

DAY OF PRAYER FOR EASTERN CHRISTIANS: This year's International Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians is on 22nd May 2022, the 6th Sunday of Easter. Organised each year by the charity FACE, who write:

"This Day of Prayer for Eastern Christians, which brings Eastern and Western Christians together, offers an opportunity to give thanks to God for all that we owe the Oriental Churches: the first preaching of the Gospel, the origins of the monastic tradition, many of the early Church Fathers, and, above all, the witness of the Eastern Christians down the centuries which has been, and still is, an inspiration to our faith.

Today, Eastern Christians are a diminishing presence in the Middle East. Maintaining their presence in those lands is essential for stability in the wider region, as well as for guaranteeing Western Christians an unbroken heritage and tradition from the source of our faith. Our Catholic charity, Fellowship and Aid to the Christians of the East (FACE), devotes itself exclusively to supporting the Eastern Catholic Churches in the Middle East, the Horn of Africa and India, through long-term projects in education, healthcare, pastoral support and interreligious dialogue, so that Eastern Christians may remain in their homelands."

Fr ANTHONY BRUNNING RIP: Fr Tony's Funeral Mass will be on 23 May at 12.15pm at Holy Trinity Church, Brook Green (off Hammersmith Road). All are welcome to attend. May he rest in peace.

THIS WEEK: N.B. NO MASS ON WEDNESDAY.

SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD: This great feast of the Church falls this Thursday 26 May. Now, in recent years, restored to the proper day having been kept on the nearest Sunday for some time, this is one of the landmarks of the year and properly for us a Holy Day of Obligation. You will have noted the statement of the bishops that our sense of obligation should be regarded as restored as of Pentecost this year, but for anyone who is now comfortable to be in church, the obligation to attend Mass this day should carry weight.

PENTECOST SUNDAY PARISH LUNCH: To celebrate the conclusion of the Easter season, a step forward from the Covid situation and to mark Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee we are hoping to have a Parish Lunch on Sunday 5 June at 1.30pm after the end of Sunday Masses at St Gabriel's Hall. Can you help? If you can sign up to help with logistics, food, serving drink, music etc please let the office know.

PRIEST TRAINING FUND COLLECTION: Thank you for your contributions. The total so far is £1158.03, not including those donations made directly to the PTF account.

BISHOPS' STATEMENT ON SUNDAY & HOLY DAY OBLIGATION: The bishops of England and Wales have issued a new statement about the obligation of Sunday Mass for those who wish to be practising Catholics. The text is available in the foyer and on the parish and diocesan websites. In essence they say: *"We therefore believe that the reasons which have prevented Catholics from attending Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation no longer apply"*. The statement is called an "Invitation" for all to be putting Sunday and Holy Day worship in first place as of Pentecost Sunday. If you have any questions or queries about this please ask one of the clergy. Also available in the foyer is Fr James' digest of the previous statements by the bishops, called *"Sunday - It is our day."*

EUCCHARISTIC OCTAVE AT COVENT GARDEN: The Diocesan Shrine of the Blessed Sacrament, Corpus Christi, Maiden Lane in Covent Garden will be hosting a Eucharistic Octave from **11th to 19th June**. This has been organised by several London parishes to celebrate our Eucharistic Lord in the lead up to the Solemnity of Corpus Christi. Full details can be found at www.catholiclondon.org.

FORMATION OF AN SVP CONFERENCE IN OUR PARISH: There will be more news now once the group who have expressed interest in this have formalised that commitment. Any parishioner, of whatever age, who would like to give even a little time to help others are warmly invited to consider the SVP as a way to do this. Our new Conference will come into shape later in the summer.

HELP EMERGENCY APPEAL FOR UKRAINE: The Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral in London and community organisations have united to work with accredited and registered Ukrainian charities to provide medicines, food and critical services to support the most vulnerable to overcome the consequences and trauma of war. Donations can be made by cheque (payable to AUGB LTD - Central Appeal Fund and sent to Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of the Holy Family of London, Chancery Office, 21-22 Binney Street, London W1K 5BQ), directly to the central appeal fund (AUGB Ltd, Account Number: 80038237, Sortcode: 20-65-89, with reference HelpUkraine) or online: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/helpukraine>. Alternately, donations can also be made to Cafod, who are a member of the Disasters Emergency Committee at <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Emergencies-news/Ukraine-crisis>. There's a poster in the foyer with a QR code and the above details, or just put cash in an envelope marked "Ukraine" and it will be forwarded.

STUDY COURSE ON THE BOOK OF PSALMS: at Our Lady & St Thomas Harrow-On-The-Hill: Starting Weds 11th May at 12Noon with soup/tea/coffee and then the talk and discussion. This will be repeated at 7pm in the evening for those who are at work.

For catering purposes we would like to know of anyone wanting to join. The course will run for 9 weeks and full details will be given on Wednesday at the first session. Contact No. 020 8422 2513.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES JULY2022: See the posters in church for details of the pilgrimage. We have booking forms available. Please ask at the Parish Office.

YOUNG ADULTS RETREAT: 'See All Things New' The Jesuits in Britain invite young adults in their 20s and 30s to join them to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the conversion of St Ignatius of Loyola. Two times are offered for a retreat: online, from **27th July to 1st August 2022**, residential retreat at St Beuno's, from 28th July to 1st August 2022. Information is available at <https://www.jesuit.org.uk/events/see-all-things-new-a-retreat-for-young-adults-in-their-20s-and-30s>.

