

Sunday 21st March 2021

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

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TIMES OF HOLY MASS AND LITURGIES THIS WEEK

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Day	Date	Mass Time	Church	Liturgical Day	Mass Intention
Sat	20 th	4:00pm	St Patrick's	Vigil	People of the Parish
		6:00pm	St Anne's	Vigil	James Behan RIP (Ann.)
Sun	21 st	9:00am	St Patrick's	Fifth Sunday of Lent	Ned & Thelma Taylor RIP
		10:00am	St Anne's		Bridget McKenna RIP
Mon	22 nd	9:30am	St Anne's	Lent Feria	The intentions of the Iraqi Christians
Tue	23 rd	9:30am	St Patrick's	Lent Feria	Bob & Damian
Wed	24 th	No Mass		Lent Feria	
Thu	25 th	6:30pm	St Patrick's	Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord	Peggy Toner RIP
Fri	26 th	6:30pm	St Anne's	Lent Feria	Teresa Walsh RIP
Sat	27 th	4:00pm	St Patrick's	Vigil	People of the Parish
		6:00pm	St Anne's	Vigil	Geoffrey Green RIP
Sun	28 th	9:00am	St Patrick's	Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord	Philomena McCarron RIP
		10:am	St Anne's		Michael Collins RIP

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM By Appointment

Prayers for the sick: St Patrick's: Phylis Bowers, Susan Prince, Tim Tiernan, Gregory McKinlay, Linda Reavy, Martha Porter, 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.

Prayers for the departed loved ones whose anniversaries occur at this time: *[St. Patrick's]* Gertrude Currin, Mary McGowan, Margaret Hawkins. Olive Loydall, Michael Sheehan, Richard Lalor, Jerry Sutton, Patrick Ward, Antonia Orfila, William Kearns, Patrick Edensor, James Wilkinson, Rudolph Valentini, John Jackson, Helena Gage, Reginald Concar, Harold Leslie Wilkes, Violet McCarthy, Joanne O'Brien and Mary McKiernan. *[St Anne's]* Helena Joret, Lucy Thomason, Alice Shackle, Peter Brown, John Moloney, John O'Loughlin, Lucy Moran, Hilda Nicholson and Geoff Green.

Income 14/3/21	Source	Gift Aid	Non-Gift Aid	Standing Order	Total	Attendance
St Anne's	Offertory	£58.00	£178.28	£283.84	£520.12	Sat 42
						Sun 35
St. Patrick's	Offertory	£78.00	£102.00	£146.23	£326.23	Sat 26
						Sun 26

On the Archdiocese website there is a standing order and Gift Aid form for parishioners so they can continue to give at this time. Please direct any such enquiries to:

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

Parish Tote 150 Club

February 2021 Winners. £100 K Johnson – 70, £50 M Ross– 146, £20 K Bermingham -71, £10 J Peck – 153, £10 N Shammass – 134, £10 A Smith – 94, £10 P Turner – 75, £10 M J Murphy – 63, £10 E Compton – 101, £10 W Meehan – 54, £10 L Garnett – 120.

Thank you for your continued support for 2021. Numbers are still available at £4 per number per month. Further details from Marie on 01785 661012.

Gift Aid

*At this critical time, if anyone wishes to make a commitment; whether weekly, fortnightly, monthly or annually, it would make such a difference. You remain in control for as long as you want. Those who use gift aid envelopes will find new ones for this financial year, labelled and numbered at the back of each church. Some parishioners might like to know that the parish office (St Anne's) can always be used as a 'drop-off' for envelopes. There are large collection bins placed on entry and exit**

Without such donations, 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 been reduced. A significant amount of unavoidable work is also planned shortly for both parishes, so 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 please help in any way. Very many thanks

St Anne's: At present all Masses celebrated at St Anne's are web streamed. (Our grateful thanks to Peter) [Please go to the front web page and click on Mass Live at the top and you should be able to follow the Mass]. **Fr. Bob**

MISSION: The latest Mission Today periodicals have arrived for both parishes. Please help yourselves; in the church porch at St Patrick's and on the table under the hall porch in St Anne's. You can take them for yourselves, neighbours or the promoters (box openers) can deliver to their normal addresses. But **DO NOT** collect any monies yet. Many thanks

Places of Worship are still able to remain open, but we were reminded of the need and importance for us all to be extra careful and diligent with social distancing and hygiene. All our parishes have been grateful for the help and dedication of our stewards/ cleaners, ensuring that all guidelines are followed and that we can safely celebrate Mass. **Please remember that the obligation to attend Holy Mass is still suspended.**

Our Deceased: Please remember in your prayers two priests of our archdiocese who have died recently: **Fr. Oliver Kemp**, a resident in Aston Hall, who looked after St Patrick's for a short time in 2009. Also **Fr. Michael Crumpton** (retired priest of St Mary & St Modwen, Burton) who died last week. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

St Anne's Church Roof: *The remedial work to the lower roof was completed last year.* Much appreciation to those who have already given so generously; we are gradually on our way – over £6,000 has been raised so far. This year we plan to try to remedy any ongoing problems to the upper roof. Please accept my sincere and grateful thanks for any donations that you may be able to make. F.Bob

Mill Hill Missionaries (novena): As you may be aware, this year is 'The Year of St Joseph' and the Mill Hill Missionaries are holding a national novena to St Joseph from 10th until 18th March. There is a poster in the porch of each church with details and you can find further information on the Mill Hill website at: www.millhillmissionaries.com/novena It will provide information as to which parishes are holding novena Masses.

Day of Prayer (Tuesday 23rd March): We have been asked to hold this day as a day of prayer and reflection on the first anniversary of the first lockdown. We pray for the many needs, hopes and sorrows that have emerged over the last year. We can all find opportunities during this day to quietly reflect and ask God for help in our lives. Special prayers will be said during our morning Mass.

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER 2021

We have received the *Church Guidance* for Holy Week 2021 and are now able to see how Holy Week and the Sacred Triduum will take shape this year. Once again, it is good news that our churches are able to be open, and that we can gather together to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of the Lord's Death and Resurrection. We are reminded that the need to ensure social distancing and good practice in hygiene is still of great importance to us all.

Because of the capacity within the three churches, we have decided that the Triduum will be celebrated fully in each church. Timings of the Triduum liturgies in the three churches are as follows:

Maundy Thursday	7.30pm	Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday	3.00pm	Solemn Liturgy of the Lord's Passion
	7.00pm	Stations of the Cross and Veneration *
Holy Saturday	8.00pm	Vigil and First Mass of Easter

** This liturgy has been added particularly for those who are unable to attend the 3.00pm service due to work commitments during the day.*

Masses on Palm Sunday will be at the usual Mass times (Saturday 4.00pm and Sunday 9.00am at St Patricks, Saturday 5.00pm and Sunday 11.00am and St Austin's and Saturday 6.00pm and Sunday 10.00am at St Anne's). Easter Sunday Masses will be at the usual Sunday Mass times. Please note there is only one Vigil Mass at 8.00pm on the Saturday evening in each church. We are asking people to attend the Triduum in one church, rather than swapping and changing between venues.

As we are uncertain of the numbers which might be attending, we have decided to use the booking system, like we had in place for Christmas. The number to use if you would like to book spaces for the Easter liturgies is **07856 918465**. This is now available. Please only call to book seats between **5.00pm and 7.00pm, Monday – Friday**. There will be no need to book for the Masses on Palm Sunday. To avoid lost bookings, **please do not send requests via text message or leave voice mail messages**. When you call you will be asked which church, and which of the liturgies you would like to attend.

Following the instructions given in the *Church Guidance*, there will be a few changes in how we celebrate the liturgies. There will be no procession on Palm Sunday, no Washing of the Feet or Altar of Repose on Maundy Thursday and no individual veneration of the Cross on Good Friday. Because of the changes, we plan to produce a simple Order of Service for each liturgy enabling us to pray through the liturgies without any unnecessary announcements or instructions.

These changes will naturally bring a different feel to the liturgies, but let's remember that it is different for both the congregations and the priests who celebrate the Triduum this year. All of us, in this last year have experienced change and none of us, if we are honest, like change. It is often said that *'familiarity breeds contempt'* and with that in mind, let's see Easter 2021 as a new opportunity to enter into the Sacred Triduum in a fresh and new way.

[Canon Michael Fr Simon Fr Bob]

HOMILY FOR THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

I think perhaps all of us who have tried reading parts of the Bible, whether Old Testament or New, have sometimes been confused or baffled as we try to understand the gist of where a narrative is going. For us, as far as scripture goes, the Gospels are our key reference points, aren't they? But, if we just think about today's passage from John, it begins with some Greek worshippers in Jerusalem approaching the disciples and asking if they could see Jesus. So, it's logical to expect that Jesus would say to Andrew and Phillip: "that's wonderful, tell them to come". But when Jesus does reply to them the evangelist John records Him as talking about the 'hour' having come for the Son of Man to be glorified. And then we hear something familiar about a grain of wheat falling to the ground to die. So, why doesn't Jesus follow-on to answer His disciples' question. Well, of course, He actually does respond; and in the deepest and most meaningful way possible.

The presence of the Greeks coming to worship in Jerusalem is proof, for Jesus, that the rest of the 'world' is seeing its final destiny in Jesus' work and mission. In fact, we hear the fullest answer to the question in verse 32 where Jesus declares that, if He is "lifted up" from the earth, He will draw all people to Himself. So, in other words, if the Greeks want to see Him and want to fully benefit from what He's been sent into

the world to do, Jesus' proper response is to carry on and complete the work His Father has given Him. And we can see, can't we, that it is only by this strange vocation that the non-Jewish world, the world of the 'Greeks', if you like, will come to gain the deepest access to Jesus that God intended. So, the rest of the world (in this passage represented by the Greeks) wouldn't just 'see' Jesus, as they asked, they would come to Him in the fullest and most real way; being drawn by that powerful love of God to new life.

So, maybe we can see now that Jesus' strange talk about seeds falling into the ground and dying is in fact the beginning of His answer. God, as we know, will save the world through the death of Jesus. John's Gospel is famous for impressing upon its readers that Jesus, the Son, the Word, is in charge of events; that He is in control. And do you notice that in earlier passages of John's Gospel reference is made to Jesus' time not having come yet. In Chapter 7, verse 30: 'nobody arrested Him because His time had not yet come'. But now, Jesus realises that His time HAS come, and the fact that foreigners are asking to see Him, here in Jerusalem, acts as a sign that the Father's plan for redeeming His creation is finally unfolding.

When you think about it the analogy of the seed is very symbolic, isn't it? Because the wheat grain is an example of the expansion of life which can only occur through death. If we can imagine Jesus as the seed, His life, which was restricted within the husk of His body, would become available for all of us through the coming of the Holy Spirit. Just as one seed can eventually fill a whole field, so the life of Jesus is destined to fill the whole world. And of course, where Jesus leads we follow, don't we, and we're also 'seeds' that have to die; this is our Christian vocation. "Now my heart is troubled," Jesus went on. "What am I going to say?" Here Jesus recognises what faces Him and shows His full humanity and the sacrifice that is required; remember He is a young man in the prime of life. Letting go costs Jesus, just as it will cost us in our daily lives. We hear in the first reading from Jeremiah about God's 'new' covenant with His people – one where the word of the Father's love is written on their hearts. That same word of love is written on our hearts as well, and as we know, when we love someone, it's easier to sacrifice something of ourselves for them. But Jesus goes beyond that, doesn't He. He leaves us something that will explain His giving up His life for the world, as well as hope for the future. We pray especially this Lent that we will be given strength to follow Jesus in His sacrifice, where nothing is held back but all is offered to the Father who gave us life.