion

Patricia Mitcheison  
 Fares Moussaid  
 Patrick Neville  
 Pamela Nielson  
 Margaret Needham  
 Carla Norris  
 Carol Nwosu  
 Hugh O'Neill  
 Charlie O'Rourke  
 Francesco Paganuzzi  
 Anthony Pullicino  
 Pam Rodgers  
 Shakila Sivanandu  
 Michael Scribbins

Bohdan Shak  
 Honoraria Stankiewicz  
 Fr Paul Saunders  
 Eileen Stephenson  
 Mary Simpson  
 Frank (Paddy) Vallely  
 Patricia Wright  
 Jeffrey Wrangle



*Grant them eternal rest, Lord,  
 and let perpetual light shine on them.*

## THANK YOU...

...to the wonderful Ann Bennett who made so many face masks for the parishioners before Christmas

*"To a friend whose name I don't know. In making this gift, I prayed for you. In giving this gift; I want you to know you are not forgotten. Happy Christmas!"*



*" Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."*

*Mark Twain*

# CONFIRMATION 2020

Confirmations in 2020 were initially postponed due to lockdown. However, a total of 35 candidates were confirmed over three separate Masses on Saturday 19th December at 10am, 12 noon and 3pm by Bishop Paul Hendricks. The following young people received the Gifts of the Holy Spirit on that day:



Lacey Bates	Callum Gordon	Sienna Mpiima	Rocco Stefka
Natalia Bela	Sienna Kearney	Declan Newman	Eleanor Trow
Stephanie Biscoe	Gabriella Kisiel	Freddie Noctor	Eva Wheatley
Danielius Boguckas	Stephanie Lee	Elizabeth Partridge	Dominic Witkowicz
Joshua Brierly	Julia Majcherska	Emily Phillips	
Hannah Casati	Isabella Malveiro	Patrycja Saj	
Maya Cierzniakowska	Aaron Matema	Jovani Soares	
Jessica Craughwell Jones	Sofia Matskiv		
Sasha Delaney	Cian McGing		
Cara Dooley	Esther Mirandola		
Caitlin Downes	Martyna Morawska		
Eliza Finn	Lauren Moussaid		

# FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2020

First Holy Communion was also affected by the Covid restrictions, originally these should have taken place in the early summer but were rearranged during August and September at the 9.30 Sunday Mass. A total of fifty children in our parish received their First Holy Communion in 2020 (28 boys and 22 girls).

Adela Jarocka	Gemma Martin	Penelope D`Cruz
Albert Olujimi Oluwunmi	George Ormrod	Rafael Gomes
Alexander Savage	Grace Amelie Rachel Watson	Reid Adamson
Ava Elizabeth Worton	Helen Morgan	Richard Mazery
Caitlynn Semler	James Bunce	Riley O`Keeffe
Cian Daniel Murray Jones	Jude Lumsden	Roisin Maunsell
Deborah Seglo	Keit Lekstakaj	Ryan Hosier
Deirbhile Quinn	Kianne Galgewala	Santiago da Silva Rodrigues
Dylan McManus	Kunashe Mabiza	Sebastian Medina Law
Eden Rae Spear	Leonidas Sonson	Sofia Cierzniakowska
Emily Bourke	Luke Foxley	Sophia Rose Lam-Kin-Teng
Erin Ormrod	Matthew Chetty	Tarynn McGinnity
Ewan Leonard	Max Baker	Wiktorija Sienko
Frankie Geoghegan	Oscar Naoise Duggan	Zofia Truchel



# 2020 THE YEAR THE LIGHTS STAYED ON

After the meeting in January 2020, no other meeting of the PAC has taken place and due to the continuation of the pandemic it is not likely to do so in the foreseeable future.

This does not mean that the parish has been idle, indeed in many ways the parish has rallied round and has survived.

## BUILDING WORKS

The start of the year 2020 saw a significant overhaul of the church buildings. This was known about and had been discussed in PAC meetings as very necessary. An extensive report had been received that gave us clear information as to what were the worst problems and the order in which they should be tackled.

The year therefore started with the church being covered in scaffolding to enable the work to be done to the fabric of the exterior. This included a renewal of all the flat roofs and painting of the exterior. This work has been dealt with by professionals and the works overseen by Declan Pritchard who has extensive experience in the building trade. He co-ordinated the different tradesmen and ensured that we got good value for money.



We were able to cajole the Diocese into releasing funds from our reserves (over which they had control) to enable this work to be done. It was decided that whilst the exterior was being refurbished an overhaul of the inside should also take place. Thus a painter was employed and steps were taken to have the church floor sanded and polished. Smaller tasks such as installing hot water in the sacristy toilet and repairs to the heating were completed. We did not need to get Diocesan permission for these works as they fell below

the £10,000 ceiling when we can self certify.

There was a suggestion that the Stations of the Cross needed to be lit and a new light was installed in one, but it did not significantly enhance the Station and so no further work was undertaken on them save for a deep clean of the church prior to re-opening after the first lockdown. Many parishioners volunteered and the whole job of installing social distancing was done in good spirit.

## STREAMING MASSES

You may recall that after lengthy discussions we decided that we would look into the question of streaming Masses. We were greatly assisted by a generous donation from a parishioner meaning that the parish outlay was greatly reduced. This streaming service was very soon tested and used by many within and outside the parish when we were forced into the first lockdown.

Streaming was put into place under the auspices of the church streaming service and a new dimension in watching Mass was successfully introduced. There were some teething problems, particularly when the roofers damaged the wiring, the service has continued ever since and has been used not just by parishioners but many others all around the world. Evangelisation in action.

## COVID MEASURES

The problems associated with the first lockdown did not faze our parish and when the all clear was given to resume actual services then we were ready. A large willing body of volunteers came and gave the church a deep clean and cleanse. Social distancing measures were put in place and for this we are most grateful to Melissa for organising and co-ordinating the practical side of this work including all the clear signage. Indeed a great number of members of the parish were very keen to volunteer and became involved in the task of





ensuring our safety during socially distanced masses including cleaning and sanitising the church after each service.

There has been a great willingness and at times an eagerness to volunteer to ensure that things ran smoothly. Thanks to those also who continue to oversee the supply of church necessities for service and candles, altar cloths and the like together with the flower arranging and when necessary decorations. Volunteers took up counting the collection which was sealed in plastic bags and after a few days counted. We were thus able to see the steady stream of money which sadly but understandably had diminished during this period.

We received an anonymous complaint about lack of ventilation in the church and so we had to open all the windows, some of which had been painted shut and not opened for a long time.

## GENERAL MAINTENANCE

A special mention should be made about the regular work Michael Tully has been doing to care for and tidy the area around the church. This included painting the fences and planting in the flower beds which have been created. The drains were attended to sometimes being cleared out by hand and encroaching roots were removed. It is hoped to employ a gardener to do the grass around the church and lower some of the



hedging. New outside lighting has been installed enhancing the safety aspect and aesthetic look of the church.

A new and attractive sign was skilfully made by Mark Eaden (pictured left) for the statue of Saint John Fisher.

All the work was undertaken with a

huge amount of willingness and generally co-ordinated by Melissa who worked tirelessly herself as well. The Diocese put her into furlough so she did a lot as a volunteer!

Sister Catherine to whom we sadly said goodbye in late 2019 did an incredible amount of work for the parish often unheralded and unknown. Her duties have largely been undertaken by a team of Catechists who had previously worked under her. She would I am certain be very pleased that the tasks have continued to be done by those on whom she relied. Her work on the 'Year of The Word' was continued and we now need to decide how to celebrate the current 'Year of St Joseph' as ordained by the Pope. A bookmark has been produced to mark the first anniversary of her death.

The First Holy Communion course for 2021 also commenced in September. We have finished the first part of the course for the sacrament of Reconciliation. First Confessions will take place once lockdown is ended. After that we will continue with the second part of the course for the sacrament of the Holy Eucharist.

Three confirmation services have taken place in December and First Holy Communions took place during the months of August and September.

Most services have been reduced to a minimum and the playing of live music has been banned, this means that we have had no music in the traditional way but we have recently started to have the playing of pre recorded music which can be a really good aide to our personal worship.

## CHURCH ORGAN

We have continued to pressurise the Diocese about a replacement organ as the venerable pipe organ that we currently have is barely usable and no longer fit for purpose. The diocese after a not insignificant delay eventually refused our request and said we should seek a grant to refurbish. Our requests for a grant were looked at by the grants committee and with a wry smile they made it quite clear we were highly unlikely to get anything. This message has gone back to the Arts and Architectural committee with a request that we now be allowed to proceed as originally requested. It is hoped to fund an electronic digital organ for which we have – some time ago – received potential funding. We are now awaiting again a response from the diocese.

## CHURCH HALL

The Church Hall has been largely lying fallow for the greater part of the year. Some emergency repairs were undertaken to replace a broken downpipe which was causing considerable damp.

## 255 CANNON HILL LANE

The biggest project undertaken by the parish in 2020 was the renovation, redecoration and modernisation of 255 Cannon Hill Lane. This was originally purchased as a home for the nuns (of the order of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart) and continued to be used by Sister Catherine until her death. It was agreed at the last PAC meeting that the home, which was basically sound but in need of an immense overhaul, should be rendered into a modern desirable property which could be rented out at a good price to produce an income to supplement the parish income.

In March 2020, steps were taken to start to clear the house and to remove all the furniture. Some of the contents were reused at the presbytery but a great deal of the rest was disposed of either into a skip or via Christian Care. Nothing that could be used was given away. At the start of the first lockdown a lot of bedlinen and the like was used to make gowns and masks for the NHS workers.

Before we could commence work on refurbishing we had to obtain permission from the diocese as they were registered as the owners of the property. We had to provide three quotes for every task. They effectively held the property on trust for St. John Fisher as it was our funds which had previously purchased the property.

Work was done to clear the overgrown garden, remove sheds and dispose of a great deal of rubbish. A large fox had taken up residence in one of the bushes but he did not stay too long to view progress.

Likewise every room in the house had to be cleared and cleaned to prepare it for a complete refurbishment. Furniture and old white goods and the majority of fixings such as curtain rails were removed. All books where appropriate were placed in the church repository.

Eventually we were ready in early September to start the work having had our choice of tradesmen to do the work approved by the diocese. Fitted wardrobes, cupboards, curtain tracks and old electric fires were removed.

We started with work to ensure that the property was wind and water tight so scaffolding was put up to enable work to be done on the outside. This also facilitated the replacement of nearly all the windows with modern double glazed units.

A new central heating system was installed as the old partial system was totally ineffective. We had electricians in the house and decorators to make good and decorate. The garage door was replaced. The whole project was originally co-ordinated by Declan Pritchard and Melissa until Declan became ill so she continued on her own.

Slowly like a phoenix from the ashes the property emerged and we were able to put it on the market for rental. Significant work was done by a number of parishioners which meant that we could keep costs to a minimum. The works took about three months in total but by the end of November it was fit to be shown to the letting agents who were excited by the possibilities. The property was carpeted throughout and was taken by the first person who saw it at the price recommended by the agent.

On passing the house you may see that it is now known as *Catherine House* and that has been officially recognised by the Royal Mail. The property has had many associations with Sister Catherine and she would use it regularly for the classes and courses she held there. It is thought fitting therefore to name the property, with which was so long associated, in memory of her.



## PARISH HALL - PLANNED WORK

Emboldened by the eventual success of refurbishing 255 the parish are now able to turn our minds to other work that needs to be done, first and foremost will be the Church Hall. refurbishment of the Church Hall is to be one of our priorities in 2021. It is planned to refurbish the hall to a good standard so that it can be let out and thereby add to the parish finance. The hall requires an overhaul of the electrics and remedial works to update the plumbing and renovate the function rooms. The floor will be sanded – in the same way the Church floor was done.

There are a number of damp problems also to be overcome and some decisions will need to be made about the use of the hall itself. Questions we need to consider in due course will be what kind of building we want – do we still need a fully functioning stage, should we have smaller meeting rooms and do we need to have the facility to show videos or streamed programmes?

The windows are in desperate need of replacement and we will have to renew the curtains/blinds as well.

Ultimately we want to achieve a situation where we can have a comfortable place where the parish can have socials and which also could be used to be hired out to again add to the revenue of the parish on a regular basis. The cost of running the parish has been steadily climbing and could start to exceed the amount of income that we receive. We have some savings but this will not allow this situation to continue on a regular basis.

## PARISH CAR PARK & GROUNDS

The car park is in need of refurbishment and the lines redrawn. The railings have been painted but it is planned to put up a new noticeboard and so if anyone has any thoughts please let us know.

Thus you will see that we are ready to come out of lockdown in a good place and the situation of the country over the past few months has meant that we have been able to press on with works when the Church and its grounds were not regularly used.

## THANK YOU

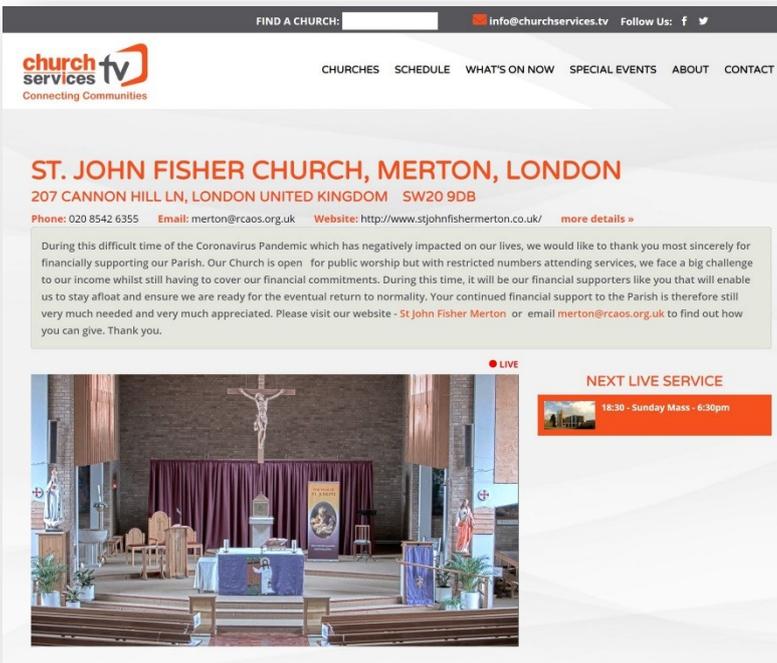
Groups of volunteers have kept the Church open and sanitised. These have become largely self-regulatory. Father Matthias and Father Francis have continued to work tirelessly and to give us all a suitably upbeat message throughout the year.

**Paul Spooner**  
Chairman, PAC

# STREAMING MASS ON CHURCHSERVICES.TV

Streaming Mass online has been really comforting to so many during lockdown and particularly because of the limits on numbers attending funerals. Many have watched funeral services standing outside in the church car park or sitting in their cars! It is good that so many family members have been able to take part in the service from their homes all over the world.

When we resumed baptisms and the 'rule of six' applied it was so lovely to hear the joy in people's voices when they realised that family members could watch the baptism wherever they were in the world. It was a real comfort to many. Lockdown has been hard for so many, those who have lost family members and could not attend funerals or those lockdown babies who were baptised with only a handful of people around them, to



be able to watch these sacraments online has really made a difference. Our First Communion and Confirmations were also streamed, again much appreciated.

