

Sunday 3rd May 2020

Weekly Newsletter

St. Anne's Catholic Church

Lynton Avenue Weeping Cross Stafford, ST17 0EA. Telephone: 01785 661012 - Website www.st-annes-st.org.uk

St. Patrick's Catholic Church

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Parish Administrator: Father Robert Devaney - Parish Secretary: Marie Badger

Deacon: Rev. Michael Horsnall

The parishes are part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Registered Charity No.234216

TIMES OF HOLY MASS AND LITURGIES THIS WEEK

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Day	Date	Mass Time	Church	Liturgical Day		Mass Intention
Sat	2 nd	pm	St Anne's	Vigil	No Congregation	Peggy Toner RIP
Sun	3 rd	am	“ “	Fourth Sunday of Easter	No Congregation	Kathleen “Patty” Tiernan
Mon	4 th	am	“ “	The English Martyrs	Feast No Congregation	Bishop Leo McCarty RIP
Tue	5 th	am	“ “	Easter Feria	No Congregation	Ernest & Catherine Elliott RIP
Wed	6 th	am	“ “	Easter Feria	No Congregation	Joseph Galvin RIP
Thu	7 th	am	“ “	Easter Feria	No Congregation	Joan McKinlay
Fri	8 th	am	“ “	Easter Feria	No Congregation	For the sick & their carers
Sat	9 th	pm	“ “	Vigil	No Congregation	John & Eleanor McKinlay RIP
Sun	10 th	am	“ “	Fifth Sunday of Easter		People of the Parish

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM By Appointment

Prayers for the departed loved ones whose anniversaries occur at this time: [St. Patrick's] Bridget Duffy, Harry Rothwell, Patrick Scanlon, Isabella Palmer, Mary Matthew, Dorothy O'Shea, Ian Milward, Lawrence Dillon, Martin Murphy, Edith Adams, Witold Kurek, Catherine McCabe, John Hannifin, Eileen Edensor, Fr Walter Joret. [St. Anne's] Mary Murphy, Madeline Sweet, Gordon Truckel, Mary Wharton, Edith Hird, Margaret Kiberd, Thomas Callaghan, Monica Scriven, Noel O'Sullivan, Tony Adamson, Pat Bayliffe.

Prayers for the sick: St Patrick's Phylis Bowers, Kath Read, Susan Prince, Tim Tiernan, Gregory McKinlay, Linda Reavy, Martha Porter and Cecylia Kotara St Anne's Michael Glover, Patricia Walters, Thomas McCormick, Mary Terry, Bernard Lundberg, Cath Miles, Walter Rogers, Colin Wilkinson, Richard McMahon, Patsy Connelly Smith, Colin Wise and Shaun Gilbride.

Income	Source	Gift Aid	Non-Gift Aid	Standing Order	Total	Attendance
29 th March						
St Anne's	Offertory		£	£	£	
St. Patrick's	Offertory	£	£	£	£	

St Patricks: We have received the figures from **Missio** for the Red Box collections and other donations from St. Patrick's Parish in 2019. We raised £390.16. **Missio** would like to thank everyone for their donations in the past year.

ST. ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

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ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Parishes Social (Fundraising Events) DATES UP TO SUMMER: Due to our present emergency situation all such events

Our Parish Deceased: Please remember in your prayers **Kathleen Boulton**, of St Patrick's, and **Barbara Curran** and **John Taylor**, of St Anne's, who died very recently. We pray also for their families at this time. May *Kathleen, Barbara*

Divine Renovation have produced a Parish Response Kit to the current 'coronavirus' situation that we are all in. It can be downloaded for free here: <https://divinerenovation.org>

Parish Tote 150 Club: In order to catch up with the months missed, once we return, each of the missing months will be drawn separately. In this way, there will be no gaps. Many thanks for your support.

Hello Parishioners on this Fourth Sunday of Easter. A continued Blessed, Happy and Holy Eastertide to you all as we know that the Easter period takes us through to the Gift of the Holy Spirit Himself (Pentecost).

