

Sunday 29th March 2020

Weekly Newsletter

St. Anne's Catholic Church

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

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT - Lectionary Cycle A, Weekday Mass Cycle 2 Psalter week 1

Day	Date	Mass Time	Church	Liturgical Day	Mass Intention	
Sat	28 th	pm	St Anne's	Vigil Mass	<i>No Congregation</i>	
Sun	29 th	am	" "	Fifth Sunday of Lent	<i>No Congregation</i>	
Mon	30 th	am	" "	<i>No Congregation</i>	Lent Feria	Martina&Edmund Quinn (In Thanksgiving)
Tue	31 st	am	" "	<i>No Congregation</i>	Lent Feria	Mikey Owens (In Thanksgiving)
Wed	1 st	am	" "	<i>No Congregation</i>		John&Edith Connor
Thu	2 nd	am	" "	<i>No Congregation</i>	Lent Feria	'Patty' Tiernan RIP
Fri	3 rd	am	" "	<i>No Congregation</i>	Lent Feria	Joan McKinlay
Sat	4 th	pm	" "	Vigil Mass	<i>No Congregation</i>	People of the Parish
Sun	5 th	am	" "	Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord		Mary Atkinson RIP & In Thanksgiving(Golden Wedding)
<i>No Congregation</i>						

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM By Appointment

Prayers for the departed loved ones whose anniversaries occur at this time: *[St. Patrick's]* Frederick Cull, Catherine Owens, Timothy Vella, Mrs Morgan, Fr Thomas Cockburn, Mary McGrath, James Bratt, Mary Daly, Daniel Sullivan, James Emery, Eileen Murphy, Annie Wilde, Rose Mann, Joseph Parton and Margaret McDonald. *[St. Anne's]* Michael Collins, Robert Hunt, Annie Shelly, Sarah McHugh, Betty Cunningham, Jack Bilton, Amy Geoghegan, John Helks, Eva Brown, Elizabeth Loran and Sidney Stanyer.

Prayers for the sick: *St Patrick's* Phylis Bowers, Kath Read, Susan Prince, Tim Tiernan, Gregory McKinlay, Linda Reavy, Martha Porter and Cecilia 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 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

Telephone: 01785 663128 Fax: 01785 662987

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

ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Marston Road, ST16 3BT

Telephone: 01785 413275

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

The Second Collection 14th/15th March for The Daughters of Divine Love St Anne's £453.35

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

Parish Tote 150 Club. Thank you all for your support. Numbers are available at £4 per number per month. Further

Our recently deceased: Please remember in your prayers **Ken Fenton and Ray Brough**, of **St Anne's** and **Joan Roe**, of **St Patrick's**, who have died recently. We pray also for their families at this sad time.
May Ken, Ray and Joan rest in peace and rise in glory.

Dear Parishioners of St Patrick's and St Anne's,

I hope and pray that we are gradually becoming 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, like every experience thrown to us in life, we take it as it comes. 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.

So, to parish practical matters:

As you see, 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. Unfortunately, since last week's newsletter was published, we have been instructed to keep all church buildings locked. This is mainly to discourage folk from venturing out and potentially coming into proximity with others unnecessarily. But, the parish office/presbytery will be open as usual and, in so far as we are 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, will be working from home as far as it is possible and we shall still be in communication regarding particular parish concerns, especially where I may need information; I shall be available in the presbytery for first point of contact There is also little excuse now for me not uploading the bulletin earlier, at least by Friday at the latest (I'll see how I get on).

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. He had returned from the charity BRUSHSTROKES and 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.

Palm Sunday is only one week away and the only way I can think of "distributing" blessed palms is to leave them for people to collect in a basket under the hall porch from Sunday. I am hoping to be able to bless them in church (on the Saturday vigil)

It is obviously a great disappointment for us that the planned social events have had to be cancelled, but I am sure we will make up for it when more settled times return.

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 just 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 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

Also, I shall be printing several hard copies of these bulletins every week so that 'volunteers' may distribute them to the housebound, provided they are able. I shall leave these on a table under St Anne's Church Hall Porch.

Don't forget the plethora of websites you can access if you wish to follow Mass. A good start would be our own Archdiocese of Birmingham website.

PS: Don't forget the clocks go forward ONE hour this weekend (British Summer Time)



HOMILY FOR FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Do you remember seeing that series of films nearly three decades ago in the eighties – “Back to the Future.” Science fiction comedy but pretty entertaining nevertheless. The main theme of these films was for the young hero to travel back in time and attempt to alter the outcome for the future. The idea was that if we could travel back in time we could influence the decisions that would provide a better ‘here and now’. We know that time travel is the stuff of dreams and fantasy, don't we? But I think it really does speak to a part of us that wishes we could change things for the better – “Why has this happened?” “Why couldn't this have been prevented?” The list goes on. “If only!” “If only!” Doesn't Martha say this to Jesus? “If only you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died.” Martha knows that if Jesus had been there He would have cured Lazarus and she also knows that Jesus also delayed His journey to them. You notice there's a reproach in Martha's greeting to Jesus but Jesus invites her, and also US, to look to the future, rather than looking at the past and dreaming about what might have been.

Jesus asks us to look to the future and imagine it brought forward into the present. Martha believes in the Resurrection at the end of Time and knows her brother will rise then. Now Jesus brings that future reality to the here and now when He states to Martha who He really is: “I am the Resurrection” And that just about says it all, doesn’t it? The whole story of Lazarus – Jesus’ deliberate delay and apparent late arrival – right through to Lazarus walking out of the tomb. “I am the Resurrection” is the ‘hinge’, if you like, around which everything revolves. If we live the Resurrection Life now we’re living in Jesus and the future meets us where we are NOW – in our struggle and in our mess. What does Jesus say? “If you believe in me you’ll live even if you die.” “And if you live and believe in me you’ll never die.” So, the message for us here is that if we genuinely make our faith (that faith we profess in every Creed) real then the future won’t surprise us or frighten us. Because, if you like, we’re “Back to the Present”! The future’s burst in – God’s new creation and with it, the Resurrection, has been brought forward from the End of Time to the Middle of Time.

It’s funny, isn’t it? But you notice the different personalities of Martha and Mary come out clearly. There’s Martha (ever the practical sister) reminding Jesus that Lazarus has been dead so many days now, so he’ll smell if the tomb stone’s rolled back. Whereas, Mary’s probably been praying in the house and now throws herself at the feet of Jesus. And its Mary’s tears that move Jesus to tears – what a display of humanity there! In a way it shows us that natural human death has to be acknowledged and also mourned by us. This is what Jesus was doing. His 100% human nature is with us all the way – from our celebration of new birth in the maternity ward to our gathering around the graveside. There’s no sham pretence at being human from the ‘God made man’ here – but genuine sorrow and empathy with the sisters. And this is how it should be. Natural death is real and it’s human and it’s emotional, but it’s not the end. Lazarus was resuscitated but he would die naturally again, only to be resurrected at the end of time. Resuscitation is temporary – Resurrection is forever.

That wonderful first reading from Ezekiel we heard follows Ezekiel’s vision of the valley of the bones – remember that spiritual song –“dem bones dem bones dem dry bones”. This is the Old Testament at its most encouraging, isn’t it? “I will open your graves, my people – And I shall put my Spirit in you and you will live.” This is the promise of Resurrection. And this prophetic Good News could only be made because of the journey Jesus would make – through death and out the other side into new life. No ‘Back to the Future’ here – only the ever present Resurrected Jesus – past and future in ONE – the ALPHA and the OMEGA.