

ANNUAL “MASS COUNT” AND STATISTICS: We’ve just completed the annual count, required by the bishops, of those attending Sunday Mass. The count shows the average number at Sunday Mass is now 675, an increase of 47% on 2021. That’s good news, but still only 75% of the level of Mass attendance from before the Covid crisis - the average in 2019 was 899. Our statistics, though, are much the same as the other parishes in our deanery. The pattern is similar everywhere - as is the pattern of who is and isn’t coming to worship. So some good news, but there’s work for us all to do. Each one of us needs to pray for those who are not with us, but also to encourage, to invite and maybe in some cases to admonish those who have fallen away so that we can build our parish anew in this new situation. On a related subject, some may wonder why we don’t publish a weekly income report, as before Covid. The reasons are again because of the new circumstances we are in: we don’t currently process cash as regularly as before, and giving is now by a number of methods - Standing Orders, on-line donation and Contactless. Indeed, for some time the published figure was not very accurate, for the same reasons. It might be easier to work out a monthly figure...and, of course, the annual accounts are published and displayed in church. The main point here: if you have any questions about any of these matters, *please* come and ask. Questions are good and always welcome.

“THE BIG SUMMIT” YOUTH MINISTRY EVENT: For those aged 18-15; 21 October 6-8.30pm at Westminster Cathedral: Come and join us for an evening of prayer, Adoration and some guest speakers as we explore the theme, *‘Mary arose and went with haste’*. As with all Summit events there is a time of input, by the Maximillian Ford and music by One Hope Project; Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and guided meditation. We are really blessed to be able to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation throughout the evening. *Summit* evenings are always full of real joy and fun. All are welcome. www.dowym.com

SUNDAY 20 NOVEMBER PARISH LUNCH: There’s a new date for your diaries. On the last Sunday of the Church’s year let’s celebrate together our post-Covid new beginnings and the joy of the Gospel. Our recent Parish Lunch was such a joyful event it will be good to be together again in this way.

“MISSIO” RED BOXES/ WORLD MISSION SUNDAY 23 OCT: We have more Red Boxes in stock. Ask at the office or at the sacristy at St Bernard’s. Thank you for supporting *Missio*. **WORLD MISSION SUNDAY IS ON 23 OCT.** There will be a collection for *Missio* at Sunday Masses. See posters in church for details. Envelopes for Gift Aid donations are in the foyer.

DIVINE MERCY DAY RETREAT AT SUDBURY SAT 29 OCT: The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London is holding Day Retreat at St Georges, 970 Harrow Road, Sudbury on Saturday 29 Oct, 2 pm to 4:30 pm. The Retreat will include teachings on the Message of Divine Mercy, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. Call Millie on 07957594646 for more information.

LATERAL FLOW COVID TEST KITS: Thanks to the generosity of a parishioner we have more test kits available for anyone who can make good use of them. Please ask at the office.

DOWRY TOUR OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM: Sadly we are told this week that the announced conclusion of the 2019-2020 national tour of the Statue of Our Lady of Walsingham at Westminster Cathedral is now cancelled. No reason has been given at this time.

CALLING ALL SINGERS/MUSICIANS! MUSIC FOR SUNDAY MASS: During August there’s less music at Sunday Mass. That reminds us how important music is to our worship and how, like anything valuable, it needs to be constantly renewed and developed. For the foreseeable future our Sunday Mass schedule is remaining as it is now, and we want to build up the music especially at 9am, 10am and 11am Mass. A GREAT WAY TO OFFER A MINISTRY TO YOUR PARISH IS TO COME AND JOIN THE SINGERS TO LEAD MUSIC AT THESE MASSES. Speak with the clergy or with Simon (Director of Music) if you can offer your talent in this way...and don’t be shy!

SOME FINANCE MATTERS:

1) THANK YOU! GIFT AID TAX RECLAIM: We have now received all our Tax Reclaims for 2022, coming to a total of **£16,551.30**. Thanks to everyone who has signed a Gift Aid Declaration which makes it possible for us to claim this money. If you are a taxpayer and don’t currently Gift Aid your donations, please consider this. Forms are available in the foyer of church and on the website <http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/harrowssouth/donate>. (Also, should you cease being a tax payer, please let the office know).

