

Fourth Sunday of Lent, 10 March 2024

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life."

There are many examples in literature of people who, through the course of the story, move from despair to hope, selfishness to generosity, darkness to light. Rarely do they do this entirely through their own efforts. Usually someone is rooting for them, encouraging them, or coaxing them towards something better. This persistent support empowers them, not only to do better for themselves, but also to do better for others.

In Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge is shown a way of living that differs from his self-absorbed existence. He sees what might be if he let joy, light and generosity into his world. He responds, reluctantly at first, but later with uncurtailed joy. In Barbara Kingsolver's *Demon Copperhead*, several good people refuse to give up on a boy born into a life of poverty, neglect and addiction, where circumstances seem to make bad outcomes inevitable.

In many cases, the path is not straight. Life is messy, and ups may be followed by downs. Characters resist support. Or they accept support but nevertheless encounter hurdle after hurdle. As in real life, there may be no fairy-tale ending. But it is usually clear that goodness makes a difference, and that even one good person can transform how another experiences the world. Indeed, those involved in young people's services know that having "one good adult" is crucial in helping a young person to flourish. And surely this continues to apply in adulthood. Scrooge, after all, was no longer young when he accepted love from others in a way that enabled him to bring love into the world in turn.

In John's Gospel, it is Jesus who has the power to transform the lives of those he encounters. This applies in the sometimes abstract, theological sense of salvation and in the concrete sense of how people live their lives.

John describes how people "have shown they prefer darkness to light because their deeds were evil". They have avoided the light because they fear it will expose their wrong actions. In the first reading, we hear of "infidelity", "shameful practices", and the repeated resistance of the people when God sent "messenger after messenger" until it seemed "there was no further remedy".

But as Paul tells us in the second reading, God persisted. "God loved us with so much love that he was generous in his mercy." Even when we "were dead through our sins", God brought us to life with Christ. Paul is clear, however, that we are not saved by anything we alone have done. We are saved through grace and faith, gifts from God given in Christ Jesus. He is that one good person who empowers us "to live the good life". He is the one who John says was sent by God to save the world, empowering us to live by the truth "so that it may be plainly seen that what [we] do is done in God".

Living the life God intended is impossible if we go it alone. That is why we open our hearts to Jesus as the one who brings light, grace and faith into our lives. Spending time in prayer and reflection, pondering on the scriptures, and celebrating our faith in community can help us experience the transformative light of Christ. This light is not just for us as individuals, even if we experience it through deeply personal prayer. Our life in Christ is not simply and 'inward' or 'upward' spiritual exercise. Just as we see the power of one good person on many a character in literature – and as we may have experienced in our own lives – so we are called to reach into the world.

Each one of us is just one person, but our influence can be transformative if we are the one who brightens another's day, offers a word of comfort, lifts another up, treats our

environment and every person with the respect they deserve as part of God's creation. Our gestures do not need to be grand, although some of us may be in a position to do great things. Today, let us think of one way in which we might be one good person in the world.

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Happy Mother's Day. May all the days of every year be Mother's Day, with lots of prayers and wishing you a Happy Mother's Day

Annual Mission Appeal. Welcome to Fr Tom Ryan, from the Missionary Society of Saint Columban (Columban Fathers) who will be celebrating all the Masses this weekend. There will be a retiring collection for the Columban Missions, our annual Mission Appeal. *(Please kindly note cash donations only – no option to use the card machine on this occasion).*

Monthly Teas/ Coffees. Please do go through to the parish hall for a cup of tea or coffee after the 9.15am Mass this Sunday, 10th March.

Kindly note the forthcoming Funerals:

Pauline Gore RIP at South West Middlesex Crematorium, Hanworth on Friday 15th March at 12.40pm. *(note change of time)*

William (Billy) Moore RIP at St Michael's Church on **Monday 25th March** at 11.15am

Elizabeth Floyd RIP at St Michael's Church on **Tuesday 2nd April** at 10.45am.

Diane Russell RIP at St Michael's Church on **Wednesday 3rd April** at 11.00am.

Weekday Mass. Mass this week on Monday (9.15am) and Wednesday (6.00pm) will be in St Joseph's Chapel.

Stations of the Cross on Fridays in Lent at 7.00pm.

Lenten Service of Reconciliation is on **Monday 18th March at 7.00 pm** and **St David's Stanwell, on Tuesday, 19th March 2023 at 7.00 pm.**

Cardinal's Lenten Appeal 2024. You will find the donations box is at the back of the church or you may use the QR code to make your donation online. Please do take a donation envelope, which you will find in the narthex.

Marian Year, 11th February to 20th November, 2024. We, the Sons of Divine Providence, are celebrating the Marian Year and invite you to join us to celebrate the year with devotion and veneration to Mary, Mother of God. *We will recite the Orionine Marian Year Prayer after Mass each day – you will find prayer cards at the back of the church.*

Easter My Day by Day booklets are now available in the narthex, £1.00 each. Please place your donation in the Publications Box in the narthex.

Certificates of Catholic Practice (CCP) for admission to St Michael's Nursery in the presbytery on **Wednesday 10th April**, 11.00am – 12 noon and 6.45- 7.30 pm. Please try to come at this time, rather than seeking an individual appointment.