The parish have received many positive emails from parishioners and viewers around the world:

*"Hello and good morning*

*My name is Gerry and I heard Mass from your church this morning through the webcam.*

*I live in Dublin, Ireland. We are in lockdown here and our churches are all closed for public Mass.*

*I just also want to thank the priest for a good homily on humility and Our Lady."*

*"Because of COVID, we can't come to London for the funeral, so it's very nice to have this opportunity to see this online- thank you very much!"*

(This lady has no family in the UK, her grand-daughter and great-grand-daughter watched her funeral from Poland)

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*"My Dad is too scared of catching COVID so we will be logging to watch online."*

(A family who had booked Memorial Mass)

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*"In Scotland, we are unable to attend Mass due to Covid19 restrictions but have been logging on to your 9.30 Mass every Sunday and are very grateful for it."*

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*"Thank you for a beautiful mass this morning. I live in Belfast and try to get mass from all over Ireland and UK during this pandemic time. You were inspiring in your mass and preaching"*

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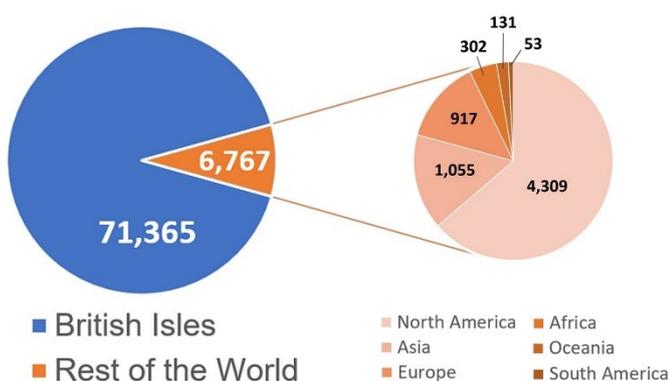
*"Greetings from Dublin! I just wanted to pass on a message to the lady who reads during weekday mass to compliment her on how well she discharges the office of Minister of the Word. Her diction is perfect and pace of delivery of the Word spot on! Tell her that she discharges the ministry with great dignity and reverence and it is very good to see! You are fortunate in England that you are able to have public masses. ... Most churches have webcams but I often like looking in on overseas mass. Blessings to you all. Keep the faith"*

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## Church Service Viewing Figures (from 15 April 2020 to 8 March 2021)

In the almost 12 months since we began streaming Mass from St. John Fisher, 78,132 people have watched services from our Parish - the majority from the British Isles, but a remarkable number are from overseas, from 92 different countries! After the UK and Ireland, the highest number of viewers are 4,139 from USA and more than 800 viewings from India.

Streaming Viewing Figures



## HOLY WEEK



### MAUNDY THURSDAY 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL

Due to the limited seating capacity in our Church, there will be two Masses to give an opportunity to as many people as possible to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

- 5.00pm: Mass of the Lord's Supper
- 8.00pm: Mass of the Lord's Supper

No booking is needed, first come first served. If you are unable to find a place in Church, you can follow the Mass in the Parish Hall via live stream.

### GOOD FRIDAY 2<sup>ND</sup> APRIL

Solemn Day of Fasting and Abstinence

Due to the limited seating capacity in our Church, two services have been arranged to celebrate the Passion of our Lord.

- 2.00pm: Service of the Passion of our Lord
- 3.30pm: Service of the Passion of our Lord
- 6.00pm: Online Stations of the Cross

### HOLY SATURDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> APRIL

No Masses at 9.00am and 6.00pm

- 8.00pm Easter Vigil.

### EASTER SUNDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

- Masses at 8.00am, 9.30am, 11.00am & 6.30pm

### CONFESSIONS

From Monday to Saturday during Holy Week - 9.30am to 10.30am in the Parish Hall

## EASTER OFFERINGS

Your personal gift to the Priests of the Parish envelopes are at the back of the Church.

You may know that the Clergy do not receive a salary as such and rely upon the Christmas and Easter Offerings to supplement any income received through Mass Stipends and Stole Fees for Baptisms, Funerals, and rare Weddings.

# PARISH FUNDRAISING

Lockdown meant a huge loss of parish income for us. The running costs of the parish are high and so we had to think of other ways to increase our income. With support from the diocesan fundraising team we set up a just giving page which helped significantly and we would like to thank everyone who has contributed so generously. We have raised over £7600 to date with an additional £1400 received from gift aid contributions since the page was set up on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

## JustGiving™

### JustGiving Donations

The link to the JustGiving page can be found on the parish website:

[www.justgiving.com/fundraising/st-john-fisher-merton](http://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/st-john-fisher-merton)

### Contactless Giving

More recently we have introduced contactless giving.

We have a contactless machine in Church and also a smaller device for use in the parish office to pay for Masses etc. Please ask a steward if you need help using the contactless machine.



If you pay tax you can gift aid your contribution which means that the parish is able to reclaim an additional 25% on your donation. All you need to do is enter a few details the first time you use the machine. Once you have entered the information, you will not have to do it again.

### Gift Aid Envelopes

The Weekly Gift Aid envelopes are still being used, in fact the envelopes for the next financial year (light brown in colour) are ready for people to collect from the parish hall. The contactless machine is in addition to this, perhaps for people who don't regularly gift aid, or those that usually give cash, or for visitors to the parish.



### Easy Fundraising

Another way of earning income for the parish without costing you any money is to register for Easy Fundraising. Easy fundraising has over 4,400 shops and sites which will donate to us at no extra cost to yourself, including lots of big name retailers like John Lewis, Argos, Uswitch, eBay, M&S, Just Eat, Now TV, Domino's Pizza and Audible.

All you have to do is sign up to support us using the link below and the next time you shop online and go through the easyfundraising website or app, the parish receive a free donation.

We really need all the help we can get at the moment and any funds we raise will make a big difference to us! You can find our easyfundraising page at:

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stjohnfisherrcchurch/](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stjohnfisherrcchurch/)

Some examples of Easy Fundraising retailers:

- **Buying a new policy from Tesco?**  
Home Insurance - Up to £20.00 donation,  
Pet Insurance - Up to £30.00 donation,  
Car Insurance - Up to £25.00 donation, and  
Tesco Mobile - Up to £15.00 donation
- **Moving to Sky?**  
The parish can earn up to £40.00 donation
- **Shopping?**  
John Lewis, Tesco or M&S? Up to 2% donation
- **Renewing or buying home, pet, car or travel insurance?**  
Even using a price comparison site can raise as much as £17.50 for the parish and you can still enjoy a year of free movies or meals out (when lockdown is lifted!)

### PARKING

Please remember to be considerate of our neighbours and fellow parishioners when parking your car for Mass at the weekends and over the Easter season. Do not obstruct driveways or park on grass verges, and please also keep the church entrance clear. Thank you.



When the news broke that we would no longer be able to meet face to face, we initially kept in touch with the members of the unit with a fortnightly email. Girlguiding offered a regular input of new activities that the girls could try out at home which we passed on, but by far the most popular was the Sleepover at Home Challenge produced by a Division within our Guide County of Greater London West.



We were all ready to have some meetings out of doors, when this was eventually allowed, but by the time we had completed all the necessary forms we found it would not be feasible and so we changed to Zoom. Since October this has worked well and we have, with adaptations to some of the activities, managed to complete a number of the badges which form part of the programme. These have included 'Skills for my future - Live Smart stage 4' and unit activities to support this and the 'Know Myself' theme. This enabled Sophie to complete enough Theme Awards to gain her Gold Award.

Leading up to Christmas, County again provided a Challenge and while only two Guides actually completed the 20 out of the 24 possible activities, it did give us some additional ideas for activities to include in our meetings.

We welcomed a new Guide to the Unit in January, who quickly settled in. We have continued with the programme and are looking forward to an international evening after half term. Obviously, we cannot wait to be able to meet up again face to face in the outdoors.

**Sandy Brown**

As with the Guides, we kept in touch with the girls during the summer and first half of the autumn term. The 'Sleepover at Home' challenge mentioned in the Guide Report, proved very popular and we were delighted to see the photos of the girls in their variety of tents, some home-made, enjoying their snacks before bedtime. We also encouraged the girls, with the help of their parents, to try some of the Growing up Wild Paw Print Badges which involve enjoying the out of doors.

Some of the badges gained this way included: Texture and Shape, In an Emergency, Hop, Step and Jump. Our LaSER Region (London & SE England), also offered badges which included one in conjunction with the RSPB and another on London, both of which were completed by one very keen Rainbow. At this point I need to thank all the parents who kept me posted by sending photos of the girls doing the activities and copies of any of the written work, or drawings that they did.

Rainbows also switched to Zoom meetings in the autumn and welcomed six new girls to the Unit. We were very pleased to be able to present, virtually, the four oldest Rainbows with their Bronze Award. The badges and certificates were later delivered together with a small selection of goodies for Christmas. We then continued with the programme and were able to complete Express Myself – Innovate stage 1. We took up the County Christmas Challenge, and started it over several meetings to be completed at home.

This term we welcomed another new Rainbow and have completed Have Adventures – Explore stage 1. We also took advantage of the snow and all were able to complete the Paw Print in the Snow and Ice. Not a badge we are usually able to suggest! Again we received some great photos of the girls enjoying the few days of snow, with snowmen and sledging, snow angels and snowball fights all featuring. We are now looking forward to the second half of the term and eventually, as with the Guides, being able to meet face to face in the out of doors.



**Sandy Brown**



# ... AND ... THE BROWNIES



Well what a strange year 2020 was! It's been hard for the children not to be able to socialise. However, we at the 3rd Morden Brownies, have carried on meeting up virtually on zoom. We have been doing this since last March and are still meeting weekly.

We managed to meet up once outside face to face in October, this was lovely as it gave Lynda Davis a chance to see the girls before she left as Assistant Brownie Leader at Christmas. We also managed to meet inside at the end of half term. This was a socially distanced Halloween/Goodbye party for the six 10/11-year-olds that were leaving us. This was a lovely evening for the older girls giving them a party to finish their journey in Brownies.



During our virtual evenings, we did lots of different activities and the Brownies also had the opportunity to gain more badges. We played a variety of Virtual games. The most popular game was scavenger hunts around the house. i.e. Finding different objects, linking with the clues.

We still managed to celebrate St Georges Day as a Brownie Unit, we made an origami rose and decorated a flag ready to stand outside our houses with our uniforms on. Of course we had the extra special celebration last May for VE day. We were supposed to go to Walton Firs for our half term Pack holiday; instead all the girls celebrated VE day at home with their families and we had a virtual sleepover with many girls sleeping in their tents in their gardens. Then we finished off the summer term with a virtual sports day, lots of challenges set online all together.

In November we learnt a new task. We did fork knitting and made a poppy, again we stood outside our front doors on Remembrance Sunday.



We raised money for Children in Need; we iced Pudsey bear biscuits, and skipped the age of 3rd Morden Brownies, our unit is 67 years old!!



As the winter drew in, we started to think about the birds, and we made a homemade bird feeder for the birds to enjoy. As Christmas approached the Brownies worked on a Christmas challenge badge. We finished off our year on Zoom with another virtual Christmas sleepover. We enjoyed a hot chocolate all together and a pamper evening with foot spas. It was greatly enjoyed. Also at Christmas we sadly said Goodbye to Lynda after 16 years with the 3rd Morden Brownies.

Now in 2021 we are hoping to be able meet face to face but have started the year on Zoom. We have been lucky to find another leader. Caroline Aldon has started her adult training with us; Welcome Caroline.

So far this year we have taken part in a Take 10 LaSER badge, with many activities about being positive. We have just finished the half term and celebrated World Thinking Day, which we celebrate with Brownies from around the world. As part of this we made cards to send to another Pack. Brownies also made a den with the theme "around the world". We visited so many countries in one evening!



*Celebrating World Thinking Day on Zoom*

We are looking forward to more adventurous activities and meeting face to face as we go into the summer.

**Leanne Kennett  
Brown Owl**

# THOMAS MORE DAVIS

14 April 1935 - 4 April 2020

## A LIFE IN THE PARISH



My father, Tom was the third child born to parents, George and Josephine Davis, of Chase Side Avenue, Wimbledon. He was baptized in the Sacred Heart Church on Edge Hill. Because his mother passed away when he was an infant, and since his father was in the

army, Tom moved about during his childhood with spells spent in Shrewsbury with his beloved Aunt Marjorie, in Marylebone with Aunt Madge, and at St George's, Weybridge, where he boarded. It was only after his father remarried that he returned to live in Wimbledon.

We don't know exactly where Tom's 70-plus years as an altar server began, but whilst in Shrewsbury he served at the 7.00am mass every day before school, and he also served at his father's wedding to Victoria Worman (née Cross) in 1948.

Tom took over leadership of the 18th Morden Scout Group from Fr Byrne, bringing his love of the British countryside to the role. It's quite a challenge to piece together how he juggled weekly meetings with the working patterns policework entailed, but he remained leader for 25 years.

Despite their family homes being within half a mile of each other, fate conspired to prevent Tom and Christine from meeting (boarding school and national service for Tom; university and a year's teaching in France for Christine). A combination of faith and music finally brought them together when they joined the church choir. After practice, Tom, being the gentleman that he was, offered to walk Christine home. They were married on 31 March 1964. Fr. Byrne conducted the wedding, Canon O'Donnell celebrated the Mass and the scout group were in attendance. The newlyweds made their home in Manor Gardens, first at number 19 and then moving to number 22. All five Davis children were baptized at St. John Fisher and attended schools within the parish.

Music remained an integral part of their lives. The family home was filled with the sound of recorder lessons and music practice, often competing. One of my overriding memories of Dad is of him conducting to a recording of Vivaldi's The Four Seasons.

With a growing family and whilst serving in the police force, Tom somehow carved out time to study, not only for police exams, but also for a degree in sociology. In what time was 'spare', he took up bee-keeping. Tom also greatly enjoyed calligraphy, examples of which can be found under the mosaics in the side chapels.

An active member of the St Vincent de Paul Society, Tom also volunteered with the HCPT, making several pilgrimages to Lourdes. Together with Christine, for over 20 years, he was a member of the Teams of Our Lady. Other causes close to his heart were the British Legion, the armed forces charity, SSAFA, and the Life Group.



After retiring from the police force, Tom worked for Battersea Dog's home, and volunteered at the Wimbledon Guild. He also took up bowling, joining the John Innes bowling club, where he was quietly proud of his considerable success. When my parents moved house, it was to the other side of John Innes park, Aylward Road.

In 1999, Tom was appointed an Extraordinary Minister by the Archbishop of Southwark and, in 2018, Fr David presented him with a medal of merit for serving on the altar for 50 years, something he was particularly proud of. He was also a regular church reader.

Always at the heart of Tom's life, the parish of St. John Fisher became especially important to him during his final years. He attended morning Mass, and his first thought on waking after his afternoon nap was that he should go to church. Tom continued to attend choir rehearsals and serve on the altar until 2019.

Tom used to say that people never die while they are remembered. Some of my lasting memories will be of taking him to church. The Davis family would like to express their gratitude for the support received from Fr Matthias and the parish community.

**Jane Davis**

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## **PAM RODGERS R.I.P.**

Pam Rodgers became a member of St. John Fisher parish in the summer of 1966 when the family moved here from Birmingham. Her husband Peter had just been appointed Headteacher of the newly-built St. John Fisher Primary School, which opened that September. Pam was kept busy looking after their six children but was always very supportive of Peter – even joining him on St. John Fisher's first ever School Trip to St Mary's Bay. There were no female teachers available to supervise the girls' dorm so Pam stepped in, taking the younger children along with her.

Pam loved to sing and both she and Peter were members of the West Barnes Singers for a number of years. Pam was, until the restrictions, a keen member of the choir at St. John Fisher, acting as 'secretary' to ensure the choir sang at weddings and funerals as well as 11 o'clock mass on Sundays.

Pam was a member of the Dames of St Joan and quietly did a lot for charity. Over the course of the year, Pam would prepare a number of Christmas shoe-boxes for the homeless, filling them with useful essentials and little treats. Pam was also a prolific knitter, belonging to two knitting groups. One group knitted toys to sell at fund-raising fairs at Liberty House and the other group knitted blankets, scarves, hats and mittens for the homeless.

One of the things for which Pam will be remembered is her genuine friendship. In addition to remaining in touch with friends from her schooldays, Pam still had wonderful relationships with friends she met as neighbours in Richmond Avenue in 1966, friends she met through the school and the church, neighbours from Braeside Avenue, where she lived from 1991 to 2015 and most recently her neighbours at Liberty House. As one of the first residents to move in she



made it her business to welcome every new resident and "show them the ropes".

Pam sadly lost her battle with cancer on 30 January 2021. Although she received the diagnosis in 2018 and underwent surgery early that year, many people did not even know she had cancer as she simply got on with her life and didn't complain. Pam was a shining example to us all and will be sorely missed by friends and family everywhere.

**Susan Leonard**

# MY HUSBAND - CHARLIE O'ROURKE

## JANUARY 1962 - OCTOBER 2020



So many people have been lost or passed away before their time during this last horrendous year. We lost our beloved husband and father, Charlie O'Rourke in October, very shockingly, and not to Covid-19 but to Cancer. A silent killer. I have been asked to write a few words about him for Talkabout and do hope that I can do him some justice.