2) DONATE BY STANDING ORDER: Would you consider donating your offering by Standing Order instead of cash? If so, there’s a form in the foyer or just ask for advice from the office or the clergy. Standing Orders make it easier to keep track of your outgoings, easier for the parish to plan what our income is, and easier and more secure as we handle less cash.

3) CONTACTLESS: One off or regular donations can be made from the contactless machines in the foyer (*There have been issues recently with the machine at St Gabriel's and these problems have been experienced in other parishes too. All I can say is we are working on it!*) Also, you can use the Donate page of the website (address above) to make one-off card donations.

Thank you to everyone for your commitment and generosity in hard and uncertain times.

“MOSAIC” DIOCESAN NEWS BULLETIN: There are a few copies of “Mosaic” in the foyer of church, giving some stories and information about various initiatives, activities and voluntary work going on all around Westminster Diocese, and thus some information about how what we contribute to the central services of the diocese is used and deployed. Please take one.

YOUNG CATHOLICS (AGE 18-35 YEARS): Keep in touch with the Youth Ministry website at www.dowym.com for many resources. Particularly now “Words of advice for Catholic Young Professionals”.

SPUC CONFERENCE ON “ABORTION AND COERCION”: 22 Oct. Broadway House, Tothill Street, SW1H 9NQ. 9.30am-4pm. Cost is £35. Contact katherinehampton@spuc.org.uk

THE IRISH RAMBLING HOUSE SHOW: “*Entertaining the exiles since 2000*” at Salvatorian College, High Road HA3 5DY. Saturday 5 Nov and Sunday 6 Nov at 7.30pm. See poster. Info at www.irishramblinghouse.com

NEWS FROM “RETRouvaille”; **A Programme for Couples Struggling in their Marriages:** Help Your Marriage – Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue ... or have you just stopped talking to each other? Does talking about it only make it worse? Retrouvaille is a programme to support couples who have difficulties in their marriage. It brings a positive focus, new hope and helps nourish and grow your marriage. Tens of thousands of couples headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending and using the tools provided. The programme helps spouses uncover or re-awaken the love, trust and commitment that originally brought them together. It helps them through difficult times whether they are disillusioned or in deep misery. 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 13 - 16 October 2022 or a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 24 - 26 February 2023, call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443 or email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT FROM “AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED”: Visit www.acnuk.org. **Thank you** for your on-going support for CAN. In 2021 CAN funded 5,298 projects around the world, including 949 construction projects; 2,095,677 Mass offerings; 13,381 seminarians supported and 1,338 vehicles for pastoral work. Absolutely vital work for the Gospel.

OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN THE CHOIR OF WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: Every September up to six boys join Westminster Cathedral Choir School in Year 4 as choristers. Becoming a chorister offers a boy the opportunity to sing in a world famous choir, and to join a thriving, inclusive, independent school for boys, age 4 to 13. All choristers receive generous scholarships supplemented by means-tested bursaries worth up to 100% of fees. Contact Lucy Auger to find out more. Telephone 020 7798 9081 or email lauger@choirschool.com

FOR THE ATTENTION OF NEW STUDENTS IN LONDON THIS YEAR: Based at Newman House, Gower Street, the Catholic chaplaincy also has campus-based chaplains at many of the universities and colleges. For any students other than freshers there is also an opportunity to live in at Newman House, a catered lodging with attractive rates and its own chapel. The application form is available on the Chaplaincy website www.universitycatholic.net. *Families whose young people are going off to college elsewhere, encourage them to find the Catholic Chaplaincy. We can help with contact details. University and college chaplaincies are important parts of the mission of the Church.*

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.

THANK YOU FROM CAFOD: Did you know that CAFOD, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, helps some of the poorest and most marginalised people across the world? We can reach so many people because we are a member of *Caritas Internationalis*, the Catholic Church network with a presence in 165 countries. Our local experts work with people over the long-term, helping them to

have the right skills, tools and opportunities to live with dignity and support their families. For example, in South Sudan we are helping families learn how to farm better as the climate gets hotter, so that they can cope better in the future when things get even more difficult. Find out more www.cafod.org.uk Thank you for your support.

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.

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

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."*

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. (Notice issued 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.