

## **Second Sunday of Easter, 7 April 2024**

**“Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.”**

**A young woman, who looked very emaciated, sat every morning at the lamppost outside Warren Street tube station in London. She begged for a few coins in an old, rather battered, McDonald’s cup. Wrapped up in an old blanket, she endured the cruel, cold wind which blew strongly between the tall buildings. Further down Tottenham Court Road, sleepers woke up from their restless sleep and stirred in their grubby sleeping bags with a few pieces of cardboard as their mattresses. Here and there, some had small tents which had been erected next to the shops to gain heat from the ventilation ducts.**

Most people walked by the woman; some placed a few coins in her cup. Most days, James also passed by, not offering her any money, thinking that it would be misused, likely to be spent on alcohol or drugs. One day he gave her one pound. A few days later he did the same again and she asked, “Can you buy me a cup of coffee please?” Stirred by her pathetic face and her pleading question, he said “yes” and went into McDonald’s. Not having visited McDonald’s for years, he was now confronted with screens for placing an order and little human contact. Negotiating this, he walked out and gave the coffee to the young woman. “What is your name?”, he asked. “Tina”, she replied. The woman by the lamppost was afterwards always “Tina” and not just another anonymous face. He began to think more about her. The pattern repeated a few times and then she disappeared. He wondered, “What happened to Tina, is she dead or alive?”

**Thomas struggled to believe in Jesus, risen from the dead, and the new life which he offered him. But Thomas’ doubt was even stronger, he was stubborn, and he said, “Unless I see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my fingers in the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side, I refuse to believe”. He made demands of Jesus and the other apostles. Thomas was arrogant. It must have been a struggle to stay with those who believed and were full of joy. Now he found himself on the margins.**

God relentlessly pursues those who try to escape from him, never abandoning them, and protecting them unceasingly under the shade of his outstretched hand. The risen Jesus seeks Thomas out to speak to him and prove that he is risen from the dead. He appears to Thomas and invites him to do exactly what he has demanded. Thomas touches the wounds of the risen Jesus and says, “My Lord and my God”. He believes.

We belong to the Body of Christ through baptism. This is not an abstract reality but real, earthy, and fleshy. We meet Christ when we love our brothers and sisters as neighbours. St Francis of Assisi, leaving his rich life behind, despised lepers in general. But when he kissed one leper whom he met on the road to Assisi, his bitterness was changed to sweetness. St Francis recognised him as having the same dignity as one of God’s children.

We do not see the risen Christ directly like Thomas and the others to whom he appeared for forty days. Rather we meet the risen Christ through prayer, his Word, the sacraments, and other people. We walk by faith and not by sight. We rejoice in being those people of whom Jesus says, “Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe.”

James meeting Tina, buying her a cup of coffee, knowing her name, was a meeting with Christ. It deepened his faith. He began to understand more deeply the meaning of Christ’s Body on earth. This meeting began to build a relationship between two people, between whom there had existed a great gulf.

**Actions speak louder than words. Many people find Christian outreach to the poor and the vulnerable, to the hungry and the needy, credible as a witness to the Gospel of Christ. This is the reason why St Francis of Assisi is loved by many people. Whilst not everyone is called to his radical way of life, we must each ask how we can live more simply and more generously towards others.**

**Just as the apostles testified to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power and were given great respect, so this parish community witnesses to the power of belief in Christ by touching the wounds of Christ in our own here and now.**

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**Sunday Friends.** Please note that Sunday Friends are not meeting this Sunday. Back on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> April. *The Look Leaflets will be available in the narthex.*

**Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April (transferred from 25<sup>th</sup> March).** We will celebrate the Feast at the 9.15am Mass on Monday.

**Monthly teas and coffees – next Sunday, 14<sup>th</sup> April after the Sunday 9.15am Mass in the parish hall.**

**Christopher Worley RIP.** The Funeral of Christopher Worley will take place on **Monday, 15<sup>th</sup> April at 11.00am.**

**Jim Gibson RIP, He died on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March,** Please keep him in your precious prayers. May God also strengthen Lee in this time of great sorrow.

**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. *Please use the new blue donation envelopes if you are able to make your Mass offering under Gift Aid.*

**Bucket Collection.** The Bucket Collection is for the Princess Alice Hospice. You will find the donations box in the wall at the back of the church.

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**Parish Quiz Night on Saturday, 20<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30pm in the Parish Hall – has been cancelled.**

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

**Baptism Preparation Course.** The next Baptism Preparation Course is on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2024 at 10.00 am in the presbytery meeting room. If you require the Sacrament of Baptism for your child in May, June or July 2024 then you will need to contact [ashfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:ashfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk) so that the necessary paperwork can be finalised before the date of the course.