Charlie grew up in Cannon Hill Lane and in fact we only left there three years ago to find a home that we could retire to and enjoy during our later years. Charlie did in fact live in the same house for 53 years and that always made most people's bottom jaw drop! He went to St. John Fisher, St. Catherine's and of course the College. He was a dedicated Old Boy being Secretary of the Old Boys Rugby Club and wrote numerous match reports for the local Guardian in the 90's. When our children came along - the boys went to Wimbledon College and our daughter to the Ursuline High.

Charlie was encouraged by the Head of 6th Form to go to Kingston Poly (not University until recently) and do an Economics degree. He enjoyed independent study and went on to do a Masters at Imperial College. Shortly after this in 1985 we met and married in 1989. Canon Acton married us in St. John Fisher Church, and we became Parishioners. Career building followed and he worked for a number of different companies providing software services and sales and in the mid-90's started a business of his own with three

colleagues. They were successful and very hard working - this time was probably the highlight of his working career.

I was a busy Mum with three small children from the mid-90's and Charlie was a constant source of support and encouragement to me, and our children, as any good husband should be. He helped me make decisions about myself in terms of my working life and shared the load of child care and home life. He was generally Dad's Taxi – Monday for Swimming, Tuesday for Brownies, Thursday for Scouts etc. etc. and got himself onto Mum's rotas for pick up and drop offs! He loved being a Dad. Never missed a parents evening, end of term play, concert where he glowed with pride.

When the College needed help and support raising funds for rugby tours – Charlie was in his element. He organised fund raisers and reached out to other Old Boys to enlist their help and support. He felt that Sport was so important, team games particularly and rugby his pride and joy. He coached at Wimbledon Minis, Juniors and Colts for 15 years and his weekends were rugby driven. He had some considerable success with cups and trophies galore and one boy playing Internationally. He was extremely proud of all the boys and in return they loved him.

All of our children had their First Communion and Confirmation at St. John Fisher Church – under the care and attention of Sister Catherine of course – as she had done to Charlie in the 1960s and 70s!

We watched and supported together as our children grew into young adults and took their separate paths to University and onwards to careers. He helped organise dissertations, collect young people from parties, clubs and sat up at night when they were late back... as all parents do. He was a dedicated and loving Dad.

Around June or July last year Charlie began to feel unwell. The symptoms were very vague initially and he suspected a recurrence of his previous IBS. Sadly this was certainly not the case, as his problems escalated very quickly. At the end of September he had several small strokes and this turned out to be the work of a pancreatic cancer that had been sending out blood clots around his body. He died in St George's Hospital two weeks later when this hideous disease had spread to just about every organ, he was 58.

I empathise with all those families who have lost someone, particularly in such a short time, and in such

a shocking manner – whether it's to Covid 19 or any other illness. This year a number of people have been missed or mis-diagnosed due to the pandemic and many have gone too soon. It's a tragedy for so many families and if this is something that you can relate to – my heart goes out to you. In closing I would just say – please don't put off any symptoms or aches and pains that you have had for a little while – do get checked out by the GP and take it further if you are not satisfied.

I write this with a very heavy heart but I do realise how very lucky I have been to have had such a wonderful husband, friend and father to our children for 35 years – I just wish it could have been for a further 20 years or more. I would like to thank Father Matthias for his generous support of us all when we faced these very dark days and the Parish in general for their kindness,

support, well wishes and prayers. They really have given us strength. My friends, family and colleagues have been a genuine life line in these past few months and I thank God for them all.

Sending you all much love.

**Belinda O'Rourke**



CANCER  
RESEARCH  
UK

Editor: *In memory of her husband, Belinda is taking part in Cancer Research UK's Walk All Over Cancer in March. If you'd like to sponsor Belinda in memory of Charlie or just because it's a great cause, please go to her fundraising page:*

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/belinda-walk-all-over-cancer-fundraising-page-9>

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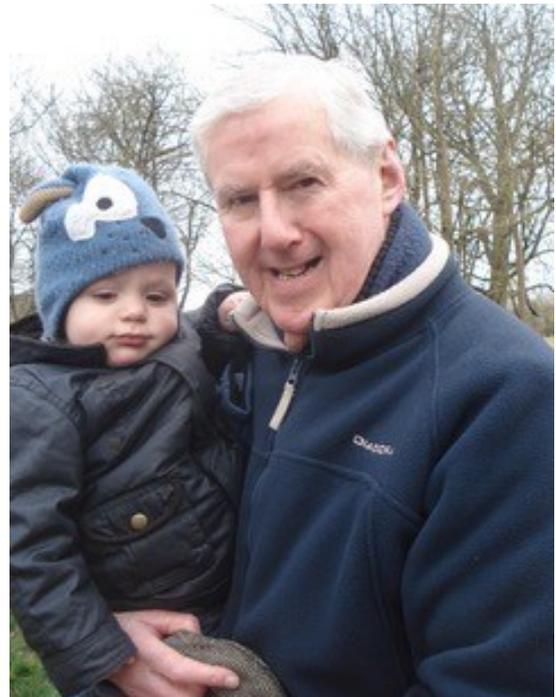
## LIAM HARNETT R.I.P.

When I was asked to write a short article about my late husband and his involvement with various charities, I said that Liam was a very private person and rarely talked about any of these activities. I apologise in advance for any lack of detail and any misinformation.

Liam was born in Killarney, Ireland and came to England in his early twenties. He brought with him a great love of his family, his religion, and his country, a strong belief in justice, an inquiring mind and an excellent education. He worked briefly in prep schools teaching Greek and Latin and then got a job with an insurance broker in London. He looked after his parents and brought them to live with him in Clapham and his two brothers joined him later.

We married in 1966 and Liam worked hard to provide for our four sons using his knowledge of Spanish to develop business in Spain, Mexico and various South American countries.

It was Spanish and his membership of the John Fisher *Justice and Peace* group that led to his involvement in charity work during his retirement. I think it began with translating work at the Wimbledon centre for asylum seekers, which then led to his membership of *Christian Care* and his work with the homeless for *Faith in Action*. During his time with *Christian Care* Liam befriended families in need and visited them regularly often helping with the paperwork needed for applications for employment, benefits, citizenship and schooling for children. He drove the *Christian Care* van for their furniture project, collecting and delivering beds and tables etc to those who had very little or even no furniture. During this busy retirement, he also had time



for membership of St. Vincent de Paul and involvement in Parish Council work.

As an active member of the *Justice and Peace* group Liam helped to distribute Christmas cards to be posted by parishioners to Prisoners of Conscience to let them know that they were in our prayers and not forgotten. He also promoted Fair Trade goods at their parish sales and helped to collect and distribute food to Food Banks and families experiencing difficulties.

Liam believed in the common good and was committed to equal opportunities and fair treatment for all.

**Barbara Harnett**

# GERRY RYAN R.I.P.

1932 - 2019



We moved into our house in Cannon Hill Lane with our three oldest children, Richard, David, and Anne in September 1969. We were just in time for the opening of schools and the new three tier system. We had previously lived in Keighley, West Yorkshire and before that in Crawley in the new town, but Gerry grew up in Wimbledon Park and played football for Catholic Youth teams and the Salesians so he knew the area well. We had even heard of St. John Fisher Parish and of Canon O'Donnell when we lived in West Yorkshire!

Gerry taught at St Thomas of Canterbury Middle School before becoming headteacher at Cardinal Newman

School in Hersham, Surrey. The Parish was quite different in the 1970's and fundraising by running hugely successful Summer and Christmas fairs was very important. Gerry involved himself in both of these and was always ready to help. They were great social events.

For several years he ran the Parish Youth Club, which met every Friday evening in St. Catherine's School. Maureen Elliott and Father Baker assisted him and the Club was in safe hands.

His experience in Catholic education as a teacher and headteacher first in East London, and later in West Sussex, Keighley, Merton, and finally Surrey, as well as his experience with the National Association of Headteachers meant that he was well qualified to serve as a school governor and he became a parent governor at St. Catherine's when our youngest son Christopher was there.

Later he became Chair of Governors and also at Corpus Christi School in New Malden. When a further reorganisation of schools happened, he was once again involved. It was a difficult time. Meetings took place in the Borough and also Diocesan meetings in Orpington. Being Chair of Governors was a full-time job in his retirement. When St. Catherine's finally closed he was co-opted as a Governor of St. John Fisher.

Gerry was the most generous of men. He was first and foremost a family man, but was always ready to give of his expertise to help the Parish family too.

Jenny Ryan

## PRAYER FOR THE DEPARTED

Remember Lord,  
those who have died and gone before us  
marked with the sign of faith,  
especially those for whom we now pray.  
may these, and all who sleep in  
Christ,  
find in Your presence light,  
happiness and peace.  
Through Christ Our Lord.  
Amen.



## Stamp Collection

A reminder that there is a box at the back of the church for your used postage stamps. These stamps are passed to the *Jesuit Missions Stamp Group* who meet monthly to sort the stamps. They are then sold to a dealer and the proceeds used to fund *Jesuit Missions* projects. This raises a considerable sum for the Missions.

Thank you for your donations!





# JUSTICE & PEACE IN ST. JOHN FISHER PARISH



The Justice and Peace group started meeting again via Zoom in September. We restarted the Food Collections with an excellent response. At present as *Faith in Action* is operating only a skeleton service, we are collecting alternately for *Wimbledon Foodbank* and *Christian Care Merton*. Many thanks to parishioners for the excellent response.

In November, as always, we invited parishioners to send a Christmas card to Christians in various countries who are persecuted for their faith. Some 150 cards were collected and sent. The number of countries where Christians cannot practise freely is growing and sadly in many countries writing to Christians can endanger them so we commend them all to your prayers. You can read more at *Aid to the Church in Need* <https://acnuk.org> and *Christian Solidarity Worldwide* [www.csw.org.uk/home](http://www.csw.org.uk/home)

At the beginning of December, *Christian Care* offered us a list of items they would like to include in Christmas hampers for families who struggle to survive. The response from the Parish was outstanding and *Christian Care* were able to make up 43 parcels. Cash donations meant they could also include a small gift.



In December we also planned our **New Year Peace Service** based on the Pope's message for 2021 "A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace" and Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, urging us to treat everyone as our brothers and sisters. Sadly the closure of the Church and the January lockdown meant we were not able to proceed with the service. We very much hope to hold this service later in the year.

Late February brought **Fairtrade Fortnight** when we are all urged to support ethical farming worldwide. This year the theme is "Choose the World you Want" stressing the need to include climate and local sustainability as part of fair trading. Do make sure any chocolate you buy carries the Fairtrade symbol.



For more information on our Justice & Peace group:

<http://www.sjf-justiceandpeace.org.uk>

and if you would like to be involved email:

[sjf.justiceandpeace@gmail.com](mailto:sjf.justiceandpeace@gmail.com)

## JUSTICE & PEACE ETHICAL SUGGESTIONS



**April:**  
Give any unwanted Easter eggs to *Christian Care*



**May:**  
Grow your own salad



**June:**  
Save water –  
Have shorter showers  
or fewer baths.



### Food Collections Feeding Families in Need

First weekend each  
month (after all Masses)

The following charities are very grateful  
for your generous donations:

10th /11th April  
&  
5th/6th June  
**Christian Care**



They would appreciate:

- Cereals
- Biscuits
- Cooking oil
- Tins of Soup, Fruit & Meat
- Lunch box items (e.g. small drink cartons, mini cheeses, fruit snacks, biscuits)

1st/2nd May  
**Wimbledon Foodbank**



They need:

- Sugar
- Ketchup
- Fruit Juice & Squash
- Tins of Soup, Fruit & Meat
- Custard
- Washing Powder
- Toothpaste

*More people than ever are now being fed by charities*



# WIMBLEDON & DISTRICT FRIENDS OF LIFE

In common with all other charities, LIFE has had to put on hold some of its normal activities since March 2020. During the first lockdown, our charity shops were closed, and, as there was no possibility of school talks, all paid education staff lost their jobs. Fundraising was difficult. Last year's 10 Bridges Walk was cancelled. We hope it may be able to take place in the autumn of this year.



Hounslow LIFE Pregnancy Care Centre. Vicarage Rd. Hounslow W.

During this time, the Hounslow Care Centre, the one our Friends of LIFE group supports, could not be open for face-to face counselling, but acted as a centre for pregnant women and mums in need to collect food parcels.

In July, our charity shops reopened, the nearest being in Gerard's Cross. Christine delivered a lot of baby clothes to Hounslow in August. She was welcomed by Karen Newman, the overall manager of Link 3, who oversees the running of the LIFE houses in our Southern area, as well as the Hounslow Centre. From there, Christine drove to Gerard's Cross with a load of items for the shop. It was good to meet the dedicated staff, and see the small, but well organised shop.



In December, our group received a donation of £100 from the sisters of St. Anne in Lansdowne Road. The sisters send us a cheque every Christmas, and we thank them for their generosity, especially in these difficult times.

Karen Newman decided to keep in touch with us through zoom meetings. We met in October, and again in January. Therese and Christine have attended both



times. The last meeting was particularly informative. We learnt that the London Community Response Fund donates £5,000 to the Care Centre every year, enabling Karen to buy clients cot beds or prams where needed. With the help of referrals from Health Visitors and Home Start, Karen had seen 18 new mothers.

In the present situation, the shops were once again closed and the staff on furlough. Care Centres too. Karen said that when the lockdown lifts, she would ideally like to have the services of a 'man with a van', as the centre has so many items for the charity shop.

We were given a report on the housing situation in the last quarter of 2020. The houses were all full, with 2 clients waiting to be housed. Engagement with the community, such as the Food Bank and the Hygiene Bank have been good. There were 30 clients, and all had Support workers. A client who arrived at the Aylesbury House recently, went into labour the following day at just under 30 weeks pregnant. Baby and mother were both well but still in hospital, with Support Workers travelling to the hospital regularly.

We had a short discussion on fundraising. Therese promised to ask whether Michael Bevan, the Kingston member who is a pianist, could present an online concert in aid of LIFE. I have just heard that Michael and Nicholas Armour, a baritone, are rehearsing for just such a concert. No details yet.

Finally, I should mention the consultation on DIY abortion pills. This comes from the Department of Health and Social Care. You will no doubt be aware that during the pandemic, there has been a temporary measure in place, enabling women to obtain abortion pills through the post, after just a telephone call, instead of a face-to face appointment. It is now proposed to make this method permanent. Some of us have responded to the consultation, pointing out the many dangers of these 'pills-by-post' and asking for this temporary measure to be ended after the lockdown.

**Christine Davis**

# WORLD DAY OF PRAYER ~ PRAYING WITH VANUATU



The **World Day of Prayer Service** was written this year by women of Vanuatu with the theme 'Build on a Strong Foundation', Matthew 7:24-27. This year it was streamed from St Andrew's, Wimbledon, but the congregation participated via Zoom. Some sixty people from churches in Wimbledon (nine from St. John Fisher) took part and the technology worked well. We were even able to "meet" in breakout rooms after the service.

Vanuatu is an archipelago of 80 islands, 2,000 miles east of Australia. Espiritu Santo was 'discovered' in 1606 by the Spanish, and the islands named New Hebrides by Captain Cook. They were renamed Vanuatu on independence in 1980. The people are mostly Melanesian with a Polynesian minority.



In April 2020 the island country was shaken by Cyclone Harold, the second category 5 storm to hit the nation in five years. The largest island of Espiritu Santo was transformed from a lush and verdant landscape to a barren, sun-burned waste. Not only was cyclone Harold devastating, it struck during a state of emergency due to Covid 19. The task of beginning to rebuild is an immense challenge and we hold Vanuatu in our hearts and prayers.



It is fascinating to see how the Bible texts can relate to the country writing the service: in a land hit frequently by cyclones the parable about building on a strong foundation seems particularly apt. Following the Gospel reading we were invited to reflect on the "storms" in our lives today, how our faith provides a solid foundation for us, and what practices in prayer help us hear and listen closely to the Word of God.

You can see the Wimbledon service at YouTube, St Andrew's, Wimbledon, or an international Worship Service at [www.wwdp.org.uk](http://www.wwdp.org.uk)

Next year the service is written by women of England, Wales and Northern Ireland with the theme: "I know the plans I have for you". Put the date in your diary: Friday 4th March 2022. Hopefully we will have a live service, although the Zoom service was a pleasing substitute.

Julie Sheahan



## MOTHERS' PRAYERS

This parish prayer group meets on  
**Thursdays at 10.00am**  
in the Day Chapel.

Please come along and  
pray for your child,

**SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

Anyone who wishes to  
attend is most welcome.

# JOSETTE MEETS ... FATHER FRANCIS

Interviewing Francis Nnamdi Nonyelu - known to us as Fr Francis - is long overdue and I was delighted to catch up with him at last and share with you what I discovered about the man behind the mask... Be prepared, Father Francis exudes joy, vitality, brilliance, knowledge, loving-kindness, and more importantly, love for Jesus and Our beloved Mother Mary but do not be deceived by the youthful looks... I would not go as far as saying that, like God, his days are like a thousand years but he has completed so much in so short a time, they must be at least 48 hours long...

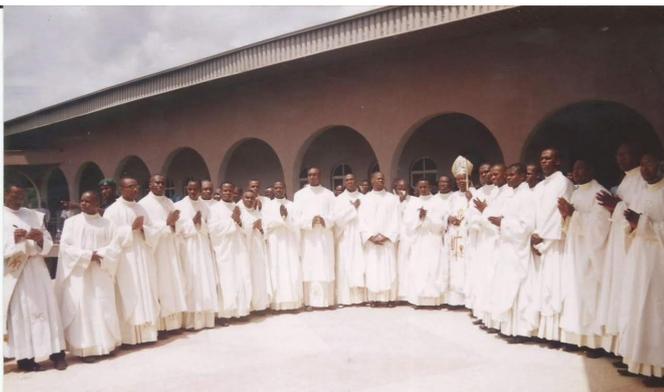
As you may remember, Father celebrated his first Mass at St. John Fisher on 2nd February 2020, at a time when we, as a family, were still under the shock and sorrow caused by Sr. Catherine's passing away in December. (As a personal note, has anybody noticed that Father always refers to Sr. Catherine as to "our dear Sr. Catherine" although he never met her? This is pure delicacy and respect for parishioners' feelings). Then, only a few weeks later, the first national lockdown was declared and churches closed. Consequently, we never gave Father Francis the usual welcome with a Reception Mass, buffet, and social gathering. Nevertheless, he finds St. John Fisher, which he calls "a noble parish" (his own words), amazingly welcoming, warm and generous. He feels very grateful to God and to the parishioners for their continued support through donations, readiness to offer practical help, encouragement, presents, etc. and wishes to take this opportunity to thank the pastoral team publicly: Fr Matthias, Deacons Fred and Tom, Melissa the Parish Secretary, Shirley the housekeeper. And by extension, Canon Colm Acton and Canon Tom McHugh, who are part of the parish. Although nowadays, the congregation is only about 20-25% of its usual number, Father had a chance of meeting more people when the lockdown restrictions were lifted last summer.

Francis was born on 3rd May 1979 in Awka, Nigeria, to



Mr (late) Lawrence and Mrs. Esther Nonyelu, both primary school teachers. Eventually, Mr. Nonyelu joined an industrial firm to improve their income. One of six children (4 boys and 2 girls), Francis grew up in a staunch and traditional Catholic family, attending ("early") Mass almost every day where he would assist the Parish Priest as Altar Server. The family, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, also prayed together daily. Francis received Holy Communion on 25th December 1987 and his vocation must have been nurtured by both his family- and his church-life as, by 1996, he was in no doubt that God was calling him to become a Priest, at which time he was also praying before the Blessed Sacrament for an hour almost daily, especially during Lent. That deep conviction of wanting to serve God has never left him.

With the help of his Parish Priest, he was admitted to St. John Bosco Junior Seminary in Isuaniocha, in 1997 where he stayed until 1999. This was followed by a year in St Pius X seminary and then eight more years at Bigard Memorial Seminary in Enugu, which is the biggest seminary in the world with around 1100 seminarians all wearing white cassocks. Francis was ordained on 22nd August 2009 in St Patrick's Cathedral in his hometown of Awka along with 23 others, a memorable day marked with big celebrations. When discussing the future which might take him out of Nigeria, his bishop re-assured him that "wherever he went, Christ would be there with him."



Father Francis has lovingly kept the vestments given to him by his family which he wore for his ordination.

Several pastoral assignments followed, including:

2009 - 2011 Assistant Priest at St Peter's, Ugwuoba.

2011 - 2013 Assistant Hospital Manager at Regina Caeli Hospital, Awka.

2013 - 2014 Assistant Priest of St Thomas Aquinas, Awka.

2009 - 2014 Notary and Auditor of Interdiocesan Marriage Tribunal (dealing with cases of annulment).

2011 - 2014 Member of the Diocese Project Committee (hospitals, schools, training institute).

2014 - 2018 Further studies at the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland.

2018 - 2019 St Andrew's Church, Thornton Heath.

2020 to date St. John Fisher, Merton.

Apart from some difficulties with the language... Poland reminded Francis of Nigeria in its deep faith in God, church attendance, respect for the Church and its Priests and he enjoyed the welcome and warmth of the people there.

Father has a Bachelor of Philosophy (2004), Bachelor of Sacred Theology (2009), has a Diploma Licentiae in theology (2016) and a Ph.D. in Dogmatic Theology (2018).

Built for it, Father enjoys playing basketball. You might have noticed a basket against the garages so that he can practice in his spare time. He also enjoys volleyball, reading, and has written an article titled "*Christian Theology and New Atheism: The Hierarchy of Explanations*" and he is working on a book "*God and an Unfinished Universe*". His other hobbies include listening to music, particularly Gospel Worship which is sometimes played in the empty church.

He asked "Prayer" to be included because as he said, "I strongly believe that man is great only when he is on his knees before God."

I felt very grateful to Father for putting me at ease and left feeling "holy". Father's faith is contagious and his smile - even behind the mask - is proof of God's love. Thank you, Father. You are very welcome amongst us for as long as God will deem necessary. We can only thank God for having sent you to us and hope you can stay a very very long time!

**Josette Kisnorbo**

## LETTER FOLLOWING THE VISIT OF EX-PARISHIONERS

Dear Father Matthias,

It was a great privilege to be able to join you when you celebrated the Holy Eucharist this morning. Saint John Fisher Church has very happy memories for my wife Ruth and myself for it is where we were married by Father Byrne on 6th June 1964. We thought you would like to see a photo of the Church, before it was updated, at our Nuptial Mass.

In those days I lived at 1 Martin Grove, and Ruth in Malvern, Worcestershire but unfortunately her parents were on a Civil Service tour in Australia so she was given away by her uncle. Ruth and I met in Cyprus where we were serving with the Royal Air Force. Ruth was a Convert and the first person to be confirmed by the late Bishop Tickle, Bishop to the Forces 10 days after his Episcopal Ordination in Rome by Cardinal Heard. My Parents Bill and Monica Bray left Martin Grove for Brighton in 1969. One very hot day in July 1961 I was on leave and attended the laying of the foundation stone of Saint John Fisher's Church. Bishop Cowderoy arrived with his secretary Mgr Strand both just wearing collarless shirts and trousers. I took a number of photos which I passed on to the late Canon O'Donnell.

I much appreciated your homily. "Walk Fast - Walk Alone" are words I shall not forget as it reminded me the good Lord makes sure we are never alone and we should slow down and walk with him. Our prayers are with you and the Parish Team.

God Bless you. Stay safe, stay well

**Mick & Ruth Freshbrook  
Swindon, Wiltshire**



# MY EXPERIENCE OF LOCKDOWN

MARCH 2020 - FEBRUARY 2021

Like most people, I guess, I approached our first national "lockdown" with some mixed feelings but soon became quite annoyed with being constantly told that I am old, vulnerable, at high risk, etc. It reminded me of my teenage years when I was either "too young" or "too old". Suddenly, the world shrunk and it felt as if an alien race had taken over, intent on dehumanizing humanity.

It was not so much the actual lockdown but the fact that I was not allowed to do what I liked and get involved. Too old for volunteering, too vulnerable for shopping, too much at risk for cleaning, too old for cooking! Really?! And who does what needs doing when there is no lockdown? Suddenly, I had to accept gracefully and gratefully (not easy!) to be at the receiving end of people's help when I did not feel I needed it. Obedience and compliance to unfamiliar regulations do not come easily to everyone...

But, almost overnight, a different world opened up. A world without commitments, unexpected visitors, traffic noise, dozens of planes overhead, pollution, obligations... A world of food offerings left in the porch by friends and neighbours (we felt thoroughly spoiled), a world of home cooking and baking experiments, longer than usual phone calls, skies bluer and bluer by the day, glorious Spring weather, spectacular sunrises and sunsets, whole families cycling on empty silent streets, kind volunteers, a world of leisurely TV watching at odd hours...

Wildlife came to town and hedgehogs, owls, deers, red kites, even snakes, newts, unusual butterflies and moths were seen locally and the daily dawn chorus started earlier and earlier as birds were eager to greet the first light.

Politicians, savants, people with opinions fell off their pedestals as Coronavirus defeated all knowledge and carried on spreading its deadly devastation. People who "know better" sowed conspiracy theories and fake news, preying on already weary minds, scattering dismay. Scammers redoubled their efforts to separate people from their hard-earned cash and sadly some fell for it, happy for someone to take an interest in them and talk to them...

On the other hand, medical personnel, key and front-line workers, volunteers became 21st century heroes, often at the cost of their health, family life and even

their own lives. Creativity, ingenuity and loving kindness abounded. New artisan and freelance businesses were created which may never have come to life without the virus. "Mask trees" decorated street corners, replenished by ladies sowing at home using material generously given by neighbours and donating profit to charities, numerous cafés and bars cooked and delivered meals to key workers, children decorated their windows with "Thank you NHS" rainbows and planted "Peace gardens" which grew rapidly as neighbours and passers by contributed a small token, a painted stone or a plant. Some of these became attractive works

of art the children could care for while in the open air, and be proud of. At one point during the first lockdown one neighbour had cooked and delivered no less than 8000 meals to local hospitals. A lot of people somehow became kinder, more caring, discovering depths of charity and compassion they didn't know they had - by the Grace of God.

Our volunteer for shopping was a charming totally selfless young lady who had decided to help her neighbourhood while on furlough. Sadly she had had to postpone her wedding, eventually getting married in October instead of May - not quite the same weather, venue or guest list, but happy to have been able to celebrate with a few friends in her back garden. It was a pleasure meeting her.

We listened to more music, more talks on radio or the Internet, discovered religious channels we never knew existed, became very familiar with travelling from one church to another and from one country to another for daily Mass, talks, virtual pilgrimages and conferences. We marvelled at the wonder of technology which allowed our world to expand again without leaving home. One little example: one morning I decided to "go" to Mass in Purley and who was reading that day but a friend of ours! When Pierre told him we had seen him at Mass, he could not believe it as he did not know Mass was live streamed!

By the way, I love watching Mass in our church and see who is there and who is missing... Just concerned.

A French Catholic channel ran daily chat shows with priests volunteering to answer listeners' questions - any question live - very brave and so knowledgeable! It was very comforting to discover that other believers have questions too... but that answers are available. Let's



say there is nothing new under the sun, we just do not know it all! We learnt a lot through another program which runs a kind of theology course with panels of Bible scholars, priests, writers, etc. With archives of some 250 one-hour-long programs, we had a great choice of subjects to choose from and are still watching a couple of times a week. We also watched some of Pope Francis' Masses and events, saddened by St Peter's Square empty of the usual cheering crowds. This must have required a great deal of fortitude on Pope Francis' part, praying and celebrating by himself, especially when on Maundy Thursday he prayed for the 60 priests who had already died of Covid-19, victims of duty and pastoral love. At the time, Italy was the first European country to be badly hit by the virus and news of some 20,000 deaths seemed unreal, far away and unlikely to reach us... Andrea Bocelli's rendition of the Ave Maria in Milan, a cappella, at Easter, was particularly poignant.

Watching priests celebrating Mass in different countries brought world cultures into our living space and, instead of feeling isolated by lockdown, we felt part of a great colourful and lively family. Of course, Mass follows the same pattern every where and can be understood (at least with the heart) or followed in any language but each priest puts his own touch, his own signature to it. It also brought God's presence into our home in an unprecedented way. It was almost a blessing not to have to go out or do anything outside the house apart from a little gardening which - I realise - does sound rather selfish while, all around the world, numbers of cases and deaths were increasing, more and more people were losing loved ones unable to impart solace and human warmth, shock and grief enshrouding the world as if a heavy blanket of darkness had been thrown over us, choking us.

People remarked with some resentment that even during the war, people could greet each other, kiss, touch, have a sing song and a dance if they wanted to even while in shelters and occasionally go to the pub. Few understood fully the need for masks, social distancing, shop and pub closures, etc. Sadly some lost their jobs and poverty became unavoidable for those already less fortunate. We often counted our blessings. Thank God, no young children to home-school and keep sane... Thank God, no commute



to town to go to work... Thank God, no risk of being unemployed... Thank God, Thank God...

Soon, every value had to be re-assessed as we began to realise just how much we had taken for granted - often without a hint of gratitude. "Vanity, vanity..." How arrogant is mankind, believing itself to be in charge, in control of life, others, nature, with very little room for God - if any. Some rebelled and acted like spoilt children whose favourite toys have been confiscated, sulking and kicking the air, blaming anyone from the Government to the dog!!

We read more and played more Scrabble. I took up knitting and crocheting again, giving away yards of (probably unwanted) scarves as I cannot really follow a pattern and yet once upon a time I could make lampshades, bedspreads, even clothes! I find the repetitive movement of needles/crochet therapeutic, leaving my mind free to do its own thing.

Personally I soon missed my church family, the Repository, my valued customers, all activities linked to our church which are so much part of my life and decided to keep in touch by sending a few people a short daily mail. This soon became a full page to include a quote (either from famous people or from me), a joke, a quiz, sometimes a video or a cartoon. As more and more people expressed their appreciation, I felt motivated to carry on through the whole of the first lockdown. Not a day went past without a call or a message to say how thought provoking, amusing, informative my messages were. Some people asked whether they could pass them on. I could hardly refuse when I was in no doubt as to the source of my inspiration which meant none of my writings belonged to me... I believe a few hundred people received them. I particularly loved writing about the Passion of Dismas (the good thief) throughout Holy Week. The whole exercise was a great blessing to me and only achievable thanks to technology (and the Holy Spirit, of course).

Since I stopped this correspondence at the end of the first lockdown (thinking we were returning to normal life) I have been sending mainly a simple "thought of the day", a video, documentary, music. etc. just to say "Hi. I am thinking of you". People are kind enough to say they like them so I have no reason to stop. My English friends appreciate French items

which help them with their French lessons and French ones enjoy practicing their English... bringing another dimension into this kind of communication.

We had our own share of sorrow. Pierre lost a beloved brother-in-law (childhood and schoolfriend) after a long struggle and eventually spending his last 10 months in one hospital or another. As no visiting was allowed during most of his hospitalisations, his family lived from day to day, sometimes seeing him through a window or having video calls, sometimes not at all because of his condition. His wife deemed too vulnerable was allowed to visit him in the hospice after she had had both vaccines but, by then, he only had one week to live. Quite honestly, being separated from familiar loving faces and cared for by strangers - no matter how kind - and then leaving this world without a last good-bye is inhuman for the dying as much as for those left behind with unanswered questions and unfinished business.

Personally I deplore not having seen my Mum since September 2019. As I was preparing to go in February 2020, Coronavirus became more of a reality and I cancelled my trip. Never did I envisage the situation would only worsen and that we would still be in the same predicament one year later. I often think of Mum in a nursing home in France. Lockdown restrictions have been very strict and her only visitor is my brother who, of course, has to wear a mask and remain two metres away. No visiting is currently allowed but when it starts again, visitors will need proof of a negative test every single time which, of course, makes sense. Like

many others, Mum does not understand why my brother does not greet her with a kiss and a hug, why he does not hold her hand and why she cannot hear or grasp what he is saying. Having to wear a mask herself, she hardly dares to talk and quickly gets out of breath, trying to pull the mask away. The strangeness of it all only adds to her confusion. Just two lives among hundreds of thousands round the world impacted by the virus albeit indirectly.

We also sorely miss our "playdays" with the youngest members of our extended family... Thank God for photos and videos although nothing can replace hugs and kisses and cuddles with little ones...