I hope and pray that we have become aware of our new mode of living lives as Eucharistic faithful. For all of us, such a significant change in how we worship as Catholics is unprecedented. But, as our faith keeps telling us, and as we keep reminding ourselves, God's creation, God's universe, God's world and God's people fit in with His 'blueprint' for the kingdom He has prepared for us, no matter what turmoil or disaster afflicts our precarious lives. If we keep steadfast and, most importantly, take advantage of the prayer time we will be offered, our Church will come through this 'crisis' humbled and with greater awareness of our utter dependency on God. Meanwhile, during our time of 'waiting' upon the Lord, we offer our prayers for all who have been, are, and will be affected by this pandemic.

To parish practical matters:

The bulletin will appear on the websites of both parishes weekly and this space will give me a chance to share with you all sorts of concerns, from how we might keep in touch with the housebound, to how we might continue to provide food etc. for those in great need. All church buildings remain locked. This is mainly to discourage folk from venturing out and potentially coming into proximity with others unnecessarily. But, the parish presbytery will be open and I shall, **in so far as I am able**, be a source of information for any who wish to know what is happening in regard to our two parishes. Marie, as you will understand, like many of you, no doubt, is furloughed; I am available in the presbytery for point of phone contact. The bulletin will continue to be uploaded to the parish websites and a few hard copies printed and left under the Hall porch at St Anne's.

As you notice above, the Mass intentions are inserted and will be honoured as I celebrate Mass each day; but sometimes I will need to combine intentions from both parishes because I am only saying one Mass a day.

Regarding the **Drop-in** at St Anne's, some may need help now that it is closed. If any need help on Wednesday morning, for example shopping or collecting medication, please contact Liz Harrison between 10:30am and 12 Noon on 07802694580. Many thanks, Liz.

I know that all three Stafford parishes will work as closely as we can, and on that point, I received a request from Joe McCormack from St Austin's, who had returned from the charity BRUSHSTROKES. They are desperate for all supplies. If people wanted to drop donations off at St Anne's Joe can do a regular pick-up, but, since the church will be locked, just phone me first. Many thanks.

Last Sunday was Easter Sunday - our greatest cause for celebration in our calendar. As the year progresses we will reflect upon this extraordinary moment and realise that the Lord Jesus Christ's resurrected glorified reality reaches across obstacles, walls, buildings, 'situations', difficulties, anxieties and pain to take us with Him back to our origins and beyond our imagination.

Finally, I am very aware that our usual routine, as parish communities, will undergo a considerable change, and we do not know for how long, but nevertheless our parishes will still need supporting as best we can for the foreseeable future. The sustaining and maintenance of the buildings and parish administration has to continue. For those of you who use gift aid envelopes, the new ones for the coming financial year have arrived and Mark (St Anne's) and Margaret St Patrick's are labelling them and for those who contribute this way. There are a number who regularly use standing order (this is the most efficient way of giving) and if 'gift-aiders' could set up standing orders it would be a great help. Such a crisis as the present one shows the advantage of this method. However parishioners wish to donate, be assured of our grateful thanks and know that the parish office (St Anne's) can always be used as a 'drop-off' for envelopes. * I have received this communication from the head of Finance form Cathedral House:

You may like to know that we've made available on the Archdiocese website a standing order and Gift Aid form for parishioners so they can continue to give at this time.

Please direct any such enquiries to: <https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/pages/FAQS/category/finance-resources>

We are also working on an online giving option for parishes which don't already have this option on their parish website. This is proving challenging due to all parishes sharing one charity number but I hope to have an update for you next week.

***I have just received this email from the diocese (Steve Roche):** Dear Fathers, Just to let you know, there is a donate **BUTTON (TOP RIGHT)** on the home page of the diocesan website – www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk From there donations which can also be gift aided can be made to any parish via credit or debit card. Funds will initially be passed to the diocese but we will have reports available to allow us to pass them on to each parish, we will work the process out over the next week or 2 and much will depend on how much it is used. There are transaction charges levied by the card processing company which amount to 20p + 1.9% of the value of the donation – so for a £10 donation this will amount to £0.39 which will be deducted from the amount we receive. Please do note therefore that standing order remains the most cost effective way for our parishioners to donate.

