

Parish Message for the 25th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Dear Parishioners,

I write to you today from my little corner overlooking the crossroads in my lovely New York as I am in the midst of preparing for a wedding ...

There is a song by the Puerto Rican artist Hector Lavoe titled 'Todo Tiene Su Fina'l (Everything Has Its End). Unfortunately, this Message also has to reflect about an end as well.

This Cardinal has asked me to be the Assistant Priest at the Parish of St. Joan of Arc, Highbury, beginning at the end of October. Although I am saddened by the fact that I will have to say goodbye to all of you here, both locally and virtually, I am comforted to know that in the past three years I have managed to know so many of you and shared an experience in the growth of faith with you.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers and support during these years. As mentioned in many Thank You speeches, the list is long and I am afraid to forget to specifically include someone. I thank you, from the parishioners whom I have greeted outside the doors when Mass finished on both weekdays and weekends, at the school, or in any circumstance (and, yes, even having my name shouted on the street or from a car); the patience of the sacristans, servers, and choir; the even greater patience of the catechists, teachers, and organisers for any visitation, committees, or events; and even a greater (and heavenly endowed) patience to Fr. Peter and Debbie, who have moulded me in my first three years of priestly ministry.

I know that any transition is difficult, but we do these things with the assurance of faith that we persevere in what we do or say because of our redemption in Christ. St. Paul sums it up in last Sunday's Second Reading: 'none of us lives for himself, nor dies for himself. If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord. Either in life or in death, we belong to the Lord' (Romans 14: 7-8)

I am sure that you will happily welcome Fr. Antonio and that he will be a great priest of service for you - a beacon of faith, hope and love for all of you in the parish.

I understand that COVID-19 has changed a bit the way we will interact with each other, but I am sure we will find a way to say goodbye. But not to worry, I am still around for another month when I come back from New York.

Pray for me as I pray for you always.

In Christ,

Fr. Carlos

Parish Note Friday 18th September 2020 and the Sunday Message from Fr Carlos

Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

Fri 9/18/2020 4:06 PM

To: Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

 1 attachments (15 KB)

Parish Message for the 25th Sunday of Ordinary Time.docx;

Good afternoon everyone

I hope that you are well.

Please find attached the Sunday Message for this week from Fr Carlos, currently in the USA and who we look forward to welcoming back very soon, albeit under probable quarantine conditions.

We are now officially in autumn and I feel a childish sense of excitement in the air as we are now in.. ' Conker season!' I adore conkers, always have done and always will. There is something rather satisfying about finding a brand new shiny, bronzed nugget, complete in its half open, prickly jacket, freshly deposited on the ground. The race to find a big one or even a tiny one, walking home from school with my friends is a really strong memory that I still possess, as we scurried amongst the crunchy fallen leaves on a seasonal treasure hunt, laughing ,sharing our find and stuffing our pockets full.

Playing 'Conkers' was great fun in the school playground too, with no apparent ' health and safety' rules back then. Making a hole through the conker with my Dad's drill casually wavering in one hand and threading a knotted piece of old string, which had probably been licked several times through it with the other, was a risk worth taking. It was nearly a ' socially distanced sport', trying to bash your opponent's horse chestnut with yours, hoping that your knuckles and eyes were left intact at the end of the bout. I never did bake mine in the oven or soak them in vinegar to 'harden them up'. It didn't seem quite right to me.

According to the Woodland Trust, Horse Chestnut trees can grow to 40 metres tall and live for up to 300 years, having been introduced to the UK from Turkey in the 16th century and the first record of the game of ' Conkers' is from the Isle of Wight in 1848. It is also said that if you put a conker in the corner of your room, it is meant to keep spiders away. Having several in the house, unfortunately, has not however deterred ' Aragog' who lives behind the skirting board somewhere in the downstairs loo and comes out each night. There is a lovely ' Conker tree' on the Great Hadham Road, so, if you just happen to drive past and see an excitable woman in her 50's lurking in the vicinity, it might be me... but I promise that I will only take one...okay.. maybe two..

