

Sunday 19th July 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

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Day	Date	Mass Time	Church	Liturgical Day	Mass Intention
Sat	18 th	6:00pm	St Anne's	Vigil	(50 spaces max) Stephen Bayliffe RIP
Sun	19 th	9:30am 11:15am	St Patrick's St Anne's	Sixteenth Sunday of the Year	“ “ Kathleen Read RIP Ann Gormley RIP
Mon	20 th	9:30am	St Anne's	Feria	“ “ Shaun Gilbride RIP
Tue	21 st	10:30 am (No Mass)	St Patrick's	Funeral Service for Kathleen Read	
Wed	22 nd	No Mass		St Mary Magdalene	Feast
Thu	23 rd	6:30pm	St Patrick's	St Bridget	Feast “ “ Joan McKinlay
Fri	24 th	6:30pm	St Anne's	Feria	“ “ Fr. Warburton RIP
Sat	25 th	6:00pm	St Anne's	Vigil	“ “ Colin Wilkinson RIP
Sun	26 th	9:30am 11:15am	St Patrick's St Anne's	Seventeenth Sunday of Year	“ “ People of the Parish “ “ The Kendrick Family Intentions

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM By Appointment

Prayers for the departed loved ones whose anniversaries occur at this time: [St. Patrick's] Charles Edwards, Theresa Leake, Gladys Birch, Maud Perry, Reginald Gask, Beryl Sloggett, William Hughes, Joan Lees, Ernest Moseley, Mary Murphy, Maurice Desroches, Louise Barker. [St. Anne's] Annie Curran, Sean McMahon, Masie McNamee, Jack McDonnell, Denise Morris, Jack Stephenson, Stephen Bayliffe, Pascal Doyle, Mary Nealon, Berta Szholz

Prayers for the sick: St Patrick's Phylis Bowers, 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, Richard McMahon, Patsy Connelly Smith, Colin Wise.

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

ST. ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lynton Avenue, ST17 0EA

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Email: office@st-annes-weepingcross.staffs.sch.uk

ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Marston Road, ST16 3BT

Telephone: 01785 413275

Email: office@st-patricks-stafford.staffs.sch.uk

Parish Tote 150 Club: In order to catch up with the months missed, once we return, each of the missing months will **Parish Tote 150 Club March 2020 Drawn on 9th July** £100 M Badger – 53, £50 M S Wright – 107, £20 P Boucher – 41, £10 J Heath – 79, £10 K Price – 29, £10 F Petrini – 27, £10 J Collins – 118, £10 R O'Toole – 81, £10 M Simpson – 36, £10 M Massey – 154, £10 L Cyples – 44, £10 A Rudledge – 135, £10 G Bermingham – 99, £10 J Pettit – 97, £10 J Palmer – 145. Thank you for your support. Numbers are available at only £4 per number per month.

***Please note that those who would like to pay their subscriptions to the 150 Club by STANDING ORDER can let Fr Bob know and he will pass on the name to Mary Owen. It would help immensely during this time. Many thanks**

Our Recently Deceased: Please pray for **Kathleen Read**, of **St Patrick's**, who died recently. May she rest in peace and rise in glory. We also remember her family at this time.

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. Now that we have started public Masses once more, there will be large collection bins placed on entry and exit* I have received this communication from the head of Finance from 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>

***This email is from the diocese (Steve Roche):** Just to let you know, there is a donate **BUTTON (TOP RIGHT)** on the home page of the diocesan website – www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk

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

*The Archdiocese of Birmingham have allowed parishes to open for 'MASS' since 4th July. We have recently received guidance information underpinning the strict conditions for celebrating Mass. The guidance includes issues such as volunteer 'stewards', cleaning materials / routines, signage, one-way systems, safety contingencies, safe distancing, etc. **For us to enable parish Masses to function it must be stressed that we shall need a healthy cohort of "volunteers". Do please offer, and rest assured that myself, together with Peter, Lyn and Geraldine, will happily go through preliminary guidance with you. It is the only way to allow Masses to go ahead. Many Thanks in advance.***

Fr. Bob

Please bear with me as I mention here just a few details we need to be aware of. At the start of each Mass I shall explain a lot more of how we proceed, so no problems. What I can let you know, in terms of looking ahead, is that Masses will be celebrated within the (1metre + guidelines) This will entail the wearing of some form of face covering within the church.

