



# Our Lady of Grace & St Edward's Chiswick and St Dunstan's Gunnersbury with St Joseph's Grove Park

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For even more regular news on parish life and activities, check the Latest News page on the parish website [www.ourladyofgracechiswick.org](http://www.ourladyofgracechiswick.org) or follow the parish on Twitter @ourladychiswick or Facebook at Our Lady of Grace & St Edward, Chiswick, London W4

17<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## SIXTH SUNDAY of EASTER

Fr Michael Dunne  
Fr Mike Maguire  
Mike Guthrie  
Sharon Bowden

Parish Priest  
Assistant Priest  
Seminararian  
Administrator (on furlough)

**CENTENARY OF THE BIRTH POPE ST JOHN PAUL II** – Many parishioners will wish to celebrate in thanksgiving tomorrow, Monday 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020, as it is the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the birth in the small Polish town of Wadowice of Karol Josef Wojtyła, later Pope John Paul, and a Saint. How many of us will remember with joy the Pope's visit to the UK in 1982! A "liberating restorer of the Church" is how Pope Emeritus Benedict describes his predecessor in a beautiful letter just written to the Church in Poland. An extract is overleaf but the full text can be found [www.catholicherald.org.uk](http://www.catholicherald.org.uk)

**FOODBANK COLLECTION LAST WEEKEND** – Thank you to those who were able to contribute over last week to the very full car-load of non-perishable items of food which went to our local foodbank, now based in Olympia, participating in a wider and still more impressive strategy to provide food to those much greater numbers in need. Taxi drivers are also volunteering by taking food parcels to the vulnerable or isolated free of charge. Cash donations last week amounted to £350, which went with our food. Thank you.

**CAFOD SAYS THANK YOU** – 8<sup>th</sup> March was the Second Sunday of Lent and CAFOD's Lent Collection. With all the upheaval since, it's not surprising they're a little late in thanking the parish for sending them £1,394 but it was duly received and put to great work.

**THE MEN'S GROUP** - Men of all ages are warmly invited to our next meeting on Thursday 21st May, from 8.30pm on the Zoom app. We will listen to an audio talk from Fr Larry Richard's book "Be A Man!" followed by a short discussion. We are affiliated to [www.catholicman.uk](http://www.catholicman.uk) Email Stephen Donnelly at [donnellysm@hotmail.com](mailto:donnellysm@hotmail.com) for details.

**CENTERING PRAYER** – In the current lockdown the Centering Prayer group has found a new way to convene via the internet platform Zoom. The group is meeting EVERY Monday at 7.30pm so if you would like to join please phone or email John O'Brien who will be happy to assist: 07747611616 or [john@jobrien.co.uk](mailto:john@jobrien.co.uk)

**THURSDAY MASS for NHS & CARE HOME staff & the SICK** – The following live-streamed Masses have now been published by the Bishops' Conference. All Masses can be accessed simply by going to each cathedral's website shortly before 7.00pm.  
21<sup>st</sup> May: Bishop Mark Davies, Shrewsbury Cathedral  
28<sup>th</sup> May: Bishop Terence Drainey, Middlesbrough Cathedral

**BAPTISMS, FIRST HOLY COMMUNION & CONFIRMATION** – It is impossible to determine an exact timetable for the re-opening of churches though if all goes according to the Government plan the weekend beginning 4<sup>th</sup> July would be the first back in church, and even then, the social distancing measures are likely to be prohibitive. The return to large and festal occasions such as First Holy Communion or Confirmation Masses is more distant. However, it is conceivable to see that soon after the re-opening of churches then Baptisms postponed could be rescheduled as social distancing would not present an insurmountable obstacle provided guest numbers were limited. Rescheduling the First Holy Communion and Confirmation Masses is very likely going to have to wait for as near a return to normality as possible perhaps in the Autumn. The parish will swiftly contact parents and guardians of existing candidates for these sacraments as soon as the Church and State authorities give appropriate direction.

### SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Sat 16/5	Easter Feria	•Della Panting •Dermot Byrne & family	Ints Ann
Sun 17/5	6 <sup>th</sup> SUNDAY of EASTER	•Yolanda Pardo & Patrick Hayes •People of the Parish living and deceased and Jean O'Driscoll	Ann RD
Mon 18/5	Easter Feria	•Rose Braniff •Karen Lynch	Ann Sick
Tues 19/5	Easter Feria	•Angelica Castelino Colette Cassell	1 <sup>st</sup> Ann RD
Wed 20/5	Easter Feria	•Sr Anna Maria Arosio •Charles Thompson	RD RD
Thurs 21/5	ASCENSION OF THE LORD	•Brian, Angelo & Elenor Hempenstall •Frontline NHS & Care Home workers; the sick & their families	Ann Ints
Fri 22/5	Easter Feria	•Kate Mills •Tina Byrne	RD Ints
Sat 23/5	Easter Feria	•Maria Harrison •Major Peggy Elliott	Ints Ann