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS - This Saturday 19th September, the Cardinal will ordain six men in the Cathedral, three to the priesthood and three to the diaconate. This will be the first time since 2nd July 1999 ordinations to these two orders have taken place on the same occasion in this diocese. We keep Priests-to-be Alex Balzanella, David Knight and Axcel Soriano and Deacons-to-be William Johnstone, Tim Mangatal and Marco Salvagnini in our thoughts and prayers

POLITE REMINDER -Wearing a face covering is mandatory in an enclosed space, which includes our Church, unless you are exempt. For the safety of everyone, please ensure that your face covering is worn properly over your nose and mouth for the whole-time that you are in the Church. As we only have a limited number of seats available for Mass at St Joseph's and to ensure that we comply with all social distancing measures in place, please make certain that you have booked your place **before you arrive**. This is also to aid compliance with our Track and Trace requirement. Places can be booked very easily by visiting our web site on the 'Events section' or by calling the Parish office Monday- Friday 9am -3pm on 01279 654063. **Regrettably, if you simply turn up without having booked a place, even if you are a regular parishioner and especially at the weekend**

which is often now fully booked to our maximum capacity, unfortunately, you will not be granted access. We thank you for your continued support and appreciate your understanding and assistance at this difficult time.

THE SVP - Next Sunday 27th September, is the Feast day of St Vincent de Paul, the Patron of the SVP. The Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) was founded in 1833 in Paris by a young lawyer, Frederic Ozanam who wanted to help the destitute and poor of the city. He chose St Vincent de Paul to be its patron as Vincent had been known as 'The Father of the poor' in an earlier generation. St Vincent said, 'Go to the poor; you will find God'. Our Parish SVP team based at St Joseph's under the guidance of Patrick Leng do an amazing job. They support the foodbank, assist the Rotary Club at Christmas and guide those in need, keeping in touch by contacting the lonely who look for company or a chat or help with tasks like shopping. They also deal with more urgent situations e.g. where families might want some food and clothing for their children which will be dealt with immediately if there is enough information to examine their needs. They will also do their best to help or pass on information which might lead to more substantial support elsewhere. Wanting to help SVP members in other countries they are 'twinned' with a Conference in Kerala, India and send them a small amount of money each year to help them do charitable work in their region. They correspond with each other on a regular basis which benefits both conferences. Through your generous donations via the SVP collection box at the back of the Church and annual Parish collections they are able to continue the charitable works begun by Frederic Ozanam in 1833, both here at St Joseph's, Bishop's Stortford and the other 131 countries around the world where the SVP have conferences.

Frederic Ozanam, the SVP founder, said 'Charity must never look to the past but always to the future because the number of its past works is still very small and the present and future miseries that it must alleviate are infinite'.

All SVP members must be screened by the Diocesan Authorities for suitability and DBS checks are compulsory for members who visit those who might be classified as vulnerable. All of our work is confidential too.

September marks the SVP's annual awareness month, the theme this year asking "Who Cares?" With a focus on loneliness, hunger, material poverty and sickness, the campaign highlighted the work of the SVP's 8,000 volunteer members who make 1,200 visits day to people in need, providing them with friendship, practical assistance and spiritual care.

You can contact the SVP via their website : www.svp.org.uk or via any member of the Conference

BAPTISM ZOOM COURSE - Fr Carlos will be offering a 'Baptism Zoom Course' for Parents who wish to have their Child baptised. Please email the office should you wish to sign up. The Zoom course will be on Tuesday 22nd September 2020 at 7.30pm and lasts approximately 1 hour. This is a change of date from 21st September as originally advertised. Invitations will be emailed out to those who wish to attend by Fr Carlos.

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL - will be having a 'Virtual' on line open evening on Wednesday 23rd September 2020 at 6.30pm. See www.stmarys.net for more info.

BISHOP'S STORTFORD FOODBANK -The Food Bank are looking to appoint a new Coordinator to lead our team of volunteers as we plan to meet the challenge of helping those in crisis during this difficult time. The job description and application form (to be completed online) can be found on our website at <https://www.bishopsstortfordfoodbank.com/>

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR MIGRANTS -The World Day for Migrant and Refugees will be celebrated on 27th September. You can find Pope Francis' letter for this day at http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/migration/documents/papafrancesco_20200513_world-migrants-day-2020.html

WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER - Marriage Encounter are excited to announce a new Online Experience for marriage enrichment. For the past 50 years Worldwide Marriage Encounter has been offering marriage enrichment retreats all around the world. Focused on couples who want to enrich their relationship and gain a deeper understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage, it offers a unique experience to explore your relationship at a deeper, more intimate level, regardless of how long you have been together. During the Coronavirus pandemic our residential retreats have had to be cancelled so we are reaching out to couples who want to deepen their relationship by offering a newly energised video conference retreat. The next Marriage Encounter Online Experience is 26 & 27 September 2020, why not find out more at wwme.org.uk or contact us on 0845 260 2016