An important and interesting point for us to understand is that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is still suspended and we can avail ourselves of weekday Masses to enable sensible spacing on weekends (some in the weekday evenings for those who work?) Now, because we are in a sort of 'fluid' time in terms of medium term commitment, I will publish the times of Masses weekly since there will be occasional alterations and gaps. E.g. because I had planned a few days break in late July and mid-August, the days of Mass will alter. Below are the times and venues: (Looking two weeks ahead) You will notice that I have

included the schedule of Masses for St Austin's which perhaps also reflects the way we need to think in terms of the future.

MONDAY 20th July 9:30am St Anne's
TUESDAY (No Mass)
THURSDAY 23rd July 6:30pm St Patrick's
FRIDAY 24th July 6:30pm St Anne's
SATURDAY 25th July 6:00pm St Anne's
SUNDAY 26th July 9:30am St Patrick's
SUNDAY 26th July 11:15am St Anne's
FOLLOWING WEEK
No Masses until:
SATURDAY 1st August 6:00pm St Anne's
SUNDAY 2nd August 9:30am St Patrick's

<u>St Austin's Parish</u>	<u>[Masses]</u>	
SUNDAY	19 TH JULY	10:30am
WEDNESDAY	22 ND JULY	7:00pm
FRIDAY	24 TH JULY	7:00pm
(FOLLOWING WEEK)		
SUNDAY	26 TH JULY	10:30am
WEDNESDAY	29 TH JULY	7:00pm
FRIDAY	31 ST JULY	7:00pm
[Fr. Michael will be streaming his usual Masses on the other days also.]		

The most important and pressing and absolutely vital requirement is that each parish has plenty of volunteers, as part of teams, for helping to 'steward' and to clean pews and various touch points after each Mass. I can't emphasise enough how the church needs you! Because the sensible (distancing) capacity of each church is 50, it will be 'first come, first served', but, between the two parishes there should be 7 Masses during one week, potentially allowing for a total of 350 parishioners. I am asking for your help in making this happen as smoothly as possible by assuming that any parishioner who is 'able' may offer their assistance in cleaning a bench or chairs after Mass. (Many hands make light work). We know that the hospitality sector has opened up and cleaning regimes are expected on their premises, so we as a church venue need to have a cleaning regime also.

This is why it is very important for sufficient volunteers to be able to cover Masses. Many Thanks for your patience and understanding. Regarding safety and distancing, we have been told to operate the 1m+ guideline so all those coming to Mass must wear a face covering, but it means we don't have to be 2m apart. There will be no bidding prayers and no offertory procession, and Holy Communion will be distributed as parishioners leave church. There will be stewards to guide people to seats and to help with communion arrangements. If you have not set up a standing order/direct debit for parish offerings please do so if you are able. (I can supply you with all the details you need). There will also be large offertory 'bins' for folk who give their envelopes and cash placed at the entrance and exit points of church. But worry not if this all sounds daunting and strange because once you are seated comfortably in the Mass of your choice I shall, with the help of the stewards we have already, explain exactly how Mass will unfold and how we will all benefit from the experience. From the outset, I

offer my humblest apology for potential situations that may arise through the 'first come, first served' policy. Remember, a family group may sit together on one bench or in neighbouring chairs. Once our maximum capacity has entered either church, a notice will be placed outside the door to that effect. The consolation remains that there will be a Mass on another day of the week that will be able to accommodate. If anyone would like further clarity then contact Fr. Bob on 01785661012.

But, to parishioners of both parishes: do be aware of our pressing need for volunteers.