Often people say "But what can we do? We can only pray". Do not belittle prayer. Never say "ONLY pray" as if it was a menial last minute afterthought when, in fact, prayer is the most important and ONLY WAY. God knows what the outcome of all this will be, how our lives will have been changed for ever, what lessons we are meant to learn but, having seen so many miracles in my own life, I can only say like St Julian of Norwich (and Canon Acton!!) "All will be well" as God will guide and sustain us as we unite to repair our wounded world.

May God bless you and keep you.

Be strong and keep well and safe.

**Josette Kisnorbo**

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## THE YEAR OF ST JOSEPH PRAYER - TO YOU, O BLESSED JOSEPH (*AD TE, BEATE IOSEPH*)

The official prayer of the Year of St. Joseph  
was composed by Pope Leo XIII in his 1889 encyclical, *Quamquam Pluries*.



To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our afflictions, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also.

Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen

# THE GOD WHO SPEAKS



The Year of the Word instituted by Pope Francis, concluded on December 8th 2020. Looking back on a Year that for some was devastating and painful due to loss of loved ones or for others, the terrible realisation that a secure job was no longer a reality, we are drawn to God more closely in prayer, seeking comfort and compassion. Where do we find this compassion and love? Our answer must be in the Bible especially in the Gospels where we meet the Word, Jesus who reveals himself as Love Incarnate. It is he who healed the blind and lame, and returned Lazarus from the dead to his sisters.

We are shown an image of God's love for us in the New Testament through his Son's life, death and resurrection.

The church insists that we should read these scriptures in two ways, each of which would compliment the other. One way is to study what we read with the help of good articles, books, lectures and group discussions. The second way is the way of prayer. Praying the scriptures is a simple way that can lead us to contemplation. Using our imagination to envisage a narrative from the gospels or Acts of the Apostles, helps to bring us closer to these events and gives us an awareness of God's compassion and his insight into our lives and needs. Choosing a phrase from an extract in the gospels that stand out for us and repeating it quietly is another way to dwell prayerfully on the scriptures.

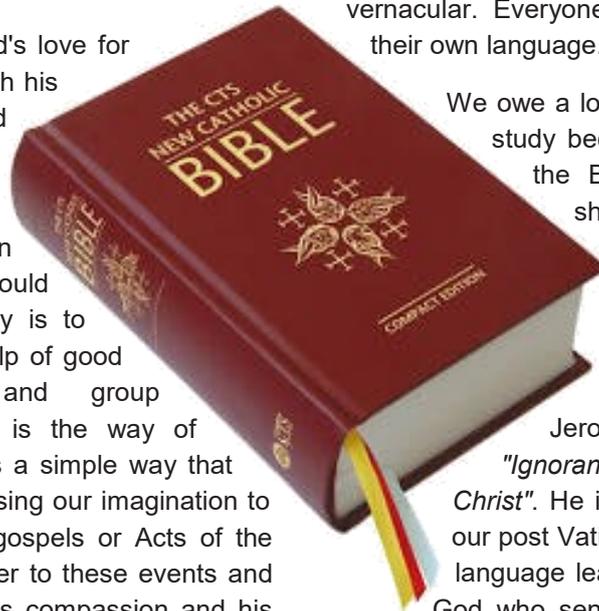
Following this method leads to quiet meditation, the discovery of the Spirit of God within us. Meditation is a way of peace, we only have to open our hearts to the words of the Bible.

Some people are still hesitant about reading the Bible. Listening to the readings at Mass on Sunday and rereading them again during the week perhaps is a good start. Even reading the passage before and after

the said Gospel would give a whole new context for our understanding.

To do this reveals to us how important it is to have a copy of the New Testament or even a Holy Bible.

Pope Francis is encouraging us to read the Bible or just the Gospels each day. *"It is not"*, he says *"for the privileged few. It belongs above all to those called to hear its message and to recognise themselves in its words"*. The second Vatican Council opened up the scriptures to us by introducing the liturgy in the vernacular. Everyone could now join in the liturgy in their own language.

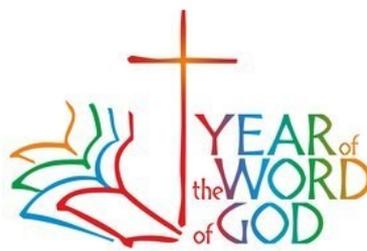


We owe a lot to St. Jerome who after years of study became a Christian. His passion for the Bible and his desire that others should be able to read it, meant he worked to translate it from Greek and Hebrew into Latin, the common language of the Roman Empire. Sixteen hundred years ago, it was extraordinary that St. Jerome was so far sighted. He said

*"Ignorance of the scriptures is ignorance of Christ"*. He is seen as a valuable example for our post Vatican II times. Our liturgy in our own language leads us more gently and closely to God who sent Jesus and raised him from the dead and who constantly addresses us in the words of the Bible. An encounter we should not ignore. As Cardinal Carlo Martini said *"The Word of God is simple and seeks out as its companion a heart that listens"*.

To remind us of the importance of reading the Bible, Pope Francis has dedicated the 3rd Sunday in ordinary time as the Sunday of the Word of God.

**Teresa Pollard**



# CHILDREN'S CRAFT

## ST JOSEPH'S FLOWERING STAFF

Some images and statues of St. Joseph show him with a staff which is topped with lilies. This symbol is a reminder of a historic story which told of how Mary's spouse was chosen:

*"Walking sticks of widowers in Israel were collected and one was to be chosen from among them. The owner of the chosen staff was to marry the young Virgin Mary. Joseph's staff burst into blossom, thus identifying him as divinely chosen."*

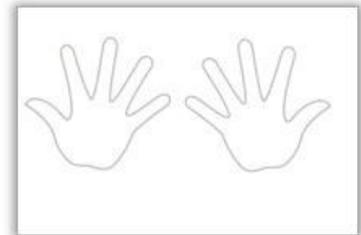
### OPTION 1 - Pipe-Cleaner Lilies

#### Supplies:

- 5 or more green pipe cleaners
- 5 yellow pipe cleaners
- 5 sheets of white paper
- 1 sheet of green paper
- A walking stick or staff (A wooden dowel from a craft store will also work, but you may want to paint/stain it brown.)
- pencil
- scissors
- tape and/or glue (hot glue, if possible)

#### Instructions:

1. The yellow pipe cleaner will be the centre of the lily flower. Cut the yellow pipe cleaner in half. Crisscross and twist the two halves together at the centre. Curl the ends down just a little to make a small ball on each of the 4 ends.
2. The green pipe cleaner will be the stem. Take the green pipe cleaner and twist one end around the yellow pipe cleaners at the centre.
3. Trace two hand prints side-by-side on a sheet of white paper and cut them out. (If possible, stack the 5 white sheets together and cut them out at the same time.) The fingers are the flower's petals.
4. Wrap one hand cut-out around the yellow pipe cleaner with the green coming out the bottom. Tape it together. Then wrap the other hand cut-out around, but on the opposite side.
5. Use a pencil to carefully curl down some of the petals of the lily
6. Repeat the above steps to make more lilies. Make about five lilies.
7. Wrap/twist the green pipe cleaner stems of your lilies around the top portion of the walking stick. You may need to hot glue them to the stick or use an extra green pipe cleaner to help secure the lilies to the staff. If you have any extra pipe cleaner ends hanging out, it looks best if you curl the ends using your finger or a pencil.
8. Cut out and hot glue or tape some long narrow leaves to the green pipe cleaner stems.
9. Now you have St. Joseph's staff blooming with lilies!



<http://www.catholicinspired.site/>

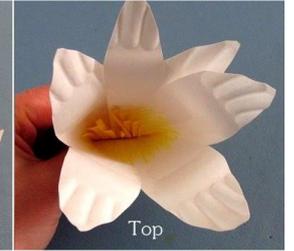
## OPTION 2 - Paper Plate Lilies

### Supplies:

- paper plate (one plate makes 2 flowers)
- yellow paper
- green paper
- yellow pencil or crayon
- clear tape
- stapler

### Instructions:

1. First cut the paper plate in half.
2. Next cut-out 6 or 7 petals, as shown in the picture.
3. Try not to make the petals deeper than the flat part of the paper plate.
4. Flip the plate so the petals are bending away from you. Colour the centre with a yellow crayon or pencil.
5. Cut a 1" x 1 1/2" inch strip of yellow paper. Make lots of thin slits in the paper, but make sure not to cut all the way through.
6. Tape the yellow fringed paper to the centre bottom of the flower.
7. Fold the paper flower into thirds (some petals will overlap). Only press the folds on the bottom half of the flower. Tape it together.
8. Open the flower and curl out the petals out, if needed.
9. Cut out four long triangle shapes from green paper.
10. Put two on each side of the flower bottom, pointing out.
11. Staple the flower and the leaves together at the bottom of the flower. One or two staples should work.



## A STORY ABOUT ST. JOSEPH

Jesus looked up at him. No words needed to be spoken. In the silence, they understood one another. As Jesus waited for Joseph's approval, Joseph chuckled to himself. He didn't doubt that one day the student would surpass the teacher! It was clear the skills of Joseph's trade came naturally to Jesus.

"Your mother will love it!" Joseph said with great affection. As the earthy smell of wood shavings filled the air, Joseph thought about how much he treasured the simple time they got to spend working alongside one another, perhaps even more now. Was it already a month ago when he and Mary had been filled with such great anxiety as they searched for Jesus in Jerusalem? Joseph's heart tightened as he thought about the fear he and Mary had felt when they couldn't find him.

A sudden stab of pain shot through Joseph's finger.

"I'm so sorry, Father!" Jesus exclaimed.

"Don't worry, Jesus... my finger and the hammer are not strangers. They have met many times before!" Joseph laughed and tousled Jesus' hair. "But what do you say we take a break for lunch?"

**Maria LaVoy**  
From *Living Sparks of God:*  
*Stories of Saints for Young Catholics*

## A CHILD'S PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

St. Joseph,  
watch over me and care for me  
just as you cared for the child Jesus;  
and by your help,  
may I come to know your Son,  
and so grow in strength and wisdom  
and the favour of God.

Amen.

# FROM MY HEART TO YOUR HEART

## "DON'T GIVE BLANKETS TO THE HOMELESS"

It was Sunday evening on one of February's cold nights. At the request of a colleague I had finished my 8.00pm Mass, in Portuguese, in one of the chapels of Funchal. After Mass all had been invited to move to the social room where coffee, tea and cake were served. A small group decided to comment on my homily. In general, my homilies, even if based on the readings of the Word of God, are not always about popular and attractive subjects. My "lighthouse" for my homilies are, most of the time, related with what I consider the Mission Statement of Jesus that is *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor... to set free the oppressed..."* (Luke 4: 18-19).

This isn't always attractive. There is a "pious" lady who has the keys of one church where I, very often, say Mass who, when in my homily, I talk about the poor, she stands up and leaves the church. Then as a "good Catholic", when I end my homily, she returns to the pews.

At a certain point of the conversation about my homily, I heard a lady saying: "Never give blankets to the homeless. Because if you give them blankets they get used to that and then they don't want to leave the streets. To be homeless is their choice". I was speechless. I almost cried. This conversation was done among a group of Christians who had just attended Mass, had heard the readings of the Word and had received Holy Communion, the Bread of Life. It was in this moment that I remembered the words of Louis Evely in his book, *'That Man is You'*, which says that: "The most difficult people to convert in the world are Christians to Christ".

In the first reading of that particular Sunday (5th on the Ordinary Time, Cycle A) the Prophet Isaiah (Is. 58:7-10) says: *"Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter*



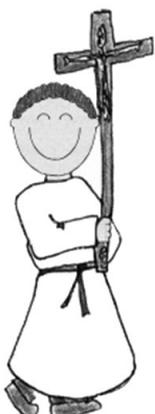
*the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked and turn not from your own kin. Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over... Cry and the Lord will answer..."*. I wanted to travel all over the world and tell people that no human being "chooses" the indignity of being homeless.

A Mass that ends with statements like that, I see it more like a religious entertainment than as a spiritual and Christian experience.

**Please give blankets and food to the homeless.** No one chooses the indignity of being homeless.

Love & Peace,

**Fr. Bernardino Andrade**  
**Chapel of Our Lady of Penha de França**  
**Funchal, Madeira**



## ALTAR SERVERS

We have five Altar Servers who joined the Guild of St Stephen back in 2015. They were due to be presented with their 5 year service certificates at Christmas, however, due to the pandemic this was not possible. We hope to be able to present their awards once more 'normal' life resumes.

I have been keeping in touch with the team via phone and occasional email.

God bless.

**Rob Roy**



# FRIDAY FARE



*Were it not for the pandemic, many parishioners would be enjoying a 'Lenten Lunch' on Fridays, a bowl of homemade soup served with rolls, tea and excellent company. We are grateful to Ann Bennett for sharing Annie Bell's recipe for Leek and Potato Soup, which we can enjoy in our own homes.*

## LEEK AND POTATO SOUP

This is a country cousin of vichyssoise, but without the cream you can settle down to a serious bowlful followed by another. I crave this soup whenever I am feeling below par and am happy to live off it for many days at a time. There is something about the sweetness of the leeks with the comforting nibs of potatoes. The bacon is a frill, which you may wish to omit on a Friday, but it's good to know how to adorn your bowl of soup should you wish.

### Ingredients:

- 50g unsalted butter
- 700g leeks (trimmed weight), sliced
- 1 large onion, peeled and chopped
- 200ml white wine
- 170g maincrop potatoes. peeled and thinly sliced
- 1.3 litres fresh chicken or vegetable stock
- Sea salt, black pepper

### To serve

- 200g rindless unsmoked streaky bacon, diced
- Snipped chives

### Method:

1. Melt the butter in a large saucepan over a medium-low heat and fry the leeks and onion for 8 -10 minutes until silky and soft, without colouring, stirring occasionally.
2. Add the wine and reduce until syrupy.
3. Meanwhile, bring the stock to the boil in a separate pan.

4. Add the sliced potatoes to the leeks and stir them around for a minute. Then pour the boiling stock over.
5. Season and simmer for 8 minutes. At the same time, heat a dry frying pan over a medium-low heat, add the bacon and fry for 7-8 minutes until dark and crisp, stirring occasionally. Remove with a slotted spoon to a bowl and set aside.
6. Blitz the soup in batches in a food processor to a textured slurry.
7. Return to a clean saucepan, taste to check the seasoning and reheat gently.
8. Ladle the soup into warm bowls, scatter over some bacon and chives and serve.

**Annie Bell**

## VANUATU COCONUT CAKE

This year's World Day of Prayer was presented by the women of Vanuatu - and this traditional coconut cake recipe comes from this Pacific island nation where coconuts grow!

### Ingredients:

- 200g caster sugar
- 60g ground almonds
- 4 egg whites
- 500g shredded coconut

6. Bake for half an hour, until beginning to turn golden.

### Method:

1. Preheat oven to 170C/ Gas Mark 3
2. Beat egg whites until stiff
3. Add sugar gradually and whisk again till stiff and shiny
4. Fold in almonds and coconut
5. Spoon mixture into a baking tray





# NEWS FROM ST. JOHN FISHER PRIMARY SCHOOL

It seems incredible to believe that as a school we have reached the landmark anniversary of one year since the interruption to 'normal service' in our wonderful school began.

The past 12 months have taught us all, pupils, staff and parents, a huge range of skills and competencies that we could never have envisaged as being so important to the academic, social and pastoral needs of our community.

Whilst we have at times suffered with frustration and disappointment regarding decisions about schools, we are resolute in our agreement as a school community that, despite the challenges presented over the last twelve months, we are stronger together and well prepared for the challenges that may still lie ahead.

After a hugely successful recovery and reintegration of all pupils back to school in September, earlier in March we have celebrated the return of all pupils to school following the easing of the latest lockdown and as 'restricted access' for all pupils comes to an end once again.

As a school community our purpose has never been clearer – to offer the very best for our pupils, staff and parents, and we look forward to embracing and uniting both 'old' and 'new' ways of working as we continue to live out our school motto:

*'Together we grow in God's love,  
learning to be the best we can be.'*

**Janine Kenna  
Head teacher**

## ST. JOHN FISHER SCHOOL LENTEN APPEAL

Please join pupils from St. John Fisher School this Lent supporting **Cafod** in their Walk for Water appeal. This is to support people in areas of the world where they have to walk to collect clean water. Pupils will be encouraged to walk every day and to put a water drop poster in their window to show they are taking part. Parishioners can take part either by joining the walk challenge or by donating to the fundraising page that has been set up.

