

NEWS

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

31 January 2021

PUBLIC WORSHIP IN LOCKDOWN: For now Lockdown rules mean that our churches can remain open for acts of public worship. 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!*

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, especially for the beginning of the Christmas season. See the homepage for details of how to volunteer.

END OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON: Christmas comes to an end on Tuesday with the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. This year we can't gather in church that day for the blessing of candles. However, I suggest we put aside a time of prayer on that day and especially offer a Rosary, using the Joyful Mysteries, which include of course the Presentation, and let us all dedicate ourselves anew to Jesus in this year, asking the help of Mary and Joseph our guardians, and the prayers of Simeon and Anna the prophetess.

BLESSING OF ST BLAISE: Usually the blessing of throats of St Blaise would happen on 3 February. Again, we can't do this during Covid restrictions. Prayers and a general blessing will be included at Mass on Thursday 4 Feb, to which you can unite your particular prayer intentions.

CRIB OFFERINGS 2020-21: LAST CHANCE TO VISIT THE CRIBS THIS SUNDAY!! 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.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE SICK 11 FEB: The Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes is the annual day of particular prayer for the sick, and this takes a particular importance and poignancy this year. [Here](#) is the text that Pope Francis has prepared for this day. Many would usually go to the Cathedral on this day, but this year we will be united in prayer at home.

NEWS FROM SPUC: Respond to Department of Health consultation to stop home abortions!

The Department of Health is holding a public consultation on whether to continue the practice of allowing abortion providers to send abortion pills to women so that they can perform their own abortion at home. We need as many pro-life people as possible to complete the Department of Health's questionnaire in order to help stop dangerous DIY abortions becoming permanent. SPUC has prepared a briefing which gives a step by step guide to completing the consultation questionnaire. Please go to <https://www.spuc.org.uk/Get-Involved/Campaigns/England-DIY-Abortion-Consultation> The consultation ends on 26 February 2021.

NEWS FROM CAFOD: Join online this coming Saturday 30 Jan. from 1030am to 1230 and listen to CAFOD's representative live from Ethiopia talking about how your support is enabling communities gain access to clean water. Contact westminster@cafod.org.uk for registration link and further information.

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 writings of St Paul on 9th February, from 7pm to 8.30pm. Register at catadmin@rcdow.org.uk

ATTENTION YOUNGER PEOPLE INTERESTED IN THE WORK OF YOUNG CARITAS: Young Caritas The first event of the year will be a Virtual Pub Quiz and Social on 26th January at 6.30pm. This event is open to young people aged 18-30, interested in meeting others with a passion for social justice. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/132916957197>

OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTARY WORK FROM CARITAS WESTMINSTER: The Caritas Volunteer Service is available to advise anyone who is looking to volunteer this lent or any other time. Caritas Volunteer Fair "Step Forward in Love" Online Event Weds 10 February from 11am -1pm. Whether you want to try volunteering for the first time or are looking for a new role, come and find out what volunteering opportunities are out there at the moment.

Please register at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/caritas-volunteer-fair-tickets-135713539851>

CARITAS WESTMINSTER REFLECTS ON COVID: The Why: Prayer, Reflection and Discernment Caritas Westminster is offering an opportunity to reflect on responses to COVID-19 in light of Catholic Social Teaching, on 16th February from 2pm to 4pm. Register on Eventbrite at www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-why-prayer-reflection-discernment-on-our-response-to-covid19-tickets-136485398501

INTERVIEW WITH POPE FRANCIS: On 30 Jan. from 11am to 12.30pm, Dr Austen Ivereigh will speak about the book 'Let us Dream', recently co-authored with Pope Francis, which presents the Pope's vision for the post-pandemic future. Find out more at <https://rcdow.org.uk/faith/news/let-us-dream/>

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 are stopping 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

"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>



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.