MARRIED SINGLES LIFESTYLE –The Married Singles Lifestyle describes couples that may have lost a sense of closeness they once had as marriage partners and are living more like roommates. 'Retrouvaille' teaches couples how to survive times like these in their marriages. This programme has helped thousands of couples experiencing difficulty at all levels of marital distress from disillusionment to deep misery. There is no group therapy or group work

For confidential information about 'Retrouvaille' or to register the next programme commencing with a Virtual weekend on 12th -15th Nov 2020, Call or text 0788 7296983 or 0797 3380443 or Email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

MARRIAGE PREPARATION -Instead of the next Engaged Encounter weekend which has been cancelled because of the Covid 19 situation, there will be a 'virtual' online course run over four Saturdays online and anyone looking for marriage preparation is welcome. The dates of the four Saturdays will be October 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th. For further info please visit: www.engaged-encounter.org.uk

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING FOR LIFE-On Monday 28th September, please pray and fast for the end of abortion and euthanasia in this Country. Your prayer and fasting is urgently needed as last year this country saw the highest number of abortions ever. For details of our live saving work see www.GoodCounselNetwork.com

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT - Daniel Robinsons & Son will be distributing free tea, coffee and cake for a donation of your choice outside their premises on South Street on Saturday 26th September 2020 between 10am -1pm to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support

ZOOM - Our 9am Sunday Zoom session continues this week . Thank you to everyone who so generously gives their time and talents to make this happen each week.

Topic: Family Mass via Zoom during lock-down (music starting at 8:45am)

Time: September 20 2020 08:30 AM London
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89508074176>

Meeting ID: 895 0807 4176
Link to Calendar invite is parishioners want to add it to their diary.

One tap mobile:
+442030512874,,89508074176# United Kingdom
Dial-in by phone:
0203 051 2874

The numbers are standard rate numbers (not free unless you have inclusive minutes), but they are not premium numbers.

HOLY CROSS COMMITTEE - We are pleased to announce that Martin Dillon is the new Chair of the Holy Cross Committee in succession to Jim Conway. Thank you very much indeed to Jim for your time and care in chairing the group over the last couple of years. It is very much appreciated.

STEWARDS NEEDED FOR OCTOBER PLEASE - In order to be able to continue to safely open St Joseph's Church for the week day and weekend Masses, we need volunteer Stewards please for the new rota in October. Thank you to everyone who has kindly helped to date. It is much appreciated.

We require 2 Stewards during the week (Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri) during October from 9am -10.30am to welcome Parishioners for the 9.30am Mass into the Church via the main doors, ensure that hands are sanitised, allocate seating, ensure the safe egress of Parishioners after receiving the Blessed sacrament via the One-way system and assisting with the cleaning of the Church afterwards (sanitising pews, kneelers, door handles, washing floor etc).

For the weekend Masses open to Parishioners (Saturday 6pm Mass - Stewards to arrive by 5.30pm) and Sunday 9am and 6pm Mass (Stewards arrive by 8.30am and 5.30pm respectively), we need 3 Volunteers please. If you can help, please contact the office via email with the exact days/ dates that you are able to assist and we shall add your details to the rota. Thank you very much.

Even if you can only do ONE session please, it will really help to spread the workload as we still have some slots to fill!

CONTINUED THANKS - to our lovely Choir members, who accompanied by Duncan, have taken a turn each to sing solo at our 11am Mass at St Joseph's in line with current restrictions.

PARISHIONER OF THE WEEK - This week the award has to go to the very lovely Jean Hind from Most Holy Redeemer, who for many years now has helped prepare the monthly anniversary list of those deceased parishioners and loved ones from Sawbridgeworth for our weekly Bidding prayers. Thank you, Jean, for everything that you continue to do x

Hope that you all have a very happy and healthy week.

Best wishes

Debbie

Parish Administrator

(Mon- Fri 9am - 3pm)

Catholic Parish of Bishop's Stortford

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Most Holy Redeemer, Sayesbury Road, Sawbridgeworth*

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

Follow our Live streaming on www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford