

NEWS

The Baptism of The Lord

10 January 2021

PUBLIC WORSHIP IN LOCKDOWN: For now, Lockdown rules mean that our churches can remain open for acts of public worship. There are two things to bring to your attention about this:

1) Fr James will keep under review the precise schedule for Mass and times for Reconciliation based on practical things: availability of volunteers (and, indeed clergy!); weather conditions and how much demand there is from the faithful. When necessary revisions of the schedule will be published a week in advance on the website, on the notice boards and by e-alert. If you have not yet signed up for e-alerts, please follow the link on the [homepage](#) today!

2) Various Local Authorities are trying to exert pressure on the churches to close “voluntarily”. A response to this has come from the bishops and is published [here](#).

Whilst it is possible for us to be open during Lockdown our intention is to be open as much as is safe and sustainable. It is vital that all of us act to keep everyone safe, above all by giving each other space on the way in and out of church, and keeping sanitizing rules.

VOLUNTEERS!! Returning to public Mass means that we depend again on our wonderful volunteer stewards. Can you help? Please consider volunteering as the more volunteers we have the easier the job is for everybody and the more our churches can be open. See [here](#) for details of how to volunteer.

WESTMINSTER YEAR BOOK 2021: Copies of the new Year Book are available from the Repository at St Gabriel’s, priced at £4.50. Ask a steward or at the Parish Office.

CRIB OFFERINGS 2020: The Catholic Children’s Society writes to us: “Since March CCS has provided emergency food, essentials and mental health services for over five and a half thousand children and parents/carers. Families under lockdown and losing income etc have faced desperate circumstances”. Please support the crib appeal all through the Christmas season... and plan a visit to the cribs in church. Because of social distancing needs, our cribs will be situated differently from the usual and fewer people can visit them at any one time.

POPE DECLARES “YEAR OF ST JOSEPH”: In a new Apostolic Letter entitled *Patris corde* (“With a Father’s Heart”), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

The Letter marks the 150th anniversary of Blessed Pope Pius IX’s declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. To celebrate the anniversary, Pope Francis has proclaimed a special “Year of St Joseph,” beginning on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception 2020 and extending to the same feast in 2021.

The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, “the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,” who nonetheless played “an incomparable role in the history of salvation.”

This has come without any advance notice...so we will be looking at ways to use this coming year in the months ahead. For now the Holy Father’s prayer to St Joseph is published on the homepage.

CATHOLIC UNIVERSE NEWSPAPER: We have stopped our subscription to the Catholic Universe Newspaper at least for the time being, as an expense that cannot be subsidized in present conditions. Anyone who would like to receive the Universe please contact the Parish Office and we will put you in touch directly with them to arrange a subscription.

MESSAGE FROM RETROUVAILLE MARRIAGE SUPPORT: Stress in Your Marriage? – This has been a very difficult year for many couples. Retrouvaille is a programme for married couples that feel bored, disillusioned, frustrated, or angry in their marriage. Some experience coldness. Others experience conflict. Most don’t know how to change the situation or even communicate with their spouse about it.

This programme has helped 6,000 couples who were experiencing difficulties in their marriage in the past year alone. There is no group therapy or group work

For confidential information about 'Retrouvaille' or to register for the next programme commencing with a Virtual weekend on 25th – 28th February 2021, call or text 0788 7296983 or 0797 3380443 - or email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

JOURNEYING WITH THE BIBLE NOW ONLINE: the series of talks presented by Fr Javier Ruis-Ortiz PhD and Sr Monica Cardona STL will look at the story of Jesus according to Mark, Matthew and Luke on 12th January from 7pm to 8.30pm. Register at catadmin@rcdow.org.uk

“JESUS, I ADORE YOU”: is a new book of prayers before the Blessed Sacrament for younger children. Available from St Gabriel’s office or stewards priced £5.95. A really good teaching resource for parents, especially in this time without public celebration of Mass.

RIGHT TO LIFE UK ASK FOR YOUR SUPPORT: Act now and ask your MP to oppose introducing assisted suicide. The assisted suicide lobby have launched a large campaign to put pressure on the Government to reconsider the legalisation of assisted suicide.

It is vital that it is clear to the Government that the public want them to continue to hold strong against this pressure from assisted suicide campaigners. Right To Life UK have set up an easy to use tool which will enable you to email your MP asking them to make it clear to the Government that it should not give into demands from the assisted suicide lobby to reconsider the legalisation of assisted suicide. It only takes 30 seconds to email your MP by visiting the link: <https://righttolife.org.uk/StopAssistedSuicide>

DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2019: has arrived. We keep a copy of the full report in the Parish Office, but at present that means it is unavailable. If you want to study all the figures and information, it is online at www.rcdow.org.uk/about



HAND MADE ICON FOR SALE: Cristinel Paslaru, who made the icons of the Baptism of Christ in St Gabriel’s and of the Holy Trinity in St Bernard’s is a professional Icon Writer from Iasi in Romania.

He has made a new icon of St Christopher (25cms x 12cms) which is looking for a home. His price is £150. Cristi’s work is beautiful and of the highest quality. All questions or enquiries to Fr James.

HEATING IN CHURCH: This will soon be an issue. At St Gabriel’s we can use the heating as normal - but the church must remain ventilated when in use, so the windows will be open. At St Bernard’s the heating is in the form of air circulated in the building, and this we cannot use when church is open for reasons of covid security. All we can do is heat the church before Mass. Again, the church must continue to be ventilated when in use. Please come dressed in extra layers as the weather changes!