NEWS FROM CARITAS WESTMINSTER: POVERTY CHALLENGE - SEE, JUDGE, ACT: Following the Pandemic many households face new hardships as prices rise. Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) the Catholic agency addressing poverty and injustice in England and Wales has released a new booklet to increase awareness of Catholic Social Teaching on poverty. This can be downloaded at www.csan.org.uk

COST OF LIVING HUB: The Mayor of London has launched a new Cost of Living Hub to help people access information, support and advice about claiming benefits, dealing with debts, financial management and mental health support. Visit <https://www.london.gov.uk/cost-living-hub>

GRANTS TO HELP WITH ENERGY DEBTS: Possible help from a charitable trust plus links to other advice providers at <https://fuelpoverty.org.uk/focus-on/fuel-debt-and-trust-funds/>

THE CATHOLIC NETWORK: See the poster in church advertising this free digital on-line service, a point of contact and interaction for Catholics seeking to interpret the world we live in. Each week the network welcomes guests, commentaries, reflections and instruction, as well as news items about work being done by Catholic organisations. More information at www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk.

NEW CAMPAIGN AND RESOURCE FROM CAFOD: CAFOD write as follows with information you may wish to follow up: "The paradox of abundance": Over 800 million people go hungry each day. Yet the world produces over 4 billion tonnes of food and we only need 3.7 billion tonnes to feed everyone. From all this food produced, a third is wasted. St John Paul II called this 'the paradox of abundance.' Clearly the currently global food system is not working. But as Pope Francis said, "Each of us has a role to play in transforming food systems for the benefit of people and the planet." Let's respond to his call! CAFOD's new campaign is called *Fix the Food System*. See www.cafod.org.uk/food for more info.

APPLICATIONS FOR YEAR 7 ENTRY SEPT 2023 ST MICHAEL'S CATHOLIC GRAMMAR SCHOOL, BARNET: Applications are now being accepted for girls currently in year 5 to sit the entrance tests for year 7 entry to St Michael's in September 2023. Applications can be made through the online system available on our website <https://www.st-michaels.barnet.sch.uk/admissions/admissions-2023-24/>. Parents should ensure that they read the Admissions Policy prior to making an application and provide the original Certificate of Catholic Practice signed by their Parish Priest by the closing date of 4pm on Tuesday 5 July 2022.

MARCH FOR LIFE 3 SEPT 2022 - SAVE THE DATE!: March for Life This year marks the sad milestone of 10 million abortions in the UK since the 1967 Abortion Act. The annual March for Life will be held on Saturday 3rd September. Bishop John Sherrington will celebrate Mass at 11am at St George's Cathedral, Southwark. Priests are welcome to concelebrate. LifeFest22 is a festival held from 10.30 to 1.30 at the Emmanuel Centre, Marsham Street SW1P 3DW. The March starts at the Emmanuel Centre at 2pm, proceeding to Parliament Square, where there will be testimony and speeches, with the day concluding at 4.30pm. More information is available at <https://www.marchforlife.co.uk/>

INTRODUCING CATHOLIC LISTENERS: Catholic Listeners; Diocese of Westminster, a new confidential listening helpline launching this month, has been set up for those who are returning to the faith. The number is 0800 448 0704. This service is based on the Landings ethos of compassionate listening. Although not a counselling service, they have a professional team trained on signposting to other services and agencies. They aim to help those in need of a safe space to talk. For further information please contact Ade at Catholiclisteners@gmail.com

JOB OPPORTUNITY - WARDEN AND CLERK - ST SCHOLASTICA'S RETREAT: Competitive Salary, pension, and accommodation onsite in Princes Risborough, Buckinghamshire. The Trustees are seeking to appoint a Warden & Clerk to the Trustees for this almshouse charity that provides sheltered housing for Catholics in financial need aged 60 or over. Closing date: Monday 9th May. For details of the role and how to apply, see: www.stscholasticas.co.uk/warden-clerk-vacancy

FOUNDATION DIRECTORS SOUGHT BY BLESSED HOLY FAMILY ACADEMY TRUST: BHFCAT is currently seeking to appoint up to 5 additional Foundation Directors to the Trust board as part of the ongoing expansion of the Trust in line with Westminster Diocese Academic Strategy.

Foundation Directors are key strategic decision makers in a Catholic Academy Trust (CAT). The legal responsibility for the performance of each academy rests with them. Their role is strategic rather than operational much in the same way that the role of a Foundation Governor is within a single non-academy Catholic school.

The Trust Board is keen to ensure that there is a wide range of complementary skills reflected on the Trust Board. An annual skills audit is conducted to help plan for training and recruitment. At present BHFCAT are looking to recruit Directors with expertise in: Financial Management; Law; Procurement; Facilities Management; Marketing; Local Authority governance. Please contact Catherine Hogan for information at hoganc@hotmail.co.uk

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION IN OUR PARISH: As we emerge from the Covid period to a new reality, so too our approach to preparation for the sacraments needs to change. We don't have an official line on this in our diocese as yet, but Cardinal Grech, Chair of the European Conference of Bishops, memorably said in 2020 that if after Covid the Church went back to doing what we did before it would be suicide!

There are some radical new ways of thinking on this unfolding in some parishes around the UK as we wait for the bishops to take a lead. We will be a little less radical.

As Parish Priest I ask families and candidates not to come with particular expectations or sense of entitlement to what should happen when: candidates should come to the sacraments when they are ready, and the first step to being ready is that habitual Sunday worship in line with the "Obligation" should be the **established** norm for the families of small children - and the children be part of this - or chosen personally by those of teenage years and above. After that, we can start to look at the base on which to build. If you have any questions or observations, contact Fr James. (March 2022)

(Copies of the bishops statement on Sunday and Holy Day worship of May 2022, and Fr James' digest of the previous statements by the bishops are available in the foyers of our churches and on the website. This will help to give context to the above.)



Support our parish.

You can make a donation to the parish by scanning the QR code or making a card payment on the card machine at the entrance of both of our churches.