

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

ST. ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL Lynton Avenue, ST17 0EA Telephone: 01785 663128 Fax: 01785 662987 Email: office@st-annes-weepingcross.staffs.sch.uk Principal: Mr. M. Killeen	ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL Marston Road, ST16 3BT Telephone: 01785 413275 Email: office@st-patricks-stafford.staffs.sch.uk Principal: Mr. M. Brandon
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TIMES OF HOLY MASS AND LITURGIES THIS WEEK

Fourth Sunday of Easter

Day	Date	Mass Time	Church	Liturgical Day	Mass Intention
Sat	24 th	4:00pm	St Patrick's	Vigil	Gregory McKinlay's well being
		6:00pm	St Anne's	Vigil	Pupils&Staff of our Schools
Sun	25 th	9:00am	St Patrick's	Fourth Sunday of Easter	Private Intention
		10:00am	St Anne's		Andy Stewart RIP
Mon	26 th	9:30am	St Anne's	Easter Feria	Gerry Kelly RIP
Tue	27 th	9:30am	St Patrick's	Easter Feria	Keith Price RIP
Wed	28 th	No Mass		Easter Feria	
Thu	29 th	6:30pm	St Patrick's	St Catherine of Sienna	Feast L Alex & MC Duncan
Fri	30 th	6:30pm	St Anne's	Easter Feria	People of the Parish
Sat	1 st	4:00pm	St Patrick's	Vigil	Alex Marriamma RIP
		6:00pm	St Anne's	Vigil	Peggy Ogram RIP
Sun	2 nd	9:00am	St Patrick's	Fifth Sunday of Easter	Patty Tiernan RIP
		10:00am	St Anne's		Peggy Toner 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]* Louise Adams, Margaret Smith, Alfred Millward, John Jackson, Mary Heslin, Eva Devlin, Honora Eley, May Carroll, Mary Hardy, Anthony Finn, Vincent Brigham, Ronald Skelton and Michael Bell. *[St Anne's]* Roy Bowyer, Ivor George, Caroline Langham-White, Ted Shelley, Rose Thomasson, Thomas Brough, Jim Fletcher, Andrew Martin, Gabriel Geadah, Joan Batkin, John Wilson, Barbara Curran and Ada George.

Income 4/4/21	Source	Gift Aid	Non-Gift Aid	Standing Order	Total	Attendance
St Anne's	Offertory	£47.00	£86.86	£283.84	£417.70	Sat 43 Sun 45
St. Patrick's	Offertory	£50.00	£97.53	£146.23	£293.76	Sat 21 Sun 51

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:

<https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/pages/FAQS/category/finance-resources>

***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 March 2021 Winners

Thank you for your support. Numbers are 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**

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.

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. This year we plan to try to monitor and possibly 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**

Sacrament of Reconciliation: [Easter Duties and Confession at this time]. Please be assured that the Church's communication on this is still valid from the beginning of last year's lockdown, and that provided we are fully contrite in our hearts, we can confess our sins to the Lord within our own 'private prayer space'. According to the teaching of the Church, the present ongoing situation would not warrant the 'Rite of General Absolution'. If notice is given, and at convenient times, before or after Mass, I have been hearing confessions and this will continue. God Bless. **Fr. Bob**

Gift Aid Envelopes: Please be aware that the new 2021/22 GA boxes are available at the back of each parish church. They are numbered and named and begin on 11th April (many thanks to Margaret [SP] and Mark [SA] for preparing these). They are ready for collection. If anyone would like more information concerning this method of giving (or, indeed, concerning donation by Standing Order) please see Fr. Bob

Appeal for Readers: *In order to grow and develop our pool of readers in both parishes, we are appealing for anyone from St Anne's or St Patrick's parishes to help by becoming a reader. Reading the scriptures at Mass encourages personal contemplation of the Word of God and allows the word to dwell more richly in our hearts. We need more parishioners willing to read occasionally at Mass. A training session for Readers will take place soon (date to be decided). Please text Deacon Mike 07706077124 or leave a message at the parish office if you would like to take part. If you are already a reader please make contact as well to indicate your continued availability for this service. Many Thanks.*

HOMILY FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

In modern parlance, sheep get a "mixed press" when we consider what they are and their role in our faith history. We've only got to think about the lively conversations concerning our present pandemic over the last year. Sadly, like all crises, you see the divisions forming in society. One sector (a minority) calling the rest of the population, who follow the guidance, sheep. "Don't you have a mind of your own?" "Why don't you follow your own instincts and wake up to the fact that all the government want to do is to control the population". And so on. So, by this reckoning, most of us are sheep, who, by this definition, don't have minds of our own. Lambs or sheep do seem to have a 'core' place within our scripture don't they? We couldn't even begin to catalogue them. The lamb is the focus and object of sacrifice, whilst

sheep are to be cared for looked after and guided. Importantly, it's how we look upon the role of sheep in the Gospel and our own relationship with them metaphorically, that forms our meditation on this Sunday's reading. In other words, are we, as Christians, just meant to see ourselves as pitiful, mindless creatures at the mercy of predators or a controlling shepherd, or is there a deeper, more special and sacred meaning to who we are as 'sheep'?

The famous TV programme, 'One man and his dog', gives us a good insight into how herding can be made into rivalry and intense competition. Basically, the aim is to herd a small flock of sheep into a small pen in as short a time as possible. The shepherd controls the dog which then circles the sheep, trying to keep them together. But this is far from easy – the sheep always seem to scatter at the last minute, or veer off in the wrong direction. Now it might seem to us that the shepherd and the dog have executed a clever operation whilst the sheep have just shown how silly they are when they scatter, but maybe they're not as silly as we think. Firstly, they are just trying to avoid being fenced in, and secondly, the sheep are running from a predator. So, the programme is essentially exploiting the hunting instinct of dogs and the instinct of sheep to flee predators.

How different this is from what shepherding was about in Jesus' day. Jesus couldn't have given us His parables or talked so much about His sheep if shepherding was only about driving and herding. No way. It's so important to understand first century Middle-Eastern sheep handling if we're going to make sense of what Jesus is telling His disciples about

their life with Him. Shepherds walked with their sheep, going ahead if there was a hazard. They also knew each sheep by name and understood their needs and potential dangers. If a wolf appeared they would drive it away. Unlike the extreme examples shown in our TV programme, the sheep knew their shepherd and trusted that the shepherd wasn't trying to take away their freedom. In fact, the shepherd would want to expand the sheep's horizons for the springtime grass. And this is exactly the kind of shepherd that Jesus was describing Himself as in John's Gospel today. Jesus also emphasises strongly that the 'good' shepherd lays down his life for his sheep. Now, surely, it goes without saying that if we lay down our lives for anyone, that 'anyone' must be a real part of us in the deepest sense, mustn't it. Jesus, as the GOOD shepherd describes Himself as that kind of shepherd who leads us (His flock) to where He knows that we'll find personal nourishment and fulfilment. He knows us individually and we can trust Him. And that's the difference, isn't it, between a job and a vocation. Jesus' 'vocation' is to lead us, take care of us, guide us and bring us home to the unimaginable kingdom of our heavenly Father. In this way, Jesus totally turns the 'popular', dismissive notion of sheep on its head, doesn't He. He sees us (the sheep) as part of Himself, and when we get lost – which is often – He carries us on his shoulders. Our vocation is ultimately to be like Jesus; because only our likeness to Jesus will make us good shepherds ourselves. How different this is to "one man and his dog". There are no whistles and predators driving us into a closed pen, but only God, made one of us, carrying us over the threshold of death and into the infinite pastures of paradise.