

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER WEEK

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER WEEK SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP: is available today. Please take ONE, and keep it safe, to save paper and costs. Full details of worship for this period and of the availability of the Sacrament of Reconciliation before Easter.

KEEPING HOLY WEEK: Holy Week begins with *Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord* next Sunday. Making a symbolic entry into Jerusalem with Jesus on that day we hear the Gospel telling of the passion and death of the Lord, in preparation for the coming week. Essentially, in our worship, we then enter into all the mysteries of our redemption as it were in real time, especially on the GREAT THREE DAYS or SACRED TRIDUUM of Holy Thursday to Easter Sunday. Plan now to make these days the centre of our year and take that extra time to be at worship, especially on the days of the Triduum.

- On Thursday evening after the Mass of the Lord's Supper, come to spend time in adoration and simply stay with Jesus in his agony of prayer in the garden.
- On Good Friday come to the solemn Celebration of the Lord's Passion, kept by ancient tradition at the very time of the crucifixion of the Lord.
- For families with children under 10 years approx., come to the *Children's Stations of the Cross* to help you in your teaching of your children.
- Make a priority - if you haven't before - to come to the VIGIL OF EASTER on Holy Saturday evening. ***This year Bishop John Sherrington will preside at the Easter Vigil at St Bernard's and lead us as a parish into the mystery of the Resurrection.***

LENTEN ALMS: We will be collecting Lenten Alms for the Cardinal's Lent Appeal, and once again for the Diocese of Hadiyah-Irbil, in Iraq. Cardinal Vincent writes: "This year celebrates 10 years of *Caritas Westminster*, supporting both local and diocese-wide charitable concerns working with the most deprived, restoring hope and enabling people to lead a life of dignity and worth." There are many ways to give alms: see the posters in church with QR code for donations; envelopes for gift-aided offerings; a dedicated wall box in each church. ***The collection at the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday will be for Lenten Alms.***

EASTER OFFERINGS & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS: A reminder that the offerings made at Easter go a very long way to providing for the priestly ministry to the parish for the entire year. Thank you as always for your generosity. There are envelopes in church for this purpose, and Contactless and Online donations can also be made for this purpose.

Also remember that the collection taken at the ***Celebration of the Passion of the Lord*** on Good Friday goes to the support of the "*Custody of the Holy Land*" - that is the care of the Holy Places in the Holy Land and for the support of the Christian presence there. Thank you in advance!

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION IN LENT: One of the Precepts of the Catholic Church - a law that helps our spiritual and moral upbuilding - is that, as the absolute minimum, we go to the Sacrament of Reconciliation for any mortal sins at least once a year, so that we may be able to receive Holy Communion also at least once a year. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church, §2042*) Although this precept does not specify when, Catholics often associate it with Lent due to the penitential character of the season.

The approach that we may have with the Sacrament varies in many ways: whether it be joyful or daunting, a form of habit or challenging. Confession, however, already helps us to experience the central message of our faith: that God in Christ has redeemed us of our sinful lives by His Passion, Death, and Resurrection - transforming us into one who lives for the love of God and neighbour - the very promise we wait for in Easter. ***Renew yourself in Reconciliation this Lent.***

In our parish, we already have Reconciliation available on **Thursday evening and Saturday morning/evening**. During this season, we will also offer the opportunity to come to Confession on **Monday 6pm - 6.45pm at St Gabriel's and Wednesday: 10.30-11.15am also at St Gabriel's**. Embrace this opportunity of God's Mercy and Grace.

PLANNED GIVING, BOXES OF ENVELOPES 2023-24: are available now to collect from the Parish Office (St Gabriel's) or the Sacristy (St Bernard's) after Mass.

SYCAMORE: A COURSE IN EXPLORING CHRISTIAN FAITH: *How can we find happiness? What's the meaning of life? Is there a God?* These are questions that you or someone you know may be thinking about. ***Sycamore*** is an informal course about the Christian faith and its relevance for life today. It gives you space to meet other people, share ideas, explore your beliefs, and think about questions that really matter. It can form a real sense of community, a spirit of friendship, some great conversation. **NEXT MEETING will be at St. Gabriel's Church Hall on 18 April 2023 at 7.00pm refreshments available!** All are welcome - whether a faithful parishioner of many years or someone

who is starting his/her journey of faith. Meetings then will be every two weeks or so, giving five more up to the summer. Ask Fr Carlos for more information.