### LET US PRAY

**For those who are sick:** Sandra Bocca, Cecil Pocock, Romeo Monthoy, Fr. Noel O'Boylan, Celine Duignan, Andy Cronin, Bob Barnett, Eulalie Raymond, Jim O'Grady, Greta Gribben, Jim Ryan, Mike O'Farrel, Bridget Hayden, Alaina Embling, Hannah Thomas, Lauren, Anna and Joseph Mullan, Ewa Blonska, Phoebe Rodriguez, John Moylan, Cyril McKeefrey together with all those suffering in the pandemic.

**For those recently deceased:** Ann Walker, Fr John Seabrook PP. May they rest in peace.

**LENT PROJECT 2020** – Our charities this year are: Friends of the Holy Land [www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk](http://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk) ; The Cardinal Hume Centre [www.cardinalhumecentre.org.uk](http://www.cardinalhumecentre.org.uk) ; The Cardinal's Lenten Appeal [www.rcdow.org.uk](http://www.rcdow.org.uk) . The current total for the Lent Project is an astonishing £9,580 between the three charities. Thank you!

**PARISH ASSOCIATION WITH THE CATHOLIC UNION** – Our parish has become the first in the country to have a formal association with The Catholic Union [www.catholicunion.org.uk](http://www.catholicunion.org.uk) and many more will follow where there is shared interest. Fr Michael much recommends going to the website to sign up for their news briefings directly emailed completely free of charge. The news from parliament is always interesting if often worrying with initiatives to challenge the common good. Other briefings are more specifically pertinent to Catholic life and seasons.

**FEELING VULNERABLE AND NEEDING HELP?** – Some parishioners are offering to shop and deliver groceries etc for any others who may not feel strong enough to shop for themselves. If you would like this help, please phone the Parish Office and leave a message. You are not alone! Help is at hand! 020 8994 2877

**CAN YOU OFFER HELP?** – If you'd be happy to volunteer to assist particularly elderly, isolated or isolating parishioners with just one or two errands each week as you are about your own, please also email or phone the Parish Office. You must be known to the priests and other parishioners from attendance at Mass. We'd be aiming to match postcodes of volunteers and recipient.

## Fr Mike writes:

In one of the chapels at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, England's Nazareth, right above the sanctuary space, is a depiction of the Ascension, with two feet hanging out from the ceiling; the artistic image showing the two pierced feet of Our Lord disappearing into a cloud as he ascend into Heaven.

Now, I wonder what your own image of Our Lord's Ascension is? Does it perhaps have a finality about it, as we see Our Lord disappearing from our sight, fading into the sky? Has Jesus simply gone away? Is this our last sighting of Jesus, which stirs up in us a deep sense of sadness, as it does when someone close to us dies and we wished they were still around? For 'departure' is a common theme as people reflect on the Ascension. But, if we just return to those final words of our Gospel, we hear a very different tone: "Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time" (Mtt 28:20). Jesus' words are very clear and incredibly powerful! Jesus isn't departing from us to let us get on with our own devices, nor simply to let us 'take over His mission' alone, rather, Jesus departs from our sight precisely so that He can be with us in a new and better way in and for the mission.

In the Office of Readings for the Ascension, St Augustine reminds us that although 'Christ is now raised above the heavens, he still experiences on earth whatever sufferings we his members feel.' 'Why then,' St Augustine continues, 'do we not exert ourselves on earth so as to be happy with him already in heaven through the faith, hope and charity which unite us with him? Christ while in heaven, is also with us; and we, while on earth, are also with him. He is with us in his godhead and his power and his love; and we, though we cannot be with him in godhead as he is with us, can be with him in our love, our love for him.'

You see, our experience of Jesus is different to the disciples who saw Him, touched Him and ate with Him. Our experience of the 'Risen Lord' is like that of billions of people since the time when Jesus was on the Earth, who haven't seen with their eyes, but have real, loving contact with Christ through life of the Church, the life of faith, through Baptism, the Eucharist and all the Sacraments; this is the life in which we continue to be 'with Jesus always' (Mtt 28:20). And, so, St Augustine invites us again at Ascension-tide to 'let our hearts go up with Jesus Christ Our Lord, who went up to heaven,' and it's precisely in this invitation that St Augustine further draws on the words of St Paul: 'If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds of things that are above, not on the things that are on earth' (Col 3:1-2). 'Just as he ascended without leaving us, so too we are already with him in heaven, although his promises have not yet been fulfilled in our bodies.'

