

Sunday 31st January 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

FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Day	Date	Mass Time	Church	Liturgical Day	Mass Intention
Sat	30 th	1:00pm	St Patrick's	Vigil	Health of Mgr. John Heslin & Michael Scott RIP
		6:30pm	St Anne's	Vigil	Percy Grero RIP
Sun	31 st	8:00am	St Patrick's	Fourth Sunday of the Year	Tony Ruttledge (Birthday Ann.)
		9:30am	St Anne's		Celebrant's Intention
Mon	1 st	9:30am	St Anne's	Feria	Peggy Toner RIP
Tue	2 nd	9:30am	St Patrick's	The presentation of the Lord No congregation	Feast Kathleen Boulton RIP
Wed	3 rd	No Mass		Feria	
Thu	4 th	6:30pm	St Patrick's	No congregation	Feria Peggy Toner RIP
Fri	5 th	6:30pm	St Anne's	St Agatha	Memoria Fr. Giles Goward RIP
Sat	6 th	4:00pm	St Patrick's	Vigil	Bob & Damian
		6:00pm	St Anne's	Vigil	People of the Parish
Sun	7 th	9:00am	St Patrick's	Fifth Sunday of the Year	Patty Tiernan RIP
		10:00am	St Anne's		Annual Mass for parishes (Johnson Association)

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]* Cyril Evans, Eileen Gibson, Amy Hipwell, Cecilia Cooper, Timothy Lumb, Selivia Webb, Winifred Baxter, Phyllis Cliff, Lily Bronn, James Carr, Vincenzo Narcisi, Arthur Cyples, William McLean, Lilian Croxall, Anthony Giusso and Edith Whitlock. *[St Anne's]* James Moran, Phyllis McCosh, Hannah Hoderne, Joseph Nicholson, William Ruscoe, Bernadette Strange, Marie Palmer, Stan Rusinowski, Marjorie Cowley, Bill and Norma Fennell, Leanne Butler, Edna Hammond and Martin Sturgess.

Income 24/1/21	Source	Gift Aid	Non-Gift Aid	Standing Order	Total	Attendance
St Anne's	Offertory	£23.00	£206.00	£283.84	£512.84	Sat 33 Sun 22
St. Patrick's	Offertory	£144.40	£173.26	£146.23	£463.49	Sat 15 Sun 10

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

Thank you for your support during 2020. Hopefully we can count on your support again in 2021. Those who pay yearly please can you put your monies in a sealed envelope with your name on the outside marked for 150 Club and put into the collection bins. Cheques should be made payable to St Patrick's. 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 Roof Appeal (Update)

The remedial work to the lower roof has now been completed. We are appealing for any donations St Anne's community can donate to this work; my thanks and appreciation to those who have already given so generously; we are gradually on our way - looking at a sum approaching £10,000. (We are nearly half of the way there). This year we hope to remedy 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

** St Anne's parish is now live-streaming Masses, so please go to the front web page and click on Mass Live at the top and you should be able to follow the Mass.

St Patricks: In consideration of the attendance numbers and in discussion with our team of stewards and helpers, it has been decided to suspend the public nature of the two weekday Masses in St Patrick's. Please refer to the first page. Please be assured that I shall continue to say a private Mass in the sacristy of the church on those days, including the accompanying intentions. Fr. Bob

Even under new restrictions for a third national lockdown. **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. They have ensured, and continue to ensure, that all guidelines are followed and that the church is thoroughly cleaned after each service. **Please remember that the obligation to attend Holy Mass is still suspended.** All our Masses from St Anne's will continue to be live streamed through YouTube, details of which can be found on our website.



REVISION OF MASS TIMES



Back in October 2020 we introduced a new schedule of Mass times with the understanding that these would be reviewed at the end of that year. In the meantime, Stafford was placed into Tier 4 and Public Worship was once again suspended at the end of October. In early December we were able to reopen, but numbers attending Mass have been considerably lower than before. This is understandable owing to the uncertain times in which we are living and the need for people to continue isolating for various personal and medical reasons.

The new and current schedule of Masses was met with both positive and negative feedback, all of which has been taken into consideration. Owing to the ongoing implications of the pandemic and the uncertainty of these current times, it has been difficult to make a realistic assessment.

Recently all parishes of the Archdiocese were encouraged to consider, and if needs be to review their Mass time provision and seating capacity in all churches. It is certainly a time of change and challenge for us all. Pope Francis in his book *'Let us dream'* says 'to come out of this crisis better, we have to see clearly, choose well and act right.' Some parishes have decided to postpone their Sunday Masses and even weekday Masses, due to numbers attending being so low.