PERFORMANCE OF STAINER'S *CRUCIFIXION*: The choir of St Etheldreda's Church, Ely Place, are performing John Stainer's *The Crucifixion* along with appropriate readings and reflections for Holy Week on Weds, 05 April 2023 from 6.30 - 7.30pm. Admission free but donations in support of the choir are welcome.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE MEANING OF LENT

Lent is a season of soul-searching, or repentance and of renewal in preparation for Easter. Lent (which in English also means "springtime") originated in the very earliest days of the Church as a time of preparation for Baptism at Easter, when the faithful rededicated themselves and converts were instructed in the faith before Holy Baptism. By observing the forty days of Lent, the individual Christian imitates Jesus' withdrawal into the desert for forty days. Lent is above all characterised as a time of prayer and penance, when Christ wants to lead us back to our baptismal promises of dying to sin and of living for God.

- **Dying to sin:** During Lent, God's people seek to put sin out of their lives by uprooting habits that are contrary to God's will. It is a time of conversion, of turning away from our sins and of turning back to God.
- **Living for God:** The Lord Jesus is calling us to be people of praise and prayer, and living signs of his love for all. During Lent we open our hearts to our Father, so that we may live with Christ for God.

What should we do in Lent? The Gospel of Ash Wednesday tells of the three traditional pillars of Lenten observance, **prayer, fasting and almsgiving.**

- **Prayer:** More serious attention - in other words renewal - in prayer during Lent should draw us closer to the Lord. We might pray especially for the grace to live out our baptismal promises more fully.
- **Fasting:** This ancient discipline is more than a means of developing self-control. It is often an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God. Fasting should also be linked to our concern for those forced to fast by poverty, those who suffer from the injustices of our economic and political structure, those in need for any reason. Thus fasting too is linked to living out our baptismal promises.
- **Almsgiving:** This sacrificial sign of our care for those in need and of gratitude for all that God has given us. Works of charity and the promotion of justice are integral elements of the Christian way of life that begins with baptism.

EARTHQUAKE IN TURKEY & SYRIA: Practical aid - i.e. financial donations - can be directed through CAFOD who will be supporting the work of church agencies on the ground. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Caritas Turkey and Caritas Syria, and you can read about their initial response here: <https://www.caritas.org/2023/02/earthquake-in-turkey-and-syria-caritas-network-launches-first-phase-of-aid/> More details visit CAFOD's Syria Turkey Emergency Appeal: at <https://cafod.org.uk/give>.

AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED: is also channelling disaster relief via local contacts in the church in Syria and Turkey. Visit acnuk.org to help.

Please don't hand in cash for earthquake relief. We cannot pass this on efficiently.

PARISH ACCOUNTS FOR 2022: A summary of the Parish Accounts for 2022 is posted in the foyer of each church. From this you can see the following:

- Income is up, which is good news. BUT we are not giving to the parish in the most efficient way. Please consider giving by means of a Standing Order and, if you are a tax payer, making a Gift Aid declaration.
- The amount of Gift Aid we were able to claim in 2022 was roughly the same as in 2021. This means that several thousand pounds of FREE MONEY from the government went to waste.
- Expenditure is roughly in line with what we expect. Less repair and fabric work were done in 2022, so it looks as though we have a much bigger surplus. However, fabric work will need to be done, and of course fuel/energy costs are rising dramatically in 2023.

Thank you! For your commitment and generosity to the parish and to other causes. Please keep under review what you are able to contribute, and if you can move away from using cash to a Standing Order, please ask for the details.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 21-28 JULY: Bookings are not open yet, but '*Expressions of Interest*' are sought from all who intend to participate in the Pilgrimage, whether as Praying Pilgrims, Clergy etc. An expression of interest can be made at the website: <https://rcdow.org.uk/pilgrimages/lourdes/>

