

**ANNUAL "MASS COUNT" AND STATISTICS:** We've just completed the annual count, required by the bishops, of those attending Sunday Mass. The count this year shows the average number at Sunday Mass is 650, very close to last year 2022. We encourage our parishioners to celebrate the Eucharist as a community together.

**FIRST RECONCILIATION AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION:**

The programme for preparing our children First Reconciliation and Holy Communion will start on **4 November 2023 at St Gabriel's Church Hall at 10 am to 11am**. There will be parents' meeting on **Friday 3 November 2023 at St. Bernard's Church Hall at 7 pm** for those who did not attend last meeting They can receive orientation and details about the whole programme and dates of First reconciliation and First Holy Communion. If you have any other queries, please contact Fr. Raja Sebastian.

**SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION:** We need minimum 20 children for the Bishop coming into our parish for the Confirmation. We will announce it shortly about the course preparation for Sacrament of Confirmation. The parents of those children ready, please register their forms in the parish office.

**SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS: WEDNESDAY 1 NOVEMBER:** is All Saints' Day and, of course for us a **Holy Day of Obligation**. The times of Mass that day in the parish will be the usual for Holy Days: 10.00am at St Gabriel's and 7.30pm at St Bernard's.

**CELEBRATE THE SAINTS, NOT "HALLOWEEN":** "The Eve of All Hallows" on 31 October should be for us a time of preparation for the great Feast Day. It is increasingly important that Catholics DO NOT get involved in "Halloween" activities, which celebrate the opposite. Put a candle and a holy picture in your window. Have a kids party and dress up as your patron saints. Celebrate our faith. Don't aimlessly follow the herd, but "Be in the world, not of the world" to paraphrase the Gospels and St Paul, for "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14).

**COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED: THURSDAY 2 NOVEMBER:** Mass for All Souls' Day will be offered at 10.00am at St Gabriel's and 7.30pm at St Bernard's.

**NOVEMBER: MONTH OF HOLY SOULS:** The Commemoration of all the Faithful Departed (All Souls' Day) on Thursday 2 November will commence the month of prayer for the Holy Souls. You are invited to take an envelope from the back of church in which you can put a list of your deceased family and friends and enclose any offering you can make for the offering of Mass. You can return this envelope to either the Parish Office, the Presbytery, or to one of the boxes kept by the altar during November. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered throughout November for the repose of the souls of those so remembered.

**THE SICK & RETIRED PRIESTS' collection is next week**

The second collection next week will be for the sick and retired priests of our Diocese. Most priests offer their resignation at 75, but many continue to serve in our schools, hospitals, hospices and parishes. Last year, the Diocese of Westminster provided care to **82** retired priests, at a cost of **£850,000**. Caring for our brother priests in their senior years, or at a time of illness, is a fundamental part of the mission of our diocese. By supporting

the Sick & Retired Priests' Fund, you can help cover essential costs and give them peace of mind that in the event of an emergency, their needs will be met.

You will find a donation envelope at the back of the church today. Please take one home, and bring it back next weekend with your donation. You can also donate online at [www.rcdow.org.uk/donations](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/donations) - the envelopes and posters feature a 'QR Code' that you can scan with a phone camera to give online. You may also wish to consider becoming a **Patron** of our Sick & Retired Priests' Fund. If so, please take a leaflet home today. And please continue to pray for the wellbeing of all of our clergy: active, retired and ill. Thank you.

**FIRST YOUTH MEETING:** Our first Parish Youth meeting will be on **Saturday, 18th November in St. Gabriel's Church Hall from 2pm to 5pm.** Please come along if you are interested in joining. Open to post confirmation children and youth of St. Gabriel's and St. Bernard's. Come along with your friends and share a bite!

**MISSIO" RED BOXES/ WORLD MISSION SUNDAY TODAY:** We have more Red Boxes in stock. Ask at the office or at the sacristy at St Bernard's. Thank you for supporting *Missio*. See posters in church for details. Envelopes for Gift Aid donations are in the foyer. All donations go to the Universal Solidarity Fund to support developing or impoverished Catholic communities around the world. For more information about World Mission Sunday, visit <https://missio.org.uk/wms>

**SOME FINANCE MATTERS:**

**1) THANK YOU! GIFT AID TAX RECLAIM:** We have now received all our Tax Reclaims for 2023, coming to a total of **£16,076.53**. 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/harrowsouth/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 MACHINES:** The contactless machines at both churches are working with Wi-Fi changes. You can contribute your offertory now with Dona app. ***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!

**MISSIO IN OUR PARISH:** Fr Carlos, as diocesan *Missio* Secretary writes: As Catholics we are called to raise awareness of the Church's evangelisation around the world. MISSIO is the charity from the Holy See that helps provide awareness in our local church to support those helping the global community, regardless of background

or relief. Awareness exists through prayer and conversation, but financial help is always necessary - often through the famous 'Red Box'. We wish to take focus on MISSIO in the coming months. Currently, there is discussion of appointing a local secretary - a parish representative of MISSIO, but perhaps you may wonder how can you help. For more information visit [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk) or speak with one of the clergies.

**MISSIO RED BOXES THANK YOU!** In 2022 our parish raised £1,625.45 through our Rex Boxes and donations to MISSIO and the Mill Hill Missionaries. This is part of a worldwide network of people supporting missionaries through prayer and financial assistance. Your support of projects such as the Fundong Mission Station in Cameroon has enabled Fr Leon, a Mill Hill Missionary, to help children learn in a safe environment and instil values that empower them to turn away from conflict and towards faith in God. Visit [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk) to find more about how your support changes lives for the better. Red Boxes are available from the Parish Office or from the Sacristy at St Bernard's.