**Antiques Fair.** The next fair is **on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> April**, 10.00am- 3.00pm in the parish hall. Please do go and have a look at the variety of stalls. More information from Anna Hogan on 01784 254462. If you are able to help with setting up and clearing away afterwards, please do call Anna. Thank you!

**Help at Antiques Fairs.** Anna and Tony Hogan have been running the monthly Antiques Fairs in the parish hall for many years, raising funds for the parish. They really do need some help now with setting up and clearing away afterwards. They set up the hall on the Friday night before the fair. The fair runs until 3.00pm, so help would be needed to clear/move table and chairs from about 4.00pm on the Saturday. If you are able to help please contact Anna on 01784 254462.

**Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> May 2024 at 2:30pm.** The Cardinal is inviting to this Mass all couples in the

Diocese, who are celebrating their **5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> (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 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024**.

### **Marriage Care Volunteers Needed!**

Marriage Care is a Catholic organisation specialising in relationship support. We are looking for Marriage Preparation Course Facilitators to prepare couples for the Sacrament of Marriage (full training is provided for this role), Qualified Relationship Counsellors to support couples in distress and Trustees to provide governance and strategic direction for the organisation. For more information please visit: [www.marriagecare.org.uk](http://www.marriagecare.org.uk) or email: [volunteer@marriagecare.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@marriagecare.org.uk)

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### **This Sunday's readings, Second Sunday of Easter, 7<sup>th</sup> April**

*Acts 4: 32-35; 1 John 5: 1-6; John 20: 19-31*

### **Next Sunday's readings, Third Sunday of Easter, 14<sup>th</sup> April**

*Acts 3: 13-15, 17-19; 1 John 2: 1-5; Luke 24: 35-48*

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### **Offertory Collection.**

Thank you for your offertories last week:

Loose Plate **£1261.65**; Envelopes **£301.00**; Standing Orders £900.00

Contactless **£376** (*The Dona contactless PayPoint is in the narthex*)

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### **MANNA Foodbank.** This week's shortages:

Tinned fruit - all types, Long-Life Semi-Skimmed Milk (Green), Wrapped Chocolate Biscuits - Penguin, Kit-Kats etc. Tinned Potatoes, Porridge, Long-Life Juice - full size cartons, Crackers, Tinned Salmon/Sardines/Mackerel etc (we have good stocks of Tuna), Tea Bags in 40's and 160 packs - we are very short, Tinned Butter Beans and Kidney Beans, Spreads - Jam, Peanut Butter, Chocolate Spread, Shower Gel, Shampoo, Shaving Foam/Gel, Toilet Paper, Kitchen Roll.

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

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**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](mailto:ashfordsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)

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

[safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk)

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### **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>**

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PLEASE PRAY

for all the sick and housebound in our parish.

for anniversaries in April since 2017: Margerida Borges, Brian Cook, Alcina DaSilva, Anne Gates, Christine Hunter, Ian Kunzi, Peter McDonnell, Mary McGann, Joan McMullen, Mary McTernan, Sarah Anne Milton, Domingo Monteiro, Joe Redmond, Mary Savage, Carmela Tirone, Patricia Trussler.

for Fr Sean Church and the parishioners of St Francis de Sales, Hampton Hill in the Upper Thames Deanery.

for the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that the dignity and worth of women be recognised in every culture, and for an end to the discrimination they face in various parts of the world.

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### Mass Intentions 7<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> April

Sun 7<sup>th</sup> **Second Sunday of Easter**

(Saturday Vigil Mass)

06.00pm

The people of the parish

09.15am

Jim Gartlan RIP

11.30am

Lesley and Ben Westlake RIP

06.00pm

Carey D'Souza RIP

Mon 8<sup>th</sup> **The Annunciation of the Lord**

09.15am

Emma Horsey's intentions

Tues 9<sup>th</sup>

09.15am

Wed 10<sup>th</sup>

06.00pm

Greg and Esther intentions

Fri 12<sup>th</sup>

09.15am

Sat 13<sup>th</sup>

09.15am

Sun 14<sup>th</sup> **Third Sunday of Easter**

(Saturday Vigil Mass)

06.00pm

Izaak Lewis RIP

09.15am

Alcina and Clement Da Silva RIP

11.30am

Joe Redmond RIP

06.00pm

The people of the parish

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## St Michael's Catholic Church

112 Clarendon Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2QD

Telephone: 01784 252230

Email: [ashford@rcdow.org.uk](mailto: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