Taking into consideration the feedback given, the suggestion from the Diocese and having spoken to our stewards and cleaners, we propose from 6/7th February to offer the following schedule of Masses. On Saturday's there will be 4.00pm at St Patrick's; 5.00pm at St Austin's and 6.00pm at St Anne's, then on Sunday's there will be 9.00am at St Patrick's; 10.00am at St Anne's and 11.00am at St Austin's. As things evolve and circumstances change, we will review the Mass times again, as and when is necessary.

In his book, *'Let us dream'* Pope Francis says that, 'our greatest power is not in the respect that others have for us, but the service we can offer others.' This revised schedule of Masses still enables Canon Michael, Fr Bob and Fr Simon to work together, and if and when the time arises, to be available to help further afield in the Deanery. More importantly perhaps, it continues to allow us to seek the opportunities for us all to work together within in three parishes of St Anne, St Austin and St Patrick, drawing on and pulling together the various skills, resources and talents which are available to us.

One thing which has been clear during this time is people's desire to come together as a community and the comfort the receiving of the Eucharist brings in challenging times. St John Henry Newman once wrote, 'to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often.' We are all certainly living in unique times and are all finding that our lives are changing and having to adjust in so many ways. We thank you for all your understanding, co-operation and support at this time, and encourage you all to seek the intercession of our parish patrons as we look forward in hope. To strengthen that sense of hope, let us consider some final words of Pope Francis. When asked 'what is the greatest fruit of a personal crisis', he replied: 'I'd say patience, sprinkled with a healthy sense of humour, which allows us to endure and make space for change to happen.'

HOMILY FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Can you imagine a close member of your family (son, daughter, brother, sister) coming into the home one day and suddenly becoming very pious. They tell you they've had a communication from God and start prophesying. You'd probably 'humour them' or tell them not to be so daft or arrogant. "Who do you think you are?" "What makes you so special?" The language may even be stronger. Families are strange entities, aren't they? They're places of love, support and sharing; and if a member is really sick or needs help, then the others mostly close ranks and support the family member who's weak. At least, this is usually the case in human families. Communities in the animal kingdom don't always do this and the weaker cub or whatever is left to die. But, try getting above yourself or claiming to be special in any way and the rest of the family can take offence. 'A prophet is never welcome amongst his own.'

This is exactly what Jesus found when He tried preaching in His home town of Nazareth. He was rejected and couldn't work any miracles there. But here in Capernaum, in today's gospel of Mark, Jesus does do a great act in the eyes of His listeners. They recognised His authority. Even though the demon possessing the man knew who Jesus was and called Him by name, the demon had no power over Jesus. (By knowing and saying someone's name in those days it showed one had a

certain power over them). Jesus' authority in His teaching would become the 'hallmark' of His whole mission for Mark. By relating all these miraculous healings and miracles, Mark ensures that their power reaches across time, across the centuries to where we are today.

But the essential message of today's readings, I think, is to emphasise the importance of prophesy and how necessary it is for any effective mediation between God and His creatures. Think of Deuteronomy and we think of Moses, and he's got to be the great archetypal prophet of our religious history, hasn't he? Moses is aware that he won't be around for ever so he's been given the task of telling his people that they must expect a prophet to be chosen from their own community (their own family or tribe). "A prophet will be raised up for them from their own brothers". "I will put my words into his mouth and he shall tell them all I command him". When we think about this it makes sense, doesn't it? The one mediating and prophesying has to come from the people, from us, otherwise he or she wouldn't have anything in common with the people chosen by God. At the same time, the same chosen prophet or spokesperson has to be authentic. It must be seen that whatever they're saying, whatever their message, has to come from God. So, there's a warning, here, about false prophets. (We've got plenty of those around today in many areas of life).

So, let's just think about the 'genuine' prophet for a moment. On earth, God doesn't communicate Himself to the people 'en masse'. Rather, the prophet is the spokesperson. For the 'chosen people' Moses had been their prophet and had led them out of Egypt. We know, however, that Moses DIDN'T lead them into the Promised Land. That task was given to Joshua who was commissioned by God to follow in the steps of Moses. And to give it authenticity, it was Moses who agreed that Joshua would be the chosen one. If it was O.K. by Moses, it was O.K. by the people since Moses had had such a close relationship with God.

There's a very well-known saying: "familiarity breeds contempt" and it can apply in so many areas of life. It really means that if circumstances or people are so well-known to us, or so close to us, we don't really take them seriously, or we take them for granted. But we can miss so much through this sort of attitude. We can miss the prophetic insight of those amongst us who do speak for God, who are given an authentic voice to speak words of warning and words of comfort.

When Jesus went to the synagogue at Capernaum He spoke as one commissioned by God. But also as the only one who spoke for ALL the prophets. Jesus encompassed Moses and Joshua, because He both leads us out of danger and leads us into paradise. Jesus is one of us. He is in our midst. But, familiarity with Jesus should never breed contempt. It should only breed FAMILY.