Fundraising page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/st-john-fisher-primary-school-and-church>

Water droplet download:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/School-fundraising/Water-Droplet-Trail>



*Some the beautiful cards produced by the children for the senior citizens/those who are shielding in our parish*

# LET US DREAM: THE PATH TO A BETTER FUTURE



I offer here some thoughts on how Pope Francis views the present pandemic that the world is facing, and how we might be inspired to help build a better world for the future. In his book "Let Us Dream" he covers all aspects of society drawing from renowned scientists, economists, and other great thinkers. The book of course is based on sacred sources. It is spiritually heart-warming and comes from a holy and wise leader who is passionate about all mankind throughout the world.

Pope Francis suggests that in a crisis, like our present one, it challenges our priorities and lifestyles and shakes up our ways of thinking and how we view the systems and ideologies of companies and governments worldwide. We can come out of a crisis for better or worse but we are never the same. Getting through the crisis, whether imposed on us like the covid virus, or through normal unavoidable circumstances, is a time when we are sifted like wheat as Jesus told St. Peter (Luke 22:31). Our lives are full of trials, big or small which reveal our innermost feelings of love and compassion towards others or in some sad cases, the abuse of others such as moneylenders creating lifelong debts for the poor. Government values are exposed in a crisis e.g. do they save the people or the economy? Pope Francis calls this "mortgaging the people".

But there are many crises in the world, refugees fleeing war and famine, poverty and hunger, persecution and violence and worst of all fleeing the ravages of climate change. We see destruction of our environment through war or greed from rich barons or leaders. These crises may be remote from us but they affect the whole of humanity. Why are some people so marginalised, homeless and living in heart-breaking poverty, while others dwell in excessive wealth? Is the earth existing for us to plunder it? Do others exist to fulfil our needs, make us rich, while they live in poverty? We must look to God our Creator and remember that we belong to Him and to each other.

Pope Francis reminds us that now is the time to "dream big". We can see an image of this dream, like an overflowing river, in the midst of this crisis with so many groups of people and individuals going out of their way

to help others, bringing food, checking on neighbours and transforming neighbourhoods. This is a hopeful sign and a great beginning to a new dream for a better future. One danger we must avoid of course, is indifference. Should we armour-plate our souls against our surroundings? That way we become indifferent to the beggar on the street, demands for good causes and making ourselves aware of what goes on in our world. Such indifference changes our attitudes and Christian values and blocks the Holy Spirit from working in us preventing us from responding to the needs of others.

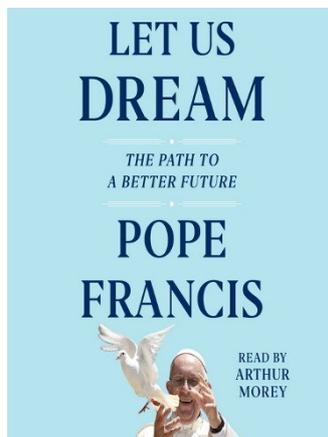
Fast responses to world or local crises is where God's Spirit is working. We have witnessed many such responses but we must continue that aid and support until each crisis is completely resolved, always being aware of people's dignity and value and their continued need.

To combat indifference we must silently open our minds and hearts to the Holy Spirit to see and discern what God's plan might be for us even in the very smallest way. We might discover this through other people's example or through actions that already exist within our community that we could join. Committing to simple changes that make a difference to our community and neighbours is the beginning of the big dream that Pope Francis prays for the whole world. We do this best through discernment and prayer.

Discernment is a decision-making process under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through it we avoid rash immediate decisions placing ourselves before God, knowing He is there always as He said in Matthew's Gospel "*I am with you always to the end of the age*" (Matt. 28:20). We put ourselves before the Lord relating our many opinions, our reasons for and against. With patience and prayer and dialogue with others, in the end we do not have a compromise, but a pull in the right direction. Compromise is only useful as a short term solution until discernment brings about a more lasting one.

So, how will we be a channel of the Holy Spirit in this present time? How do we see ourselves being part of a great movement to improve our society never to fall back into old ways and habits? Let us seek guidance in prayer especially prayer to the Holy Spirit and the Holy Family.

**Teresa Pollard**



# NO ORDINARY JOE - SAINT JOSEPH

Joseph, standing as he does at the crossroads of the Old and New Testaments, is a relatively shadowy figure in the Gospels. His name is from the Hebrew, meaning "he will add". He was married to Mary and was guardian and foster father of Jesus. That is virtually all that we know about him as a person. Indeed, we know little if anything of his actual physical appearance although being a Jew he was likely to have had the characteristics of that race. We know that he was known by his profession, that is, as Joseph the carpenter. To do this job he would have needed to be fit and strong as his work would have been to make planks by hand and even maybe to cut down trees. He was referred to in the Gospel of St. John (6:41-42) indirectly when the crowds referred to Jesus as follows: "Surely this is Jesus son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know."

Perspectives of Joseph as a person need to be distinguished from a reading of the Gospel texts where he is portrayed by his role rather than as an individual character. The four Gospels give us very little information with which to make a picture. The inference is that he is the epitome of many virtues which enabled him to be a loving guardian of the child Jesus. His actual appearance is not significant in the Gospels. He gives the impression however, although it is not specifically stated, of being a just and dignified level-headed man, prompt in action but self-effacing. Difficulties do arise as the Western tradition has normally depicted him as an old man but there is nothing to substantiate this in the Gospels.

## THE LEGENDS

For a great deal of what is our supposed knowledge of Joseph, we have to turn to the so called Apocryphal Gospels. These are Christian works that purport to recount the life or sayings of Jesus but which are not included in the New Testament. The production of such popular literature began in the first century AD but continued throughout the Middle Ages. Up to the last century texts were still being discovered in archaeological digs and the like which have also been consigned to this category.

Accounts of the hidden years of Jesus and his family have always been very popular. The most important of the apocryphal Gospels were the infancy Gospels of Thomas and James. These date from the second century and survive in numerous languages so were well known. These two served as the basis for the eighth century Gospel of Pseudo Matthew, a work in

Latin, which was influential during the Middle Ages. Although Joseph figures prominently in some of these works they do not give us anything that we could use as evidence about Joseph or the other individuals that they portray. The apocryphal works were originally tolerated but finally excluded.

The intentions of authors in the Apocrypha were diverse; some sought to supplement books already in circulation while others sought to supplant them. In some cases these books served as light entertainment. In others, the authors wanted to put forward beliefs or practices which were contrary to those laid out in the Canonical Gospels. In one, for example, Jesus was reported to Joseph for making birds from mud in contravention of the rules for the Sabbath. Jesus' response was to clap his hands and make the birds fly away. This urge to supplement the Bible has continued down the ages but such productions whilst being fascinating are generally regarded as lacking historical or literary value.

These attempts to augment the Bible do however mean that all sorts of traditions were kept alive but very much on the periphery. As an example of this there is a brief mention in Pseudo Matthew that the Ox and Ass were present at the birth of Jesus; this has no doctrinal value but it does not stop them appearing in millions of cribs every year.

Although we would of course like to have much more information about when Joseph was born and how he died, these are not important facts for the purposes of the evangelists. Joseph is important in so far as his actions show his great concern for the safety of the child entrusted to him. On the other hand, in the light of so many works being preserved from oral tradition, are we right to reject the Apocrypha completely or could there be some elements of truth running parallel with the books of the New Testament? They may have been exaggerated over the years, but may they still contain some grains of truth handed down by oral tradition which the evangelists chose not to include as they did not need them for their purposes?

## BIBLICAL SOURCES

The oldest extant Christian writings accepted as doctrinal were the Epistles of Paul. Mention in these is made of Jesus' mother but do not name her. There is no mention at all of Joseph. The Gospel of Mark, which was written about two decades later than Paul's Epistles in AD 80 – 90, does not make any mention of Joseph

either. Joseph first appears in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew which both contain a genealogy of Jesus showing his descent from King David but from different sons. Matthew has Jesus as descended from Solomon and Luke has him descending from Nathan. A possible reason for the difference is that Matthew traced the legal descent according to Jewish law, namely through Joseph as his father. Luke traced Jesus' actual physical descent through Mary. In any event Jesus was descended from the royal line of David through both his parents.

The formation of the core of writings which form the New Testament did not mean that the living oral tradition was totally downgraded. Christianity only gradually became something of a book religion, namely that people act by the book which was hardly known in the contemporary world; it was of course significant in Judaism. Indeed at the time, the mind of Jesus was thought to be better known less from books than by the oral teaching of those survivors who had known the apostles personally. Indeed the Gospels in the New Testament would have originally passed down by oral tradition and were only written down in the latter part of the first century AD.

Most of the information about the person of Joseph and his story comes from Matthew's Gospel. Matthew, as an apostle and evangelist and possibly the local tax collector, might even have been known to Joseph prior to Jesus' ministry and if this were the case it could be surmised that the information regarding the childhood which is unique to Matthew's Gospel came directly from Joseph himself. Alternatively, could Jesus, or Mary even, have given this information to Matthew? Otherwise there may have been another contact known well to both Joseph and Matthew who narrated the particular details to Matthew. (To complicate things further modern scholarship has also cast doubt upon Matthew the apostle also being the evangelist.)

Matthew's was the most Jewish of the Gospels, and his main purpose is to relate events in Jesus' life as fulfilment of the prophecies in the Old Testament. It rarely deviates from this purpose. Matthew's genealogy of Jesus, for example, carefully makes the point that Jesus is a descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph so is fully Jewish. Indeed regular reference is made to Jewish tradition and prophecy throughout the

text. The genealogy is not designed to be specifically historical but a declaration that Jesus is part of the continuous line and how he would be shown as the culmination of it.

The gospel narrative of Matthew soon introduces us to Joseph, Mary's husband, and the hero of the infancy story. Joseph is described as a righteous or just man, "Joseph was a man of honour" (Matthew 1.18). Thus, when Mary became pregnant he did not want to disgrace her publicly so he made plans to break the engagement with her privately.

According to Matthew's gospel, Joseph has a number of visions or dreams. Dreams were frequently regarded as vehicles of divine revelation. In the first dream he was advised by an angel that he should take Mary as his wife despite her pregnancy as she was with child by the Holy Spirit. When he woke up he married her as the angel had told him to. He was also told that the child was to be called Jesus which is what Joseph subsequently did.



There is no information about the actual birth of Jesus. Joseph however could perhaps have been midwife or might have assisted in some way. Stories abound in the Apocrypha about the virgin birth including one that Jesus was miraculously delivered in a cloud directly onto his mother's breast! Eight days later, as recorded in the gospel of Luke, Jesus was circumcised and given the name Jesus.

Soon after the birth, the Magi came from the East to visit the baby Jesus. It is not known how long after the birth but we are told by then the Holy Family was staying in a house. After the departure of the Magi, who were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, Joseph had a second dream and was told by the angel that in order to protect Jesus he would need to move to Egypt. Joseph did so immediately which meant the family escaped the massacre by Herod of the children of Bethlehem and thereabouts. The angel came again to Joseph in a dream after the death of Herod to inform him of Herod's death and that he could return home. For fear of Herod's son, Joseph went to Galilee after he had been given instructions in yet another dream.

The Gospel contrasts two startlingly different characters, Herod and Joseph, and narrates how Herod's rage drives the Holy Family into Egypt and

keeps them there until his death. Fear of Herod's equally vicious son, Archelaus, meant that Joseph chose, as instructed by the angel, to bring his wife and son to Galilee rather than Judea. In a real counterpoint to Herod's hostility, Joseph, the righteous man, is drawn by dreams to protect the Holy Family on their return. By bringing Jesus to Nazareth this sets the stage for what is to follow and from where most of Jesus' ministry takes place.

Nazareth was an obscure village in Galilee close to the Roman city of Sepphoris which had been destroyed by the Romans in 4BC. The city was then re-built in an expensive manner which would have meant work for skilled craftsmen. Joseph was described as "tekton" which is traditionally translated as a carpenter but also could mean a mechanic or be used to describe makers of objects in various materials. These rebuilding works could have provided Joseph with work.

In these early sections of Matthew's Gospel, we can encounter a special type of literary technique. The stories about Herod and the Magi and about Joseph's journey from Bethlehem to Egypt and then back to Nazareth weave together Old Testament quotations, popular Jewish stories about Old Testament heroes and basic elements of the gospel tradition about Jesus into a rich, complex literary tapestry. This technique is reminiscent of an ancient Jewish literary craft called Midrash, which is an artful combination of scriptural interpretation and reflection of contemporary events.

Each of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke sum up an image of Jesus and are designed to respond to the needs of Christians at the time. Matthew wrote his Gospel for a segment of the early Church that needed a sense of identity with the past and some direction going forward as they were facing an uncertain time. The community of mainly Christian Jews at the time the Gospel was written still saw themselves primarily as Jews. They were people of the Messianic age so longed for in Hebrew scripture. Christian and Orthodox Jews appear generally not to have troubled much about each other to start with.

In AD 70 there occurred a cataclysmic event in Jewish history namely the destruction of the Temple by Titus, the future Roman emperor. The impact of this action

should not be underestimated in the psyche of the Jews and was still reverberating at the time Matthew was writing. The remnants of Orthodox Judaism started to realise that if they were to have a future without a Temple or priesthood they needed to adapt. Hitherto there had been tolerance of religious diversity but now antagonism arose between the Orthodox Jews and the increasing number of Jewish Christians. The Orthodox Jews moved away and the split between the two groups became more pronounced.

Matthew's community was therefore affected by disunity and loss of perspective. He wrote a Gospel, perhaps editing what had been written by Mark, and incorporated into it parts of a text known as the Collection of Jesus' sayings and parts known by Matthew and his community at the time. Bearing in mind that the story was largely maintained originally by oral tradition, there is an emphasis on the words of Jesus. Matthew's use of

so many sayings and parables heightens his portrayal of Jesus as a teacher.

The purpose of Matthew's Gospel was partly to rally Christian Jews. Joseph's dreams, amongst others which Matthew mentions in his Gospel, would be regarded at this time as divine revelation and so Matthew was able to use them to explain the divine nature of his subject and show that God was really on the side of the Christian Jews. In this context the dreams, particularly those in the birth narratives, are yet another reminder of the impact God has in our human lives. He is shown guiding and advising Joseph through dreams to ensure the

safety and security of his Son, showing Jesus was the chosen one. Joseph becomes an instrument of God's divine intervention. The recounting of these dreams is further evidence that, whilst the Jewish Christians may have been living in uncertain times, they were still on the right path. They were indeed people of the Messianic age so longed for in Hebrew Scriptures.

The last time Joseph appears in person in any Gospel is when the Holy Family went to Jerusalem at the Passover when Jesus was about twelve years old. Joseph helped Mary to locate Jesus after losing him, finding him eventually in the Temple and for which Jesus received close to a scolding. When Jesus responds saying, "Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house" (Luke 2:41-51), they failed to



understand him. They would probably have been thinking in earthly terms as Joseph being Jesus' father even though they had both had visions or dreams about Jesus' identity before his birth.

Biblical scholars believe that there is no further mention of Joseph after the finding of Jesus in the temple.

## **JOSEPH, SPOUSE & FOSTER FATHER**

Although there is no evidence in the Gospels, legend had it that Mary was a temple virgin when she became pregnant. She needed a guardian otherwise she might have been stoned, the traditional punishment. Joseph was chosen therefore primarily as a guardian, not a husband. His appointment as guardian is accompanied by a rather fanciful story of how he was chosen. All the eligible men were told to surrender their staffs to enable a choice to be made. As Joseph's staff allegedly flowered with lilies he was clearly favoured by God and so he was chosen. To this day statues still represent him holding lilies.

The apocryphal date of birth of St Joseph was 90 BC and he supposedly died at a very old age AD 18 but there is no support for these alleged facts in the Gospels. The presumption is that the idea of Joseph's advanced age at the time he married Mary was introduced probably to allow an explanation of the perpetual virginity of Mary and celibacy on the part of St Joseph. However a significant disparity in ages between Joseph and his wife, if indeed there was one, would have been more usual at that time than we would consider appropriate now.