HOMILY FOR THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Hard to believe it's thirteen years ago during the summer I read one of the 2007 best sellers: -- it was called "*The God Delusion*" by Richard Dawkins. In fact, I read it twice because it wasn't an easy book to fully understand. Hardly a novel, but for those who haven't heard of him, he's a scientist and professed atheist who believes God is something that we human beings have created by ourselves. He believes that we AND the whole universe are a result of *Natural Selection*. (In other words, there's no design or super intelligent being). Now, whatever we think of his arguments, it really boils down to how we see life. Either we look at the world /human society and understand the work of God in it or we don't. It's really as basic as that. For all of us here we'd have to admit that we DO see God's work in the Universe and in our relationships. If we didn't then our presence here now would be pointless (unless we're just coming for social reasons to keep others company).

So, if that's the case; if we do recognise the Lord's hand then we live in HIS kingdom. But, it seems to me we've got a problem here because if we live in God's kingdom now, why isn't everything just great? Why is there so much pain and misery day in and day out? Surely God created us and He created our world, and nothing can be greater than His kingdom.

Once again, we have to turn to Jesus and His parables to give us some idea. God's kingdom for us here on Earth is like an unfinished masterpiece. We might think of someone who's making something special or painting a portrait or scene? – They might be a bit of a craftsman or artist. I'd guess they wouldn't want you to see their half-finished work. They'd ask you to come back when they've finished it. (I know I wouldn't want people to see my incomplete work). But God isn't as shy with His creation. He doesn't ask us to come back later. Why? -- Because he has absolutely nothing to hide. He doesn't need to be deceitful – in fact, we are actually IN the "the picture" being painted. We get glimpses of its beauty but it 'comes and goes'. In fact, it CAN only be described in parables because it's totally outside of our ordinary understanding. Did you notice something about these three parables Jesus told in today's Gospel? – They all imply that we need to wait for the future before we can experience this kingdom paradise. The parable of the dandelion demonstrates God's patience (in each of us we've got the wheat of love lived out alongside our acts of selfishness), the mustard seed is tiny but it turns into a large shrub, and a small amount of yeast makes the whole loaf rise. In other words, wonderful things are promised for the

future. But, what is this future? Where is it? This future means we have to believe in life after death.

And if we don't believe in life after 'death' then God's kingdom is only what we've got now. THIS IS AS GOOD AS IT GETS. For Richard Dawkins, and others who think like him, a weed is just a weed, a mustard seed is just a mustard seed and yeast is yeast. They don't point to anything else beyond what they are.

But, for those who have faith, the weeds and the wheat, the mustard seed and the yeast are within each of us – evidence of God's wonderful patience. The Lord is a great-hearted God. He waits for us in kindness and gentleness. He teaches us that justice is kind. For us, this isn't some impersonal NATURAL SELECTION process, but, rather a SUPERNATURAL selection. God selects us individually as we grow patiently into His kingdom. We ARE His kingdom, but do we see it or do we even believe it; and, most importantly, do we live it out? Living our lives in the ALREADY (the here and now) but also in the NOT YET.

As the first reading from Wisdom reminds us, God is gentle and lenient with us yet He's so powerful. How patient and gentle are we with each other in our weakness? Let's pray for the grace to be parables of God's kingdom to the world we meet; to actually live our lives according to what we believe in. This has to be more worthwhile than seeing ourselves as just the result of biological evolution.

End note: It seems strange that our parish school children have now broken up until September, since we know all too well their absence from the classroom for over four months will have had a marked effect on their progress. Some fortunate ones in crucial years have been able to avail of the school facilities and as we become more confident and assured of all that schools are doing to make the environment safe, September should be a month to look forward to. It was wonderful to be able to celebrate a Y6 leavers Mass in the playground of St Patrick's on Thursday where we had a final chance to say au revoir and celebrate their contribution to the school over 7 years. May they succeed and grow as their secondary schools welcome them to a whole new phase of their education. May the pupils of our parishes be refreshed and prepared for the great return and may the Lord support them. (Many congratulations finally to the teachers in our parish schools who have worked so determinedly within unprecedented circumstances to ensure continuity of learning for so many).