Ladies Circle are back, ready for St Patrick's Day. We meet on **Thursday 14th March** at 8.00pm in the parish hall. New members always welcome.

Flower/Plant pots. There is a selection of flower/plant pots on the shelf outside the sacristy – please do help yourself!

Easter Light – a parish fundraising event, an evening of music and dancing, **on Sunday 31st March** in the parish hall. Tickets are on sale after weekend Masses. Please see the poster in the narthex for more information.

Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 25th May 2024 at 2:30pm. The Cardinal is inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese, who are celebrating their **5th 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th (and every year over 60)** wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage in 2024. If you are celebrating an anniversary, please give Shenda in the parish office the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and email (or telephone number, if no email) by **Monday 15th April 2024.**

Mass Intentions. If you wish to book a Mass, please drop your intention envelope in the box at the back of the church in the offertory collection or through the presbytery letterbox.

Bucket Collection. The Bucket Collection is for TALK Surrey – *supporting people with Aphasia after a stroke or brain injury.* You will find the donations box in the wall at the back of the church.

Pilgrimage to Lourdes and Nevers, 28th March to 1st April 2024 organised by St Peter's Pilgrimages Package price from £490.00 Please see the poster in the narthex or contact office@stpeterspilgrimages.com for more details.

Feltham Choral Society Spring Concert on Saturday 16th March, 7.30pm at St Dunstan's Church, Lower Feltham. Tickets, £10.00 on the door, cash only. All welcome.

This Sunday's readings, Fourth Sunday of Lent, 10th March 2024

2 Chronicles 36: 14-16, 19-23; Ephesians 2: 4-10; John 3: 14-21

Next Sunday's readings, Fifth Sunday of Lent, 17th March 2024

Jeremiah 31: 31-34; Hebrews 5: 7-9; John 12: 20-30

Offertory Collection. Thank you for your offertories last week:

Loose Plate £571.25; Envelopes £190.00; Standing Orders £900.00

Contactless £253.00 (*The Dona contactless PayPoint is in the narthex*)

MANNA Foodbank. *This week's shortages:* Cup-a-Soup; Cereal and Breakfast Bars; Tinned Spaghetti in Tomato Sauce; Crackers; Custard both tinned and sachets; Tinned Rice Pudding; Tinned Salmon; Tinned Carrots, Green Beans, Mixed Vegetables; Tea Bags in 40's and 160 packs; Wrapped Chocolate Biscuits - Penguins, Kit-Kats etc; Instant Mashed Potato; Noodles for 1; Tinned Fruit; Tinned Mixed Bean Salad, Butter Beans and Kidney Beans; Chocolate Spread; Large and Small bags of Sugar; Blocks of Jelly; Shower Gel; Liquid Handwash; Toothpaste for 3-5yrs and 6+yrs; Toothbrushes for 6+yrs; Shampoo; Liquid Handwash; Washing-up-Liquid; Toilet Paper; Easter Eggs and other Easter Treats/Sweets/Cakes etc.

Please leave your donations on the Presbytery doorstep or in the Narthex.

Safeguarding If you've any concerns or require advice regarding the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult, please contact our parish safeguarding rep, Tiziana Demurtas on 07778 533932 or ashfordsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk

You can also contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on 020 7798 9356 or

safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

During Adoration after Saturday morning Mass (and by appointment)

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

To arrange a baptism please refer to the parish website:

(see: Parish Life → Sacramental Preparation → Baptism)

For the parish Mass timetable, please refer to the parish website:

<http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford>

PLEASE PRAY

for all the sick and housebound in our parish.

for anniversaries in March since 2017: Winifred Atkinson, Ben Boone, Lena Chapman, Tina Edwards, Christina Hunt, Jennifer Langan, Jeremiah McMullen, Lorraine Munro, Noel O'Neill, William O'Rourke, Joan Peters.

for Fr Philip Baptiste and the parishioners of St Theodore of Canterbury, Hampton in the Upper Thames Deanery.

for the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world might imbue the Church with their courage and missionary drive.

Mass Intentions 10th – 17th March

Sun 10th	Fourth Sunday of Lent	
(Saturday Vigil Mass)	06.00pm	The people of the parish
	09.15am	Paulo and Ana Amelia Gonsalves RIP
	11.30am	Joe Redmond RIP
	06.00pm	Alf and Joyce Jaworek RIP
Mon 11th	09.15am	Bernadette Rosborough RIP
Tues 12th	09.15am	Munidasa Saparamadu RIP
Wed 13th	06.00pm	Reynoso Quijano RIP
Fri 15th	09.15am	Julia Paradise's intentions
Sat 16th	09.15am	Nicola Fylan RIP
Sun 17th	Fifth Sunday of Lent	
(Saturday Vigil Mass)	06.00pm	Welby Cooper RIP
	09.15am	Lorraine Munro RIP
	11.30am	Angela Bentley RIP
	06.00pm	The people of the parish

St Michael's Catholic Church

112 Clarendon Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2QD

Telephone: 01784 252230

Email: ashford@rcdow.org.uk

Website: <http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford>

This parish is part of the Westminster Catholic Diocese Trustee Charity no. 233699

Fr Sidon Sagar FDP: Parish Priest, Fr Carlo Mazzotta FDP: Assistant Priest

Parish Secretary: Mrs Shenda Holmes

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm