

Sunday 24th 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

48 Sandon Road, Stafford ST16 3HF. Telephone 01785 661012 - Website www.stpatricksstafford.co.uk

Email: stannestpatrick.stafford@gmail.com

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

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Day	Date	Mass Time	Church	Liturgical Day	Mass Intention
Sat	23 rd	pm	St Anne's	Vigil	<i>No Congregation</i> Peggy Toner RIP
Sun	24 th	am	“ “	Seventh Sunday of Easter	<i>No Congregation</i> Eamon Gormley RIP
Mon	25 th	am	“ “	St Bede the Venerable Memoria	<i>No Congregation</i> Damian & Bob McKinlay
Tue	26 th	am	“ “	St Philip Neri Memoria	<i>No Congregation</i> Harry & John Healy
Wed	27 th	am	“ “	St Augustine of Canterbury Feast	<i>No Congregation</i> Ann & Harold Nelson
Thu	28 th	am	“ “	Easter Feria	<i>No Congregation</i> John Taylor RIP
Fri	29 th	am	“ “	The Solemnity of Dedication	<i>No Congregation</i> Fr. Tim Burke RIP
Sat	30 th	pm	“ “	Vigil	<i>No Congregation</i> Celebrant's Intention
Sun	31 st	am	“ “	Pentecost Sunday	<i>No Congregation</i> People of the Parish

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM By Appointment

Prayers for the departed loved ones whose anniversaries occur at this time: [St. Patrick's] Thomas Sutton, William Hinksman, Francis Pearse, Damian McKinlay, Janet Bunker, Gertrude Brough, Michael Cooney, Annie McCabe, John Mulrooney, Mary Batkin, Joseph Box, Leslie Foster, Joan Dunlavy [St. Anne's] James Ashton, Anthonie Dietruszko, Edwin Finn, M. Larkin, John Reilly, Marie Reilly, Claire Skelton, Olga Sweeney Bernard Bamber, Charles Chadwick, Anne O'Brien, Teresa Lloyd, Peter Griffin, Gerard Leongson, Robert Powell, Ronald Dawson

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. ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Lynton Avenue, ST17 0EA
Telephone: 01785 663128 Fax: 01785 662987
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

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 those who have died recently: **Fr David Duggan**, former parish

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 Seventh 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) which we celebrate next Sunday. This follows the **Ascension of Our Lord** (the fortieth day) which we celebrated last Thursday.

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 continues to 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, there is a request from St Austin's, in regard to the charity BRUSHSTROKES. They are desperate for all supplies. If people wanted to drop off donations at St Anne's a regular pick-up can be arranged, but, since the church will be locked, just phone me first. Many thanks.

As Eastertide continues and the year progresses we will reflect upon this extraordinary mystery of faith 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 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/FAOS/category/finance-resources>

***This email is 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.

*A message from the Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East (FACE). This Sunday 17th May is **INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR EASTERN CHRISTIANS**. Around 20 million Eastern Christians will be praying for Western Christians on Sunday; and conversely, a similar number of Catholics from Poland, Belgium, Monaco, France, Spain, Switzerland and Italy will be praying for Eastern Christians at the same time. Visit: <https://oeuvre-orient.com/the-international-day-of-prayer-for-eastern-christians>*

HOMILY FOR THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

I remember someone telling me once how, when he was learning to scuba dive, he had the frightening experience of being lost in 'three dimensions'. I was trying to figure out exactly what he meant but then realised that for land-dwellers, we only usually get lost in two dimensions – North, South, East or West. However, if we swim or dive in reasonably deep water, we can actually feel disconcerted if we try rotating a fair way under the surface. Momentarily, our sense of directional balance goes and we literally don't know which way to swim to reach safety or the surface. It might not last long but if you're out at sea and you've got tanks on your back it could be pretty frightening. As for the fourth dimension, I know there's some scientific ideas about what it might mean; it fits the way modern physicists think. But, what about us? Does a fourth dimension have anything to offer us? Well, I think it has to because we're more than three-dimensional; as spiritual beings we're part of something beyond space and time.