The final part of this sermon from St Augustine says that, 'He [Christ] did not leave heaven when he came down to us from heaven; and he did not leave us when he ascended to heaven again. His own words show that he was in heaven while he was here: 'No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man who is in heaven.' 'He said this,' St Augustine writes, 'because of the unity between us and himself, for he is our head and we are his body. The words 'no one but he' are true, since we are Christ, in the sense that he is the Son of man because of us, and we are the children of God because of him. For this reason St Paul says: 'just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is also with Christ.' He does not say 'so it is with Christ,' but 'so it is also with Christ.' So Christ is many members, but one body.'

Importantly, St Augustine reinforces that 'He [Christ] came down from heaven, then, in mercy; and it is he alone who has ascended, since we are in him through grace. This is why no one has descended but Christ, and no one but Christ has ascended: not that the dignity of the head is fused with the body but that the body in its unity is not separated from its head.'

Some of you may remember the ancient practice of an almost ceremonial extinguishing of the Paschal Candle after Ascension Day Mass, with the smoke wafting upwards representing the clouds that took Jesus from their sight. This is no longer a standard liturgical practice because Jesus' risen presence is not suddenly taken away from us and dissolves as quickly as smoke from a smouldering candle wick. No! Jesus' risen presence is permanent, and he continues to be the light of life for each one of us on our journey to that place where we hope someday to be with him, face-to-face. For as Dom Erik Varden (O.Cist), wrote in *The Tablet*, 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019, 'the message of the Ascension is not that Christ vanishes beyond earth's orbit, but that he enters the Father's glory, which is set to fill the earth (Numbers 14:21) by way of preparation for the glory of eternity.' [Access to the full article can be found at: <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/16025/understanding-the-ascension>]

As we look forward to Pentecost, we begin another short period of waiting, and we are filled with hope in Jesus' promise; 'to be with us always.' So, this week, let's pray for a new outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and as we celebrate the day when Jesus Christ went up to heaven, may we let our hearts go with him and feel the effects of Jesus' abiding presence in our lives, so that we may walk humbly and tenderly with others on the mission, as Christ walks permanently with us. As Jesus returns to the Father, to send the Holy Spirit as a new spiritual presence of Christ to each one of us, let's remember that the Risen Jesus is as close to us as the beating of our hearts, for as he said: "I am with you always; yes, to the end of time" (Mtt 28:20).

### EXTRACT FROM POPE EMERITUS BENEDICT'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN POLAND ON POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II:

*When Cardinal Wojtyła was elected Successor of St. Peter on 16 October 1978, the Church was in a dramatic situation. The deliberations of the Council had been presented to the public as a dispute over the Faith itself, which seemed to deprive the Council of its infallible and unwavering sureness. Paul VI brought the Council to an end with energy and determination, but after its conclusion, he faced ever more pressing problems that ultimately questioned the existence of the Church Herself.*

*Therefore, in essence, an almost impossible task was awaiting the new Pope. Yet, from the first moment on, John Paul II aroused new enthusiasm for Christ and his Church. His words from the sermon at the inauguration of his pontificate: "Do not be afraid! Open, open wide the doors for Christ!" This call and tone would characterize his entire pontificate and made him a liberating restorer of the Church. The Pope travelled the world, having made 104 pastoral voyages, proclaiming the Gospel wherever he went as a message of joy, explaining in this way the obligation to defend what is Good and to be for Christ.*

*When John Paul II took his last breaths on this world, the prayer of the First Vespers of the Feast of Divine Mercy had just ended. This illuminated the hour of his death: the light of God's mercy stands as a comforting message over his death. In his last book *Memory and Identity*, the Pope once again summarized the message of Divine Mercy. He pointed out that Sister Faustina died before the horrors of the Second World War but already gave the Lord's answer to all this unbearable strife. It was as if Christ wanted to say through Faustina: "Evil will not get the final victory. The mystery of Easter affirms that good will ultimately be victorious, that life will triumph over death, and that love will overcome hatred".*

*Through the resurrected Christ, God's mercy is intended for every individual. Moreover, at this point, the inner unity of the message of John Paul II and the basic intentions of Pope Francis can also be found: John Paul II is not the moral rigorist as some have partially portrayed him. With the centrality of divine mercy, he gives us the opportunity to accept moral requirement for man, even if we can never fully meet it. Besides, our moral endeavors are made in the light of divine mercy, which proves to be a force that heals us of our weakness.*

*God's power and goodness have become visible to all of us in John Paul II. In a time when the Church is again suffering from the oppression of evil, he is for us a sign of hope and confidence.*

*Dear Saint John Paul II, Pray for us!*