The Catholic Parishes of Buntingford and Old Hall Green & Puckeridge

3 Station Road SG9 9HT **2 Farm Lane SG11 1DT** **77 High Street SG11 1RX**

http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/buntingford **http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/oldhallgreen**

The Twenty Fourth Sunday of the Year 15th September 2024

Parochial Administrator: Fr John Cunningham **Parish Deacon**: Rev Deacon Paul O'Connor

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Yesterday we celebrated the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. That's quite a mouthful, but it means that by dying on the cross, which he willingly accepted, Jesus was exalted. In today's Gospel, Jesus confides in his disciples for the first time that he would be persecuted and killed. Then turning to the entire crowd, he tells them that they must take up their crosses, for it is in sacrificing their lives they can save them. Are you willing to accept your cross, difficult as it may be? As you ponder that question, remember this: your cross, the cross Jesus calls you to shoulder, is linked to the Holy Cross itself, which is the most beautiful sign of our salvation. Today is Evangelii Gaudium day, which used to be called Home Mission Sunday. Substituting "The Joy of the Gospel" for a rather bureaucratic title seems to be an advance.

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MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Sunday 15th September	**Twenty Fourth Sunday of the Year**	9.15am People of the Parish
		11:00am People of the Parish
Sunday 22nd September		9.15am People of the Parish
		11.00am People of the Parish

All Masses are celebrated in the Church of St Richard of Chichester, Buntingford

Prayer Intentions. At this time of the year we are asked to pray for: Students and Teachers; The Spread of the Gospel; The Harvest; The Fruits of Human Work, and the Reverent Use of Creation; Justice and Peace in the World; All Victims of War; Young People; Prisoners and their Families.

For those who are ill: Maralyn Haughton,
For those who have died recently: Jean House,

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Thank you for your last week's Offertory collection which came to £123.70 and for your Regular Standing Orders.

Volunteers Needed. Most of our rotas are now running well but we need more volunteers to count the collection after 11.00 Mass each Sunday. The more volunteers we have the less often each volunteer needs to do the count. If you are interested, please sign the list in the porch or speak to Deacon Paul.

Sponsored Hike and Bike Saturday 14th September. Thank you to all those who helped keep the church open during the sponsored hike and bike ride yesterday, and to those who took part by walking and cycling around several local churches to raise money for the upkeep of our church buildings.

Celebrate. Deacon Paul will be away next weekend as he will be in Birmingham attending the Celebrate Conference, a gathering of Catholic families from across the nation. Shalom World TV and Radio Maria will be broadcasting the conference so please feel free to watch using the links on their websites.

Harvest Festival. As part of Churches Together in Buntingford, you are invited to a lunch hosted at the URC church on Baldock Road at 12.30pm on Sunday 6th October. Further details of how to sign up will follow as soon as possible.

Sacraments. If you, or your children, would like to receive the Sacraments of Baptism, First Communion, or Confirmation, or if you yourself would like to become a Catholic, please speak to Deacon Paul after Mass today to collect an application form.

Parishioners Details Forms. We are collecting the details of our parishioners so that we can keep in contact with you. Please take one light blue form per household from the porch to complete and hand it in to Deacon Paul next week.

Mass Intentions. If you would like a Mass Offered for an Intention, please write the details on an envelope along with your offering and hand it in at the Sacristy after Mass. Deacon Paul will be able to arrange a suitable date for you.

Refreshments after Mass. There will be refreshments after the 9.15am Mass this Sunday morning as usual. If you attend the 11.00 Mass, you are invited to come early so that you can join us before Mass. We look forward to seeing you there.

Please see Page Two for a summary of what Fr John said at the end of the Masses last week.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE FOR THE PARISHES

The Diocese carried out a Health and Safety Inspection, and an electrical survey of all three Churches at the end of June. The Diocesan Surveyor also visited the Churches in Puckeridge and Old Hall Green.

Buntingford

The boilers in the Church and in Benson Hall need to be replaced. One of the ones in the Church Boiler House has not been working for some time, and the other failed its test. In Benson Hall, the boiler supplying the hot water has been out of order for some time. The other boiler supplying the heating is getting near to the end of its life, so the recommendation is that there should just be one boiler which will supply both heating and hot water.

These works will commence in October.

Puckeridge

The moss on the roof needs to be cleared, and the gutters and downpipes and flat roof over the extension need to be cleaned and overhauled. Parts of the exterior timber sections over the joints between the asbestos cement sheets need to be replaced. The interior of the building needs a deep clean.

The deep clean, and the work on the exterior woodwork and door have begun. We have asked a Roofer to give a quote for the roof and guttering. Once the Deep Clean and the work to the woodwork have been completed, we will look to bring the Church back into use.

Old Hall Green

The Surveyor wrote:
It was about 18 months ago that I last visited this church due to persistent flooding of the nave during winter time. It would appear since that time very little if anything has been done to remedy the issue.
In order to resolve the issue and open up the church once again, we need to establish the water table of the site which is forcing water up through the current church slab. There is evidence of attempt's in the past that have tried to seal the slab with unsuccessful results.
It would be my proposal to engage a water company like Cascadia to form a hole approximately a metre square and to a depth of a metre below the current undersides of the slab against the church outer wall, this way we can establish if the water pressure is forcing the water table through the slab and to establish it level on the site. Once this is found we can start to consider alternative measures to relieve the pressure of water beneath the slab to prevent water entering the church. To me it would not be meaningful again to open the church until this issue is resolved. Having look around the church there are minor building maintenance items that would need addressing together with a good cleaning and reinstatement of furniture before this would come back into service subject to health and safety measures undertaken once the church is due to open.

We will follow his advice, this will mean that the hole will be open over the winter, and the remedial works carried out in the Spring and Summer. The Church will not be reopened until the problem has been solved. The electrical survey revealed that the skirting heating is partially operative. Half the heaters work on each side of the Church. We will therefore switch the heating on low during the winter, to help maintain the structure. (It is possible that the heaters have been wired in this way due to the supply problems that were being experienced in the past, before the new supply was installed.)

The Spiritual Side

We do not have access to the Presbytery, so we cannot use it for meetings, and we do not have access to all the Parish records, or the Parish phone and internet.

However, we can move forward.

Once the Church in Puckeridge is ready, we will move the 11.00am Mass on a Sunday morning to Puckeridge, so there will be a Mass in each location.

I am planning to be in Buntingford each Tuesday evening, and celebrate Mass, offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and be available if people wish to see me. We need to ascertain what time would be best for the Mass. Likewise I plan to offer a Mass during the day in Puckeridge each week. From my point of view, a Thursday would be best. But again, we need to settle on a suitable time.

There will also be an hour of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Prayer in Buntingford one evening each week.

We will be offering the current Diocesan Faith Sharing Resource, "Calling People of Goodwill: the Bible and the Common Good". This will run for six weeks at some stage between now and Christmas.