This is the only way the disciples could have taken in Jesus' Ascension to His Father. They'd been prepared for this final meeting with their Messiah through the number of times Jesus had visited them. The disciples had been praying together in a closed room and Jesus appeared amongst them; He allowed Thomas to physically touch His wounds. And that time when the apostles had been early morning fishing – when they landed, they found Jesus cooking breakfast for them. So, what's being communicated to us in all this? What do these appearances of Jesus show? Well, they're crucial for proving Jesus is now resurrected. And it really IS Jesus; really alive in a transformed body that could eat and drink as well as walk and talk – but a body that was also different – His body could appear and disappear, and come and go through locked doors. Jesus was certainly more than a ghost because Luke and the other writers that describe the risen body of Jesus are saying that He is MORE than ordinarily embodied not less. His transformed body is now the beginning of God's new Creation, and in God's new creation, we are told, heaven and earth will come together in a new way. And Jesus' risen body is the beginning of a heavenly reality which is fully at home in this physical world, and the beginning of a transformed physical world which is fully at home in heaven.

What Jesus is showing His disciples (and of course us) is what we will all be like. Getting back to our thoughts about being lost in all sorts of dimensions [and directions], Jesus is the complete opposite of lost. We, in our risen glorified bodies will always know where we are because we will never lose God's presence. This is the dimension we find mind-boggling; and its importance is that it has no UP or DOWN, or EAST, WEST, NORTH or SOUTH or passing of TIME.

It's interesting that Jesus didn't just 'disappear' from the disciples' sight like a vanishing act – He could have done, couldn't He? But He chose to ascend out of their sight taken by a cloud. And this signifies 'movement'. Our whole lives should be ones of movement and the two angels in Acts ask why the disciples are just standing there looking into the sky. Jesus crossed all dimensions, and we are given the task of crossing all dimensions as well. The disciples weren't tasked with just standing still, but with movement; travelling 'to the ends of the world' in the spirit of the Gospel. There's no chance of us getting 'lost' in our faith because Jesus' ascension raises us up in hope so that we can hold our heads high in the air. But our feet, as disciples, are firmly planted on the ground and rather than standing still, we should be stepping forward on the mission of claiming the world for the authority of Christ. If this sounds frighteningly 'impossible' for us here and now, then we need to remember that the source of our power is the divine energy itself; God-with-us. And that power will be given to us on our Pentecost when the Holy Spirit will fill us with His love.

End note: Message from Cardinal Vincent Nicholls (on re-opening churches):

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/cardinal-on-safely-re-opening-churches-for-private-prayer>

Friends of the Holy Land:

Previously, our parish has donated to this charity during Lent and Eastertide. However, due to the closure of parishes, this very worthy and needed cause is feeling the effects of our lack of donations. Archbishop Bernard, as patron of the FHL, has asked us if we could make a very special effort at this time of Pentecost. Please read the short piece below: **Many Thanks**

The FHL are undertaking wonderful work with a very small team of paid staff and many volunteers both over here and in the Holy Land. Coronavirus is changing the lives of all of us but for so many Christians, especially in the West Bank but also Gaza, Israel and Jordan, it is devastating. So many are dependent for their income on pilgrimages and tourism which disappeared overnight in early March. For many they have no government support nor even a health service which can handle this crisis.

So, FHL launched an appeal in March for those impacted in Bethlehem and widened it on 3 April as a Pentecost Challenge to cover the whole of the region. They secured match funding for the first £100,000 and, with a few days to go to Pentecost, are close to reaching the target but are seeking help from us to get over the line. Please consider supporting this appeal. It is so desperately needed at this time.

www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/pentecost-challenge will direct parishioners to the FHL website where more information is available. You may also wish to view the news story on our diocesan website <https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/news/fhl-launch-pentecost-challenge>.