

Sixth Sunday of Easter, 5 May 2024

"As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love."

Many years ago, a film based on a true story portrayed a young South American, Miguel, who sang a song that was infectious and spread to everyone who truly listened to its words. It told of life, love and freedom beyond the poverty and oppression that his people were experiencing, but the beautiful music of hope angered those in authority who dreamed of power and wealth. Before long, they arrested Miguel, promising him imprisonment and death if he refused to stop singing. He rejected their threats.

As he stood before the firing squad, the officer asked Miguel for his last words. Instead of speaking, he sang. As he died, his fellow prisoners, watching silently from their cell windows, started to sing Miguel's song, at first quietly and then ever more loudly. The song could not be destroyed. Miguel's music soared beyond the prison into the surrounding countryside, where the peasants working in the fields joined in the melody.

When the film was created, it was too risky to identify the Mexican Jesuit, Blessed Miguel Pro. At his execution on 23 November 1927, Miguel asked if he could briefly kneel and pray. Refusing a blindfold, he stood, forgave those who would kill him and extended his arms as though on the cross. He cried out "Viva Cristo Re!" — or, in English, "Long live Christ the King!" - and with those words, Miguel died. Forty thousand people lined the route of his funeral procession. Another twenty thousand waited at the cemetery, where no priest was allowed to conduct the burial. His song continues!

Before ever Miguel began singing, Jesus showed "the power of one" and raised his voice with his message of undying love. Today's Gospel is Jesus' love song, taken from his words at the Last Supper, a moment when he knew that those closest to him would deny him and would hide in fear lest they suffer the same fate. Jesus did not condemn them for their betrayals and cowardice. Instead, he talked of love, aware that, within a very short time of speaking, he would be arrested and, rather than accept a life of silence, would sing his love song to Calvary. "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends." These lyrics accompanied his every breath, every step, until he had nothing left to give — and even then, he gave blood and water as the soldier's lance pierced his heart.

Jesus described his oneness with his Father, although, on the cross, he would cry out in agony, "My God! My God! Why have you forsaken me?" Yet Jesus had, on an earlier occasion, said that his strength was made perfect in weakness. At the very moment of seemingly utter degradation, Jesus showed what "the power of one" can do. That is why Good Friday led to Easter Sunday. His resurrection made sense of the non-sense.

We are still in the Easter season. Calvary, the tomb and the resurrection are staging posts on our journey, but the link between them all is love that never dies and never ends.

Aren't we crazy if we underestimate "the power of one"? It only takes one person with an idea, a message, a thought — a song - to touch the hearts of others and kindle a small flame. Sadly, we've often seen in the media the terrible results when love is in short supply, but we also witness the consequences when one person reaches out to another in love. It's like a pebble thrown into a pool of water, the ripples spread wider and wider. Without the pebble, the ripples would remain unborn. Without the power of one act of kindness, compassion, mercy or friendship, others wouldn't happen.

When the world in which we live is so hungry for love, why is it that we so often feel helpless and unable to do something to change things? Miguel Pro sang his song of hope at a time when his life was in danger and, by so doing, he gave others the courage that they needed to see the light at the end of the tunnel of hardship and oppression.

We have a proverb, "mighty oaks from little acorns grow". Could I be the acorn which gives rise to the oak tree? I might not see the results of my act of kindness, but Miguel Pro

did not know that his song and his death would inspire countless others to see Jesus' undying love. "The power of one" is all it takes to provide a lifeline to someone else.

Lord Jesus, make me an instrument of your love.

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The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, Thursday 9th May 2024. We will celebrate this Solemnity with Mass on **Wednesday, 8th May 6.00pm** (Vigil Mass) and **Thursday, 9th May at 9.15am.**

First Holy Communion. Please keep in your prayers our children who are making their First Holy Communion next weekend.

Monthly coffees. Please note that there will be no monthly coffees after the 9.15am Mass next Sunday 12th May. The next coffees will be on 9th June.

Catholic Communications Network. We will take up the annual diocesan collection for the Catholic Communications Network next weekend. You will find the Donations Box in the wall at the back of the church, by the Hymn Book Trolleys.

Altar Servers: *"Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain."* -1 Cor 15:58. Serving our God and King at the Altar is a service that brings blessing to all. Inviting all young hearts, who would like to be an Altar Server at weekend Masses. Children must have made their First Holy Communion. Please get in touch with Daphne for more information at daffy24@gmail.com or 07459 343539.

Altar Servers Training for current and new Altar Servers will take place on Saturdays 18th and 25th May at 10.30am.

Adult Faith Formation. If anyone is interested in any of the following free Adult Faith Formation programmes please email lee.gibson.2na@btinternet.com

1. Catholicism – Study Guide and DVD's.
2. Catholicism- The New Evangelisation Study Guide and DVD's.
3. The Bible Timeline – Study Guide and DVD's.