### **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION IN OUR PARISH:**

Families and candidates should not 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 Raja Sebastian.

**VOLUNTEERING IN THE PARISH:** As things move on from the Covid period, it is important to keep an eye on all the nuts-and-bolts things that keep our churches running:

**Cleaning and grounds care:** Church cleaning is a really useful gift to offer your parish, and is also a great aid to spiritual life as we care for the place of worship. Cleaning teams currently meet for an hour on occasional Saturday mornings at 8.30am. There will also be occasional cleaning sessions on Fridays at St Gabriel's after 10am Mass.

**Can you join?** Many hands make swift and light work. Please contact the Parish Office to be added to the contact email list.

Similarly, there is now an enthusiastic team to give occasional care to the grounds of our sites. This provides a time of fellowship and a real sense of achievement! Could you join the team? Contact Parish Office as above.

### **OTHER NEWS**

**YOUTH WORKSHOP:** Inviting our youth to a workshop at the **SPEC Retreat Centre in Pinner on the 28 October**, 'defend the faith, without raising your voice'. Register online Catholic Voices Training Workshop with Brenden Thompson - Diocese of Westminster Youth Ministry ([rcdow.org.uk](http://rcdow.org.uk))

**PRACTISING SYNODALITY** – Mondays 7:30-8:30 pm from 25th Sept to 20th November. A series of eight free webinars looking at the practicalities of becoming a listening Church with speakers from both England and Wales and from across the world. Hosted by the School for Synodality. <https://www.schoolforsynodality.org.uk/news/practicing-synodality-webinar-series>

**JOB OPPORTUNITY AT ST DOMINIC'S COLLEGE:** St. Dominic's Sixth Form College vacancy – Student Services Assistant. For info please download an application from the website [www.stdoms.ac.uk](http://www.stdoms.ac.uk) or contact the college business manager - Jacqueline Brosnan on [JAB@stdoms.ac.uk](mailto:JAB@stdoms.ac.uk)

**VOLUNTEERS WANTED BY SPUC:** The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children needs help with labelling and packing letters and other office work at HQ: Kennington SE11 4AB. Suits all over 16. Lunch provided and fares refunded. Contact Elizabeth Foody on 020 7091 7091; [lizfoody@spuc.org.uk](mailto:lizfoody@spuc.org.uk)

**"RIGHT TO LIFE UK" NEED OUR HELP:** RTL writes: You may have heard about the recent tragic case of a woman being sent abortion pills by the abortion provider, BPAS, who had not accurately established the gestation of her baby, Lily, who was then aborted at between 32 and 34 weeks, which is around 8 months gestation. Rather than take responsibility for sending out abortion pills 22 weeks beyond the legal limit for at-home abortions, BPAS is running a major campaign to fully 'decriminalise' abortion, which would introduce abortion up to birth!

Right To Life UK has launched an easy-to-use tool on our website which makes it simple for you to send an email to your MP asking them to oppose the introduction of abortion up to birth and instead ask the Government to reinstate in-person appointments to ensure babies like Lily are protected in the future. For more info, AND TO FIND AN EASY AID TO WRITING TO YOUR MP, go to:

[www.righttolife.org.uk/noabortionuptobirth](http://www.righttolife.org.uk/noabortionuptobirth)

**COULD YOU BE A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR AT A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?** The All Saints Catholic Academy Trust (ASCAT) is currently seeking to recruit Foundation Governors for a number of our Schools local Governing Boards, across the Trust, to ensure high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

This is an exciting opportunity to play a role in a vibrant and collaborative Trust that is in the process of expansion and development. The role of Foundation Governor is a rewarding one and offers various opportunities for professional and personal development. To be eligible for appointment, you must be a practicing and committed Catholic, in communion with the Church. If you are interested in the opportunity to apply to become a Foundation Governor please contact Christina Reffold, Director of Governance & Compliance, via email [governance@ascat.co.uk](mailto:governance@ascat.co.uk). See poster in church.

**DIVINE MERCY KNOCK PILGRIMAGE:** The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London is hosting a Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock, November 9 to 14 to pray for the Holy Souls. Package includes: Return flights by Aer Lingus from Heathrow, half board, 5 nights, accommodation in en suite twin rooms, hand-luggage (10 kgs), all transfers and Airport Development fee. Will include daily Mass and Hour of Mercy and retreats at Glendalough and Kylemore Abbey. Cost £800. Call Millie on 07957594646.

**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. You can book online at <http://www.tangney-tours.com/WHL> or call Gill at Tangney Tours 01732 886666 or Elizabeth at the Pilgrimage office 0207 798 9173. 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. **Note: the uncertain situation in Israel and Palestine due to war may not allow this pilgrimage to happen!**

**VOCATION TO RELIGIOUS LIFE? COME AND SEE WEEKENDS:** The Cistercian Nuns of Holy Cross Abbey, Whitland, Pembrokeshire, are inviting single Catholic Women between the ages of 25 and 45 who are discerning a vocation to experience their monastic life during one of these weekends: Friday 11th August – Monday 14th August; • Friday 20th October – Monday 23rd October. Info at [www.hcawhitland.co.uk](http://www.hcawhitland.co.uk).

**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.

**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](mailto: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 27<sup>th</sup> 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.

**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](http://www.dowym.com) for many resources. Particularly now “Words of advice for Catholic Young Professionals”.

**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](http://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](http://www.thecatholicnetwork.co.uk).

**INTRODUCING CATHOLIC LISTENERS:** Catholic Listeners; Diocese of Westminster, a new confidential listening helpline 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](mailto:Catholiclisteners@gmail.com)



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**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.