Several references in the Gospels make mention of Jesus' brothers and sisters which has caused some considerable debate through the centuries. In some apocryphal texts Joseph is even presented as a widower. One interpretation was that the brothers of Jesus were Joseph's children by a previous marriage but this belief was not followed in the Western Church which adopted St Jerome's contention that Joseph like Mary must have been celibate throughout his life; so brothers must mean cousins or other relations.

The whole question of Jesus referring to others as brothers and sisters does not mean necessarily that they were genetically related to him. The practice of referring to whole congregations as brothers and sisters in Christ continues to the present day.

Sexual continence was practised by the early Christians and this was so admired by the medical writer Galen in the second century that it was upheld as an ideal. St Joseph's celibacy would fit well into this ideal. The simple explanation may well be that St Joseph chose to remain celibate. There should be no necessity to invent reasons to explain away the situation

Saint Jerome, who translated the Bible, which later became known as the Vulgate, was a staunch champion of the perpetual celibacy interpretation in Joseph and Mary's relationship. He argued strongly against the work of Helvidius in about AD 383 who proffered an alternative view that Joseph and Mary enjoyed marital relations. Indeed St Jerome went so far as to state that virginity was better than the married state. As the accepted translator of the Bible his opinions were persuasive, and this belief has been perpetuated in one form or another into the present times. The doctrine of Perpetual Virginity was confirmed in AD 431 at the Council of Ephesus and became one of the four Marian dogmas, namely that the dogmas were deemed to be divinely revealed.

Early tradition put forward by the likes of Justin the Martyr (died AD 165) was that Jesus himself was a carpenter like Joseph and that he made yokes and ploughs. He could have helped Joseph who presumably taught him. All the suggestions from the surrounding text indicate that Joseph was not a rich man although he had been able to buy or rent a house before the time the Magi arrived in Bethlehem. Yet when he went to present Jesus at the temple he could only afford the offering of two turtle doves, not the usual sacrifice which was supposed to be a lamb.

## **JOSEPH'S DEATH**

Joseph is presumed to have died before Jesus commenced his ministry but what is said about his demise is just guesswork. Joseph was not mentioned at the marriage feast of Cana nor is he mentioned at the Passion, otherwise he would have taken charge of Jesus' body. Pilate released the body of Jesus to Joseph of Arimathea presumably as he was deemed to be the next nearest male relative to Jesus. Furthermore, Jesus is unlikely to have entrusted his mother to St. John if Joseph had still been alive.

Joseph has by tradition acquired the role of patron saint of a happy death because his death is believed to have occurred in the presence of Jesus and Mary. The apocryphal history of St Joseph the carpenter from either the fifth or sixth century AD contains a long account of Joseph's peaceful death at the age of 111 in the presence of Jesus who was described as being about 19.

The story of Joseph's death lingers still in oral tradition and even today prayers and petitions to St Joseph are made for a peaceful departure from this life.

## **VENERATION OF ST JOSEPH**

Perhaps surprisingly veneration of St Joseph started slowly in the early church where veneration was generally reserved for martyrs. Theological studies of St

Joseph go back for many centuries and there have been works of devotion to him since about AD 800. The veneration of St Joseph started and grew in popularity in Egypt, initially in about the ninth century AD. Doctors of the church began to write about him including St Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, who said, "Our holy patron St Joseph has the power to assist us in all cases, in every necessity, in every undertaking."

The earliest devotion in Western Europe dates from the early fourteenth century when the Servites, an order of mendicant friars - the Servants of Mary - observed his feast on 19th March, the traditional date of his death. This date however had been celebrated as his feast since the tenth century. This tradition found favour at the Council of Constance in 1414 and was given papal approval in 1479 by Pope Sixtus IV.

The veneration of Joseph was taken up by St Theresa of Avila (1515-1585) who attributed her recovery from sickness to St Joseph's intercession. She indicated that she never asked him for anything which he did not deliver and recommended him as an advocate. St Francis de Sales (1567-1622) included Joseph with Mary as saints to be invoked during prayers following an examination of conscience in his work "Introduction to the Devout Life".

In 1650 the Sisters of St Joseph were founded. In the mid-seventeenth century too the practice of wearing of a cord in honour of St Joseph became known. The purpose was to obtain the grace of purity through his intercession. The cord has seven knots and members of the Archconfraternity of the Cord of St Joseph, as it became, are exhorted to recite daily seven glorias in his honour. This devotion of St Joseph's cord was officially sanctioned in 1859 by Pope Pius IX.

Joseph's name was inserted into the Litany of Saints in 1726 by Pope Benedict XIII. Later, in the nineteenth century St Joseph found particular popularity with the laity, particularly the labouring classes. In 1871 the Josephite fathers were created in the United States to work with the poor.

St Joseph was declared the patron of the universal church by Pope Pius IX in 1870 and his feast day was confirmed and fixed in the calendar as a Solemnity. The pope also introduced another feast day in the second week of Easter. Pope Pius XII in 1955 then replaced this with the feast of St Joseph the Worker on the 1st May when he then became the patron of workers. This was a counter celebration to the Communist May Day.

In 1969 Pope Paul VI gave a sermon on St Joseph. The pope explained that Joseph lived an unknown life, but if we look at what we are told attentively, he can be seen by his actions to possess those qualities that the Church attributes to him. In order to be a follower of

Jesus it is not necessary to do great things. It is regarded as enough to have simple human virtues and to live in dignity, even if it is in poverty. Economic matters are worthy of christian consideration as long as they do not become an end in themselves. Joseph's attitude to his life and its vicissitudes had sublime dignity according to the Pope.

A long way from Joseph's humble origins, in Montreal Canada there is a votive shrine to him. It contains a larger than life marble statue with ten thousand votive candles. It also houses hanging between the pillars a significant number of canes and crutches which call to mind the many graces, favours and healings obtained through the intercession of St Joseph.

2020 marked 150 years since Joseph had been specifically allocated a major feast day in 1870 by way of a Solemnity by the Church, so what better way to honour him than with a year specifically dedicated to him as patron of us all. As Pope Francis said of him, "The man who goes unnoticed, a daily discreet and hidden presence."

## ICONOGRAPHY

Up until the seventeenth century Joseph has been depicted variously as particularly old, particularly grey, a particularly kindly man but it might be said also as a particularly feeble man. He is often depicted as balding and with a beard in keeping with Jewish custom. He is, if not passive, largely in the background. To do this is perhaps to miss the point; he was utterly selfless. He has been banished to the back of too many gloomy stable scenes.



As well as carpentry tools, St Joseph is frequently portrayed with lilies or spikenard (an Indian spice). The former recalls the story of the flowering staff, the latter is a Hispanic tradition. Spikenard was chosen to represent St Joseph as it was deemed to be the best of the best (in this case of aromatics) and was also known as pure nard. St Joseph is often depicted as holding a branch. Pope Francis too has a spikenard branch in his coat of arms.

Several images of St Joseph around the world have been granted a canonical coronation. In essence this means blessings or indulgences are granted when prayed in front of. A papal Bull is required to achieve this status. The shrine of St Joseph in England at Mill Hill was originally so authorised by Pius IX in April 1874. The shrine is now in Farnborough Abbey to where it was moved in 2008.

There is a charming story attributed to the choice of Mill

Hill. Herbert Albert Vaughan was responsible for the acquisition of the building but originally the vendor would not sell. Vaughan left disappointed but forgot his bag. He went back to retrieve it and was told by the vendor that he had changed his mind and would sell. When Vaughan left the second time he discovered a statue of St Joseph in his bag! Herbert Albert Vaughan eventually became a Cardinal.

In recent centuries, in line with a growing interest in Joseph's role in the Gospels, he is often portrayed as a younger or even youthful man (perhaps especially in the Protestant depictions). The emphasis is on Joseph's role being to protect but also to stand aside and allow direct access to his wife and adopted son. He has been re-conceptualised as an important figure and is represented as youthful, physically robust, and a protective head of the Holy Family. Bearing in mind all that he had to do and how physically demanding it all must have been, surely this is a much more realistic portrait.

## **PATRONAGE**

The current Pope's previous diocese in Argentina was dedicated to St Joseph, known as San Jose. Indeed San Jose in all its many translations is thought to be the most popular name on earth for place names. He is, as Pope Francis says, the earthly shadow of the heavenly Father.

St Joseph is the patron of Sicily as he was believed to have been instrumental in the relief of the island from famine. The custom on his feast day is to attend Mass in red clothing with dried fava beans blessed on an altar dedicated to him. It is traditional on this day to give food to the needy. Food was prepared containing breadcrumbs to symbolise sawdust.

In 1962 Pope John XXIII added St Joseph's name to the Roman Canon of the Mass. His name was later inserted into the other Eucharistic Prayers in 2013.

Prayers have been said to St Joseph for many things. As an example, a tradition grew of him being the patron saint of moving homes. He is the patron saint of estate agents. If you wanted to sell your house you needed to bury a statue of St Joseph in the front garden. This is a tradition that apparently goes back to the sixteenth century.

St Joseph is the patron saint of a number of cities, regions and countries around the world among them the Americas, Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Croatia, Indonesia, Mexico, Korea, the Philippines and Vietnam. He is the patron of fathers, expectant mothers, explorers, pilgrims, travellers, immigrants, house sellers and buyers, craftsmen, engineers and working people in general. He is not a blank canvas but a patron: what he

does or does not do is an example for us. In modern day parlance he is a motivator or facilitator, and his spirit is positively tangible.

## **PATRIS CORDE**

In late 2020 Pope Francis indicated in an Apostolic Letter that the year from 8th December 2020 to 8th December 2021 should be the year of St Joseph. This letter was entitled PATRIS CORDE which translated means "with a father's heart." Pope Francis describes St Joseph as a beloved father, tender and loving father, an obedient and accepting father in the shadows, never seeking credit or attention for himself.

Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Pope has prayed that we can all be helped to see the importance of ordinary people who exercise patience and offer hope every day like St Joseph. This man who goes unnoticed by design is a hidden presence but one who in the Pope's words plays "an incomparable role in the history of salvation."

Pope Francis has taught us that Joseph was able to set aside any wishes of his own and any ideas he might have had, to teach us that no matter how important we may feel we are not important ourselves. He is a man who teaches the dignity and joy of work for others.

Pope Francis says that fathers are not born but made. He believed St Joseph knew how to love with extraordinary freedom and he never made himself the centre of things. Being a father has nothing to do with possession but is rather a sign pointing to a greater fatherhood, that of our Heavenly Father. Pope Francis indicated that he has prayed to St Joseph for 40 years and has recited a daily prayer to St Joseph which expresses devotion and trust but which is also almost a challenge in its final words, "My beloved father all my trust is in you, let it not be said that I invoked you in vain and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary show me that your goodness is as great as your power."

St Joseph stands strong and supportive for us and was clearly favoured for this role in all our lives. He is and always has been and will always be the earthly shadow of the Father's love. In his unassuming, humble way he stands on the pathway like any loving, devoted father pointing and leading us, his wayward children, to the heavenly love of our Father.

As St Francis de Sales said, "Nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength."

***St Joseph please hold my hand  
and take me home***

**Paul Spooner**

# CHRIST IN THE HOUSE OF HIS PARENTS (‘THE CARPENTER’S SHOP’)

The front cover of *Talkabout* shows part of a painting by Millais, ideal for this edition since it is being published on the Feast of St Joseph



This is Sir John Everett Millais's first important religious subject, showing a scene from the boyhood of Christ.

When it was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1850 it was given no title, but accompanied by a biblical quotation: *'And one shall say unto him, What are those wounds in thine hands? Then he shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.'* (Zech. 13:6)

Christian symbolism figures prominently in the picture. The carpenter's triangle on the wall, above Christ's head, symbolises the Holy Trinity. The wood and nails prefigure the crucifixion, as does the blood on the young Christ's hand, which he has cut on a nail, and which drips onto his foot.

The young St. John is shown fetching a bowl of water with which to bathe the wound. This clearly identifies him as the Baptist, and the image is extended by the white dove perched on the ladder, symbol of the Holy Spirit, which descended from Heaven at the baptism of Christ.

Following the Pre-Raphaelite credo of truth to nature, Millais painted the scene in meticulous detail and based the setting on a real carpenter's shop in Oxford Street.

The sheep in the background, intended to represent the Christian flock, were drawn from two sheep's heads obtained from a local butcher. He avoided using professional models, and relied instead on friends and family. Joseph's head was a portrait of Millais's own father, but the body was based on a real carpenter, with his rough hands, sinewy arms and prominent veins. The Virgin Mary was his sister-in-law Mary Hodgkinson, who also appears in Millais's *Isabella*; John the Baptist was posed by a young adopted cousin, Edwin Everett; and Noël Humphreys, the son of an artist friend, sat for the young Christ.

Millais was viciously attacked in the press for showing the holy family as 'ordinary'. Charles Dickens described Christ as 'a hideous, wry-necked, blubbering, red-haired boy in a night-gown.'

**Tate Modern Website**

<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-christ-in-the-house-of-his-parents-the-carpenters-shop-n03584>

# EARTH HOUR

## What is Earth Hour?

**Earth Hour** is an international campaign aiming to bring attention to climate change and its effect on the environment. Homes and businesses are required to switch off lights at homes and businesses for an hour at 8.30pm local time. This year, it will take place on 27th March, the evening before British Summer time starts.

On Saturday 27 March, **Earth Hour** will see millions of people united in their desire to help our planet to recover after centuries of neglect, even abuse, and provide a sustainable future for us all and future generations. Starting in 2007, in Sydney, **Earth Hour** has spread to more than 180 countries and invites people to be part of this movement by switching their lights and electrical appliances off for one hour in order to save energy. Hopefully, awareness of the danger of destroying nature and biodiversity will increase.

*"The global rate of nature loss during the past 50 years is unprecedented in human history, threatening human lives and well-being,"* said Marco Lambertini, Director General, WWF International. *"The services provided by nature are estimated to be worth US\$125 trillion a year - double the world's GDP - and without nature's resources, the businesses and services we depend on will fail. Nature also benefits us by providing our food, water and clean air, and is one of our strongest allies against climate change."*



## Why is Earth Hour so important in 2021?

2021 is the start of an important decade for climate and nature action. This year, leaders from across the world will make decisions that will impact our futures. By 2030, nature and wildlife could be recovering all around us. We could have green jobs, cleaner air and a healthier future for the next generation.

So whether you simply want to help save God's generous and beautiful gift to us (our only home while in our human bodies) or planning a romantic evening, switch off the lights and light up the candles! An added bonus will be stars and planets becoming more visible in the darker, deeper night skies free of light pollution.

Visit [www.earthhour.org](http://www.earthhour.org) to find out what is happening at locations around the world.

**Josette Kisnorbo**

## RED WEDNESDAY

Wednesday 25th November 2020 was 'Red Wednesday', a day to show solidarity with our Christian brothers and sisters suffering persecution throughout the world. People all across the UK and the world took part in last year's #RedWednesday – with cathedrals, churches, schools, colleges and universities being floodlit red to make a stand for Faith and Freedom.

### Art Competition: "What does Peace mean to you?"

ACN UK invite you to be a part of an exciting art competition, linking to their annual #RedWednesday campaign, the theme for this competition is "What does peace mean to you?" – artists are free to interpret this at their will.



Aid to the  
Church in Need  
ACN UNITED KINGDOM

### Who can enter?

EVERYONE! They have three categories (with 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners from each):

- 0-10 years
- 11-16 years
- 16 years and up

### How to enter

Email the ACN Events Manager, Catharine, at [catharine.crowson@acnuk.org](mailto:catharine.crowson@acnuk.org) to register your place in the competition, with your name and age.

Artists are to send 3 photos of their work to Catharine, rather than the actual piece, and a short story about the inspiration behind the piece.

*Closing date:* 31st October 2021

#### *Mediums:*

must be one of, or a mix of, the following: paint, pastels, charcoal, graphite, ink  
NO photography or sculpture

#### *Max height and width of piece:*

841mm x 594mm / 33.1in x 23.4in / A1paper size



## DID YOU KNOW?

Have you ever wondered what happens to the random foreign coins that get dropped into the collection baskets in Church?

Any banknotes or coins which are foreign, or British (but old and out of circulation) get put aside by the Collection Counters in a jar. When there is no space left inside, the coins are sent to a company which deals with leftover currency.