Michael Christopher Colgan RIP. The Funeral will take place on **Tuesday, 7th May** at 11.00 am at St Michael's Church.

Jim Gibson RIP. The Funeral will take place on **Thursday, 9th May** at 12.20 pm at Hanworth Crematorium.

John Webb RIP. Please pray for the repose of the soul of John Webb who died last week. The Funeral will take place on **Thursday 23rd May** at 1.00pm at St Michael's Church.

Offertory Envelopes 2024/2025. There are still a few boxes of envelopes in the narthex awaiting collection. If you no longer wish to use your envelopes, please do let Shenda in the parish office know – 01784 252230 or ashford@rcdow.org.uk

Baptism Preparation Course. The next Baptism Preparation Course is on **Saturday 6th July 2024** at 10.00 am in the presbytery meeting room. If you require the Sacrament of Baptism for your child in July, August and September 2024 then you will need to contact ashfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk so that the necessary paperwork can be finalised before the date of the course.

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 can make your Mass offering under Gift Aid.*

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

Repository. First Holy Communion Ties are now on sale at £5.99 each. Also on sale is a selection of Cards, Gifts and Missals at very reasonable prices. Payment is accepted by cash (*box in the wall in the Repository*) or card (*Dona machine in the narthex – select the Repository tab and then enter the amount required to pay*). Thank you for being so supportive to the parish.

Ladies Circle. We meet on **Thursday 9th May** at 8.00 pm in the parish hall for more Bingo – please bring plenty of change (£1 coins).

The Crown of Thorns is a UK Charity that sends religious items to the Missions. Do you have you any religious statues, rosaries, books, pictures, etc. that you would like to donate? If so, please bring to the presbytery during office hours.

This Sunday's readings, Sixth Sunday of Easter, 5th May

Acts 10: 25-26, 34-35, 44-48; 1 John 4: 7-10; John 15: 9-17

Next Sunday's readings, Seventh Sunday of Easter, 12th May

Acts 1; 15-17, 20-26; John 4: 11-16; John 17: 11-19

Offertory Collection.

Thank you for your offertories last week:

Loose Plate £332.44; Envelopes £220.50; Standing Orders £900.00

Contactless £198.00 (*The Dona contactless PayPoint is in the narthex*)

MANNA Foodbank. This week's shortages: Long-Life Juice - full size cartons; Fruit Squash; Tinned Fruit - (we have good stocks of peaches); Crackers; Tinned Custard; Tinned Rice Pudding; Cup a Soup; Cereal/Breakfast Bars; Tinned Potatoes - we are very short; Tinned Salmon/Sardines/Mackerel etc (we have good stocks of Tuna); Spreads - Jam, Peanut Butter, Chocolate Spread, Marmalade; Rice in 500g packs; Dried Spaghetti in 500g packs; Sugar 1kg bags; Crisps; Porridge; Instant Mash (Smash type); Tinned Cold Meat - Ham, SPAM, Luncheon Meat, Chicken (we have good stocks of corned beef); Deodorant; Washing-up-Liquid - we are very short; Shaving Foam/Gel; Toothpaste; Single Adult Toothbrushes; Shower Gel; Shampoo.

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

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

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

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

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

PLEASE PRAY

for all the sick and housebound in our parish.

for anniversaries in May since 2017: Audrey Adu, Ted Alexander, Michael Bentley, Debra Brown, Stanley Clarke, Rose Dennehy, Felicity Devine, Bernie Driscoll, Ita Flood, Enie Forbes, Sean Garvey, Jennifer Gooneratne, Annie John, Lilly Keogh, Philomena Lewis, Catherine Mead, Robert Stonehill, Michael Sullivan, Maureen Tall.

for Canon Peter Newby and the parishioners of St Margarets in the Upper Thames Deanery.

for the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that men and women religious and seminarians may grow in their own vocational journey through human, pastoral, spiritual and Community formation, which leads them to be credible witnesses of the Gospel.

Mass Intentions 5th -12th May

Sun 5th	Sixth Sunday of Easter	
(Saturday Vigil Mass)	06.00pm	The people of the parish
	09.15am	Alberto Muyco RIP
	11.30am	Thomas Abbey RIP
	06.00pm	Sidney Vaz and Patrycja Senderowicz – 1 st Wedding Anniversary
Mon 6th	09.15am	Jim Gibson RIP
Tues 7th	09.15am	Terence Richardson RIP
	11.00am	Funeral of Michael Christopher Colgan
Wed 8th	06.00pm	Robert Wilson RIP
Thurs 9th	The Ascension of the Lord	
	09.15am	
Fri 10th	09.15am	Joseph Fernandes RIP
Sat 11th	09.15am	Christopher Colgan RIP
Sun 12th	Seventh Sunday of Easter	
(Saturday Vigil Mass)	06.00pm	Patricia Dunn RIP
	09.15am	Alwyn and Grace Cooper RIP
	11.30am	
	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