PILGRIMAGE TO ROME AND ASSISI 6-13 NOVEMBER: Fr Tom has sent details of a pilgrimage he will be leading from Northwood parish between 6-13 November. 4 nights in Rome and 2 in Assisi. Full details on the poster in church.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND 19-27 NOVEMBER: The annual Pilgrimage to the Holy Land will take place from Sunday 19th Nov to Monday 27th Nov, led by Bishop John Sherrington and Fr John Farrell OP. It will include visits to Galilee, Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Flights will be from Heathrow. Costs are £2265 per person sharing, £682 single room supplement; travel insurance essential. Booking forms are available from Tangey Tours or from Elizabeth Uwalaka in the Pilgrimage Office or at <http://www.tangey-tours.com/WHL>

CARITAS HOMES FOR UKRAINE MATCHING SERVICE: See the poster in church. Caritas, in partnership with St John of God Hospitaller Services have launched a service to bring together displaced Ukrainians with those in the Catholic community willing to host them for 6 months. If you have room in your home in these difficult times to consider welcoming a stranger displaced by the evil war, visit <https://sjog-homesforukraine.uk/> for information.

COST OF LIVING CRISIS: News about the Warm Spaces in the Westminster Diocese (which, going by today's weather, could be needed for a little while to come) has crossed the Atlantic! If you have a few minutes, take a look at this news video, featuring Fr Richard Nesbit from White City: [CBS "Warm banks" open doors to people struggling to stay warm in U.K. - YouTube](#)
For anyone struggling with fuel bills, this might be useful - Money Saving Expert Martin Lewis has created a handy tool for anyone who would like to calculate their likely energy bills from April 1st:
www.moneysavingexpert.com/utilities/what-are-the-price-cap-unit-rates-/#epgcalculator

GOOD COUNSEL NETWORK CAMPAIGN INFO: GCN have sent their 2022 Review (copy on the noticeboard at St Bernard, which amongst other things lists the names of lives saved with your support during the last year. GCN writes: *"Please also pray that the plans to introduce national buffer zones around abortion centres in the UK will not come to pass. In GK Chesterton's epic poem, The Ballad of the White Horse, Our Lady tells King Alfred, "I tell you naught for your comfort, Yea, naught for your desire, Save that the sky grows darker yet And the sea rises higher." Things may seem very dark indeed and the tide seems to rise higher but it is Christmas, and this is a season of hope. We do have a reason to hope. And the children that will celebrate their first Christmas this year because of your support, are a witness to this hope and this Christian joy!* To be a regular supporter or get involved in peaceful prayer vigils, write to info@goodcounselnetwork.com.

"There have now been over ten **million abortions** in Great Britain since the Abortion Act was passed 55 years ago, in October 1967. With this terrible number of lives lost, please pray and fast for the end of abortion in this country. GCN have sent a link to an article about the 10 million abortions that have taken place in Britain since the Abortion Act was passed on 27th October 1967. Also see what you can do to help end abortion. Please also share the article, <https://mariastopsabortion.blogspot.com/>. There are cards in the foyer to help you get involved.

COLD WEATHER: Whilst the extremely cold weather persists, remember that the underfloor heating at St Gabriel's means that the church is warm at all times and open Monday - Friday 09.30am-2.30pm.
[The following link is offered by the organization "Warm Welcome" to locate other warm spaces:](https://www.warmwelcome.uk/#find-a-space)
<https://www.warmwelcome.uk/#find-a-space>

ESCORTED PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK SHRINE, IRELAND: 15th May 2023. £699.00 per person sharing. Price includes flight, all transfers, 4 nights' in Knock House Hotel with full board. All entertainment and excursions included. Day trips to Westport, Ballintubber Abbey, Croagh Patrick, Fr. Peyton Centre & National Museum. Single supplement £150.00. Contact Patricia on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com. See poster in church.

CONTACTLESS MACHINES: We, like other parishes have been experiencing problems with the contactless payment consoles. We have made a little progress with determining the problems, but not yet as far as getting a solution. *Thank you for your patience. Thank you to everyone for your commitment and generosity in hard and uncertain times.*

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!

CARITAS WESTMINSTER: The umbrella department for all social outreach have written to share a film that was produced to show the impact of our social justice work across the Diocese. It is a celebration of what we have achieved together across the Diocese. Here is a link to the film: <https://youtu.be/Vgxvkd-8Ug>

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”.

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.

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://fuelpovertysource.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 clergies. 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.