The most recent jar-full included notes and coins from over 40 different countries, including:

- South African Rands
- New Zealand Dollars
- Danish Kroner
- Polish Zlotys
- Moroccan Dirhams
- Mexican Pesos
- Swiss Francs
- Japanese Yen
- Icelandic Kronur
- US Dollars
- Falkland Is. Pounds
- Pakistani Rupees
- Canadian Dollars
- Euros
- Australian Dollars
- Bermudian Dollars
- Iraqi Dinars
- UAE Dirhams
- Czech Koruna
- Chinese Yuan
- Latvian Lat

Our parishioners are certainly well travelled, or at least they were until recently!

On this occasion, the proceeds from our recent "jar" (£70.75, including a small donation from the company) were donated to the *Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity*. The Parish would rather receive current bank notes and coins - but it's good to know that those stray coins end up going to a good cause!

**Melissa Russell**  
Parish Secretary



## ST JOSEPH WORDSEARCH

Find the words in the puzzle.

Words can go in any direction. Words can share letters as they cross over each other.



- |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| Artisan   | Kind      |
| Bethlehem | Lily      |
| Carpenter | Loving    |
| David     | Mary      |
| Dream     | Nazareth  |
| Egypt     | Obedient  |
| Faithful  | Parent    |
| Father    | Patient   |
| Feast     | Provider  |
| Foster    | Saint     |
| Guardian  | Spouse    |
| Holy      | Steadfast |
| Jesus     | Temple    |
| Joseph    |           |



# LITURGICAL CALENDAR FOR 2021-22

## Calendar of Feasts and Fasts:

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord	Sun.	28th March
Maundy Thursday	Thu.	1st April
Good Friday **	Fri.	2nd April
Easter Sunday	Sun.	4th April
Saint George, Protector of England	Fri.	23rd April
<b>The Ascension of Our Lord</b>	<b>Thu.</b>	<b>13th May</b>
The Feast of Pentecost, Whit Sunday	Sun.	23rd May
The Most Holy Trinity	Sun.	30th May
The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ	Sun.	6th June
The Most Sacred Heart of Jesus	Fri.	11th June
Immaculate Heart of Blessed Virgin Mary	Sat.	12th June
St. John Fisher & St Thomas More	Tue.	22nd June
The Nativity of John the Baptist	Thu.	24th June
<b>Saints Peter and Paul, apostles</b>	<b>Sun.</b>	<b>29th June</b>
The Transfiguration of Our Lord	Fri.	6th August
<b>The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b>	Sun.	15th August
<b>All Saints</b>	<b>Sun.</b>	<b>31st Oct.</b>
Our Lord Jesus Christ. King of the Universe	Sun.	21st Nov.
First Sunday of Advent (Sunday Cycle: B)	Sun.	28th Nov.
<b>The Nativity of Our Lord - Christmas Day</b>	Wed.	<b>25th Dec.</b>
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	Sun.	26th Dec.
<hr/>		
The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God	Sat.	1st Jan. 2022
<b>The Epiphany of Our Lord Jesus Christ</b>	<b>Thur.</b>	<b>6th Jan.</b>
The Baptism of Our Lord	Sun.	9th Jan.
The Presentation of Our Lord (Candlemas)	Wed.	2nd Feb.
Ash Wednesday **	Wed.	2nd March
Saint Joseph	Sat.	19th March
The Annunciation of the Lord	Fri.	25th March

**Bold entries** above denote Holydays of Obligation (and every Sunday too).

\*\* Days of Fasting and Abstinence.

# CYCLE OF PRAYER

*In the Cycle of Prayer, the liturgical year has been divided into six periods. Please pray for the intentions stated - not only on a particular day, not only at Mass, but throughout the period, especially in your own private prayers.*

<b>Easter</b>	<p>New Members of the Church</p> <p>Vocations <i>especially on the World Day of Prayer for Vocations (4th Sunday of Easter)</i></p> <p>Human Work <i>especially on St Joseph the Worker (1st May)</i></p> <p>The Right Use of the Media <i>especially on World Communications Day (7th Sunday of Easter)</i></p> <p>The Church <i>especially on Pentecost Sunday</i></p>
<b>Ordinary Time: Summer</b>	<p>A Deeper Understanding between Christians and Jews</p> <p>Those who suffer Persecution, Oppression, and Denial of Human Rights <i>especially on St. John Fisher and St Thomas More (22 June)</i></p> <p>Europe <i>especially on the feasts of St Benedict (11 July), St Bridget of Sweden (23 July), St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (9 August) who with St Cyril and St Methodius (14 February), and St Catherine of Siena (29 April) - Patrons of Europe</i></p> <p>Human Life <i>especially on the Day for Life (3rd Sunday in June)</i></p> <p>Seafarers <i>especially on Sea Sunday (2nd Sunday in July)</i></p>



[www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk)

## THE POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR 2021



*The intentions are keys to live our faith in daily life, joining action to our prayers. Each intention presenting a challenge that gives purpose to the month.*

### APRIL

#### Fundamental Rights

We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis.

### MAY

#### The World of Finance

Let us pray that those in charge of finance will work with governments to regulate the financial sphere and protect citizens from its dangers.

### JUNE

#### The Beauty of Marriage

Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: may they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience.



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*On Sundays between  
 8.30 to 9.30am  
 and 10.30 to 11am*



- All occasion cards
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**SUSPENDED UNTIL  
 STAGE 2 COVID RULES APPLY**  
 (no earlier than 12 April)



### St. John Fisher Over 60s Club

**Are you free on Thursdays 1–3 pm?**

Do you and your friends like playing card games?

Are you good at words and like playing Scrabble?

Or do you just want to relax, chat and play Bingo?

We offer all these activities, together with tea, coffee, cakes and sandwiches.

**So, why not come along to the Church Hall**

**SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**





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We would be delighted to welcome you to our wonderful school.

Please visit the school website or contact the school office for details.

**St John Fisher RC Primary School**

**Grand Drive**

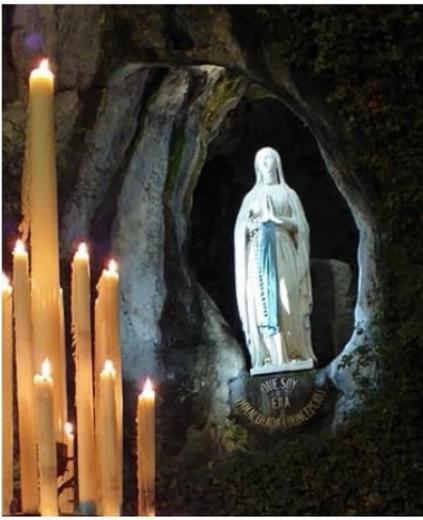
**West Wimbledon**

**London SW20 9NA**

Telephone: 020 8540 2637

Email: [school@st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk](mailto:school@st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk)

Website: [www.st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk](http://www.st-johnfisher.merton.sch.uk)



Tel: 0203 773 5115 | 0780 737 5061

office@stpeterspilgrimages.com

www.stpeterspilgrimages.com



## Pilgrimages 2021 - 2022

- Medjugorje > 24 June / 8 Days / by Air / £580
- Lourdes & Paris > 13 Aug / 5 Days / by Coach / £380
- Lourdes by Air > 13 Aug / 4 Days / by Air / £480
- Lourdes & Nevers > 6 Sept / 7 Days / by Coach / £580
- Lourdes by Air > 7 Sept / 4 Days / by Air / £580
- Fatima & Lisbon > 6 Sept / 5 Days / by Air / £580
- The Holy Land > 22 Oct / 8 Days / by Air / £1290
- Medjugorje > 22 Oct / 8 Days / by Air / £590
- The Holy Land > 19 Nov / 8 Days / by Air / £1290
- Lourdes & Paris 2022 > 14 April Easter / by Coach / £380

St. Peter's Pilgrimages Ltd - Diamond House, 179 Lower Richmond Road, Richmond, Surrey.  
Registered in England & Wales, Company No 10495803

## To advertise in TALKABOUT

Please contact:

**Marina Bowyer**

020 8542 1349

talkabout@blueyonder.co.uk

*Speak to Marina about what you would like worded or illustrated in your advert.*

*We aim to please!*

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Quarter Page	£15
Half Page	£23
Full Page	
(inside)	£30
(back cover)	£38



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## ST. JOHN FISHER PARENT & TODDLER GROUP

Thursdays (term time only)  
9.30 - 11.30 am in the Parish Hall



The Parent and Toddler Group invite pre-school children and their parents to come along and create new friendships within our church community.

£3 admission (includes refreshments and a new craft activity each week). Admission is limited to 30 children to ensure a fun and safe environment.

### Any questions?

Please contact Pippa at  
pipnlindsay@gmail.com

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## Beauty Treatments

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**020 3302 0181**

or **07932 628840**

or email: [christiancaremerton@gmail.com](mailto:christiancaremerton@gmail.com)

## TALKABOUT PARISH MAGAZINE - 2021 DATES

Deadline for submitting items ( <a href="mailto:talkabout@blueyonder.co.uk">talkabout@blueyonder.co.uk</a> or % the Parish Office)	Sunday 6 June	Sunday 29 Aug.	Sunday 21 Nov.
Distribution Weekend	26 & 27 June	18 & 19 Sept.	11 & 12 Dec.



Deadline for articles to be included in the next edition of *Talkabout* **must** be with the Editorial Team before

**SUNDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2021**

[talkabout@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:talkabout@blueyonder.co.uk)

### PLEASE NOTE:

The Readers' Rota, Eucharistic Ministers Rota and Collection Counters Rota are not being published at present.



*Coffee, tea, squash & biscuits are served in the Hall after 9:30am and 11:00am Mass each Sunday.*

**SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**

*" Faith is to believe what you do not see; the reward for this faith is to see what you believe "*

*Augustine of Hippo*



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# PARISH GROUPS

	Who for?	When?	Where?	Run by?	Contact Details?
<b>Altar Servers</b>	Parishioners (post-First Holy Communion)			Robert Roy	raroysms@gmail.com
<b>Choir</b> 11am Mass	Church Choir	Practice: Tuesday 3.00-4.30pm	Church Choir Loft	<i>To be advised</i>	
<b>Crusaders</b>	Post-First Holy Communion Young People	First Tuesday each month 4.00-5.00pm	Day Chapel	<i>To be advised</i>	
<b>Music Group</b> 9.30am Mass	Singers and Musicians		Family Mass	Pippa Lindsay & Mary Farrell	pipnlindsay@gmail.com
<b>Guild of Our Lady</b>	Parish children (Year 5 & above)	Monday evening	Day Chapel	Kate Colthup	<i>To be advised</i>
<b>Justice &amp; Peace Group</b>	Parishioners	Once a month	Venue varies	J&P Team	sjf.justiceandpeace@gmail.com
<b>Over 60s Club</b>	Parishioners	Thursday 1.00-3.00pm	Parish Hall	<i>To be advised</i>	
<b>RCIA</b>	Anyone wishing to learn more about Catholicism	Tuesday 8pm	<i>To be advised</i>	Kate Colthup & Miriam Davis	<i>To be advised</i>
<b>Readers</b>	Please speak to the Clergy if you would like to read	Mass	Church	Clergy	207 Cannon Hill Lane merton@rcaos.org.uk
<b>SVP (St Vincent de Paul Society)</b>	Needy parishioners	Help available as needed	By arrangement	SVP Team	Sean Deane 020 8715 7972
<b>Talkabout</b>	Parishioners	Editorial Team meet quarterly	Venue varies	Editorial Team	talkabout@blueyonder.co.uk
<b>Teams of Our Lady</b>	Parish Families	Each Team meets monthly	Homes of members	Davide Buttaci	davide011974@gmail.com
<b>Toddler Group</b>	Children (birth - 4 yrs)	Thursday Term Time 9.30-11.30am	Parish Hall	Pippa Lindsay	pipnlindsay@gmail.com
<b>Youth Group</b>	Parish children (Year 7 & above)	Friday 7.30– 9.00pm	Parish Hall	Clergy	207 Cannon Hill Lane merton@rcaos.org.uk
<b>UNIFORM GROUPS</b>		<i>Uniform Groups Coordinator:</i>		Jaki O'Neill-Ford	jakioneillford@yahoo.co.uk
<b>Rainbows</b>	Girls (5 - 7 yrs)	Tuesday 4.30-5.30pm	Parish Hall	Sandy Brown	san.brown8@hotmail.co.uk.
<b>Brownies</b>	Girls (6 - 9 yrs)	Monday 5.30-7.00pm	Parish Hall	Leanne Kennett <i>Brown Owl</i>	LKennett75@virginmedia.com 07957 470 943
<b>Guides</b>	Girls (10 - 14 yrs)	Tuesday 6.00-7.40pm	Parish Hall	Sandy Brown <i>Guide Leader</i>	san.brown8@hotmail.co.uk.
<b>Beavers</b>	Boys & Girls (6 - 8 yrs)	Friday 5.45pm	Parish Hall	}	}
<b>Cubs</b>	Boys & Girls (8 - 10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> yrs)	Wednesday 6.00-7.30pm	Parish Hall	}	Tracy Sterlini <i>Group Scout Leader</i> tracy@sterlini.plus.com
<b>Scouts</b>	Boys & Girls (10 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> - 14 yrs)	Wednesday 7.30-9.30pm	Parish Hall	}	}
<b>Explorers</b>	Boys & Girls (14 - 19 yrs)	Tuesday 7.45-9.30pm	Parish Hall	Tom Carter & Andy Newman <i>ESLs</i>	dtjambo@yahoo.co.uk

# PARISH DETAILS

## ST. JOHN FISHER PARISH



**Parish Admin.**  
Fr Matthias  
Kizito



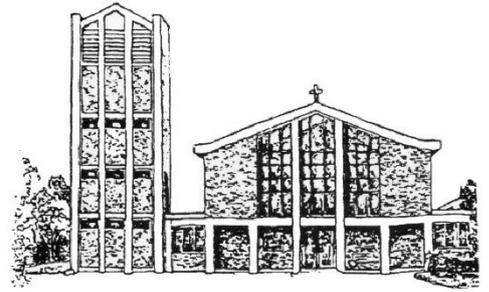
**Assist. Priest**  
Fr Francis  
Nonyelu



**Deacon**  
Fred  
Carter



**Deacon**  
Tom  
Kavanagh



**Address:** The Presbytery  
207 Cannon Hill Lane  
Merton Park, London SW20 9DB

**Telephone:** 020 8542 6355

**E-mail:** merton@rcaos.org.uk  
talkabout@blueyonder.co.uk

**Website:** www.stjohnfishermerton.co.uk

**Parish Office:** Parish Secretary, Melissa Russell  
9am - 2.00pm Monday - Thursday

**Parish Business:** 7.00 pm Mondays

**Baptism:** 3:00 pm First Sunday of the  
month by prior  
arrangement

**Reconciliation:** Saturday 10:00 - 11:00 am  
5:30 - 5:50 pm

**Mass Times:**

Weekdays: 9:00 am

First Fridays: 8:00 pm

Holydays: 6:00 pm (Vigil), 9:00 am & 7.30 pm

Saturday: 9:00 am & 6:00 pm (Vigil)

Sunday: 8:00 am

9:30 am (Family Mass)

11:00 am (Sung Mass)

6:30 pm

**Repository:** Before and after 9 am Mass most  
weekdays. On Sundays between 8.30  
to 9.30am and 10.30 to 11am. For  
more details please see advert on p. 25

## ST. JOHN FISHER PARISH ADVISORY COUNCIL

**Fr. Matthias**  
President

**Deacon Fred**  
Ex-Officio

**Paul Spooner**  
• Chairman

**Peter Nash**  
• Deputy Chair

**Collette Farley**  
• Secretary

**Fr Francis**  
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**Deacon Tom**  
• Ex-Officio  
• Apostolate



**Davide Buttaci**  
• Teams of Our  
Lady

**Michael Calnan**  
• Elected Member

**Sean Deane**  
• St. Vincent de  
Paul

**John Golden**  
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**Pippa Lindsay**  
• Toddlers Group  
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**Angie Mackay**  
• St. John Fisher  
Primary School



**Sandra Malveiro**  
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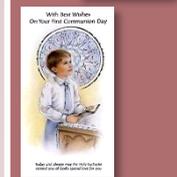
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