

Sunday 31st 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

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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

TIMES OF HOLY MASS AND LITURGIES THIS WEEK

PENTECOST SUNDAY

Day	Date	Mass Time	Church	Liturgical Day		Mass Intention
Sat	30 th	pm	St Anne's	Vigil	<i>No Congregation</i>	Celebrant's Intention
Sun	31 st	am	" "	Pentecost Sunday	<i>No Congregation</i>	People of the Parish
Mon	1 st	am	" "	Mary, Mother of the Church	Memoria	Celebrant's Intention
					<i>No Congregation</i>	
Tue	2 nd	am	" "		Feria <i>No Congregation</i>	Winifred Meehan's Intentions
Wed	3 rd	am	" "	Ss Charles Lwanga and Companions	Memoria	John & Elizabeth Galvin
					<i>No Congregation</i>	
Thu	4 th	am	" "	Lord Jesus Christ, Eternal High Priest	Memoria	Joseph Galvin RIP
					<i>No Congregation</i>	
Fri	5 th	am	" "	St Boniface	Memoria <i>No Congregation</i>	Patty Tiernan RIP
Sat	6 th	pm	" "	Vigil	<i>No Congregation</i>	Peggy Toner RIP
Sun	7 th	am	" "	Trinity Sunday	<i>No Congregation</i>	David Harwar RIP(3 rd Ann.)

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM By Appointment

Prayers for the departed loved ones whose anniversaries occur at this time: [St. Patrick's] Elizabeth McDonagh, Anthony Finn, Frances Terry, Bridie Collins, Celia Jelfs, Matilda Warrilow, Gordon Wild, Eddie Lennon, Elizabeth Galvin, Joseph Beyer, Kathleen Bacon, Margaret Deaville [St. Anne's] Mary Bester, Hugh Chadwick, Victor Crawley, John Gillett, Mrs Meehan, Christopher Nealon, Robert Powell, Terry Walsh, Cynthia Williams, Mike O'Leary, Beatrix Shelley, Bernard Chevallier, Derek Nicholson, Stephen Fulton, Katherine Ilsley, Evelyn Rimmer, Clara Rushton, Gladys Wolveson.

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
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ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

Marston Road, ST16 3BT
Telephone: 01785 413275
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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

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 Pentecost Sunday. This Sunday marks the end of Eastertide as we resume 'Ordinary Time' from Monday. However, we celebrate the Gift of the Holy Spirit and we know from Jesus' promise, that the Holy Spirit will guide us and support us through the remainder of 2020 whatever it brings.

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 plague.

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 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.

***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.

HOMILY FOR PENTECOST SUNDAY

What would we do without language? How would we be able to function? Well, if we think of language in its usual sense of 'speaking' and 'reading' and so on, then we simply can't; or wouldn't. Everything would break down wouldn't it? This is what a nation or a country is about – a common language that not only enables us to live work and operate but allows us to share a common culture as well. There have been attempts at inventing an artificial language, such as 'Esperanto' but it never really took off. It's probably because a language is more than just a technical communication medium; it's rooted in a nation's culture, isn't it? Where nuances and contextual meanings count for so much.

It's strange, but there are situations where we can communicate with each other wherever we come from. And I'm thinking of the weather here. It might be a gloriously sunny day and somehow whoever we're with, we come to an agreement that 'this is good'. The weather unites us, especially nice weather. Perhaps it's because it's a shared experience – we all bathe in the sunshine and the Sun is shining its rays on all of us equally. And that makes us realise that language in its broadest sense takes in all forms of communication; body language, emotional language, sign language – even the language of religion.

When I hear that reading from the Acts of the Apostles today I understand how those apostles would be able to speak the language of ‘shared experience’. The Holy Spirit filled the room and importantly the hearts and minds of all those gathered there. And because the Holy Spirit was so overwhelmingly present it meant that everyone else who was drawn to the noise and sounds understood the apostles; they understood the language, a language no-one had ever heard before. Yet all these people from all over the known world knew what was being said because it wasn’t really the ‘voice’ of Peter and the apostles, but the voice of God. The Holy Spirit was speaking to the listeners, at least to those who had ears to listen! But we need to remember that then, as we find today, there were those who sneered and accused the disciples of being drunk. Nothing new there then, is there. Many experienced it and were drawn to this tremendous outpouring of the Spirit, but others mocked it. And this is the story of the Church through the ages; we’ll always meet opposition.

We could never have received the Holy Spirit if Jesus hadn’t ascended to His Father, because His ascension was, if you like, the first stage of bringing earth into God’s realm. The next stage is to bring us with Him and that can only happen when the Holy Spirit comes into us and recreates us into Christ’s image.

Every age of humanity, from primordial history to the present, has seen, and is seeing cruelty, oppression and the legacy of Cain and Abel (somewhere in our world) but the Holy Spirit promises infinite power – the power that will always overcome evil. That same Spirit that hovered over the formless void in Genesis in the act of creation is even more beautifully present when a broken life is recreated; when beauty can grow out of an ugly situation; when life can come out of death. The most challenging and difficult thing for all of us is to allow our memories to be filled with love and compassion and empty of bitterness and hatred. Trying to forget the horrors is nearly impossible for us here on earth and also potentially dangerous because it can repress anger. In reality we have to remember all things, good and bad, but the Holy Spirit within us lets us hold the memories in a sort of ‘balance’. So, over time the hurts and violence become ‘scar tissue’. In John’s Gospel reading today Jesus gives His apostles backing; those whose sins they forgive are forgiven, those whose sins they retain they are retained. This essentially means that the powerful gift of the Spirit will face us with a choice: if we, as sinners, are melted by the love offered we’ll find forgiveness and be recreated. But if we refuse this offer we’re retained in our sinfulness. We need to learn how to speak the language of love and this is only possible if we truly believe in the Holy Spirit.

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, now with Pentecost upon us, are so close to reaching the target but are still 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>.