A big thank you to those parishioners who have filled out new Standing Orders to help support the churches at this critical time. I am grateful to those who have continued to support their respective churches in this way for many years. If you can join them and make such a commitment for our offertory support; whether weekly, fortnightly, monthly or annually, it would make such a difference. You remain in control for as long as you want. At this time though it makes a 'sink or swim' difference to your church. Without that money coming in, our ability to meet the ever mounting expenses (of maintenance, consumables, utilities and fabric upkeep, not to mention health and safety) will diminish. Also, for St Anne's, the regular income from Hall Hire has understandably dried up and this will make a massive difference. The outgoings remain significant. We continue to pay Council Tax; Water; Electricity; Gas. We are all in uncharted territory, an uncertain future, but if you are able to please help in any amount you can afford. Very many thanks

I shall be remembering you all in my prayers during this most unprecedented of times and have faith that the Lord will be looking after us in a way only He can offer.

Blessings Fr Bob

PS: Don't forget the many websites you can access if you wish to follow Mass. A good start would be our own Archdiocese of Birmingham website. I, like so many other priests, will be continuing to celebrate Mass on my own. I know you will be with me in Spirit, celebrating the ONE sacrifice made by Christ for all time; a truly universal and real remembrance, uniting our sisters and brothers across the face of the earth.

HOMILY FOR FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sometimes we can read or hear the Gospel and wonder just who is being referred to in the passage. Some parables might seem obvious but others need Jesus to explain them Himself. This parable of the gate and the sheepfold related in John is just one of those that Jesus expands on and tries to make clear. I think, in this context, we might find it particularly difficult because of the mention of sheep. From the crib to the crucifixion and beyond sheep always feature in some way, don't they; whether being lost, found and cared for, being led, slaughtered or being just scapegoats. So where exactly do we fit in here? Much of the Bible/Scripture, written down two thousand years ago, can only really be understood if we are aware of the culture at the time of writing. This is because, especially in the Gospel of Jesus, the message He's putting over is primarily for the people of His time and place. Although we also believe that this message is for all people for all time. We have to believe that Jesus meant for His parables to be understood across centuries – after all, the Holy Spirit works as He will – through interpreters and the Church itself.

(I found this on the internet recommending sheep farming)

Sheep are raised mainly for their wool, milk, skins. A sheep farming business is also a reliable income source. You don't need to have huge capital for starting a sheep farm. You don't have to make an expensive house for your sheep. Sheep farming business requires less labour than any other livestock farming business. You can use them for cleaning unwanted plants from your garden or field. Sheep can survive by consuming low quality grass and turn the feed into meat and wool. They are a very hardy animal, and can adapt themselves to almost all types of environment. Sheep require less space for living. A commercial sheep farming business can be a great source of income.

It struck me how far this image would be to sheep farming in first century Judaea. This portrays sheep as tough, hardy producers of profit, that don't require much outlay or investment. Wow! I wonder what Jesus would have made of it? In the Judaea of His day the sheep would have been kept safe within a walled compound and the shepherd would have known each one of the sheep very well indeed; checking each one as it came into the compound and tending to them with water and olive oil if needed. In the Bible the picture of the shepherd with his sheep is frequently used to refer to the king and his people. In the modern world we don't think of rulers and leaders in quite that way, do we? But in biblical terms the ideal king is pictured as a shepherd, perhaps modelled on the shepherd boy David, who became a king after God's own heart. And this is the image that Jesus chooses to explain His own claim to be the true king of Israel. What about these false shepherds that He mentions here? The thieves, brigands and strangers? Jesus probably had in mind the various leaders who'd come about during His own lifetime; the revolutionary leaders or warlords who longed for full confrontation with Rome, and the others who compromised with the powers, like Herod, enabling them to hold on to their power and position. But none of these could lead the people or care for their deepest needs – they cared only for themselves. Jesus is posing the question – for His followers back then, and also for us here and now: 'How will you tell God's true appointed king when He comes?' The answer is, of course, in the same way you can tell the true shepherd. The sign of the real king is the response that comes from the heart when we hear His voice, and, in love and trust, follow Him.

The Shepherd King; the Lord's anointed promises full life, and it's as relevant for us today as it's always been. Our modern world has discovered how unsatisfying a lot of its aspirations can be, and constantly looks for something beyond. In a metaphor for our age, many 'thieves' have lied and deceived the sheep, stolen them and left them for dead. The call for us now is to listen for Jesus' voice, and to find in Him alone the only life that will hold us and sustain us, now and forever.

