

## OUR PARISH NEWS

**LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS: Offertory - £1052.96**

**Thank you for your generosity and commitment.**

**SYCAMORE GROUP NEXT MEETING:** The group will next meet on **Monday 11 December, at St Gabriel's Hall**, 7pm for food and then meeting at 7.30pm. for an hour or so. Sycamore is a resource designed to help us come to ask questions about Catholic Faith and talk about aspects of the faith. All are welcome.

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION FOR THE FIRST HOLY COMMUNION:** The children who are preparing to receive First Holy Communion will receive the First Reconciliation on Saturday 16 December 2023 at 2 pm in St Bernard's Church. The parents of those children will also do the reconciliation service together with their children.

**CAROLS BEFORE CHRISTMAS:** Come to sing carols for Advent and the start of the Christmas season on the Third Sunday of Advent, 17 December at 3pm at St Gabriel's. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will also be available as will some tea and mince pies afterwards.

**PREPARING FOR CHRISTMAS:** Advent is a great season of hope and of personal spiritual preparation. On the third Sunday we will have a timetable for worship for the beginning of the Christmas season, and also a schedule of extended times available for the SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION in the latter part of Advent.

**ADVENT "WALK WITH ME" BOOKLET:** On the Repository shops we have copies of the well-known Walk with Me booklet of daily prayers and meditations for Advent. Great value at £1 per copy and a good resource for Advent. Don't forget that our Repository shops carry a good range of Christmas cards and calendars for 2024.

**REPOSITORY SHOPS CHRISTMAS STOCK:** Our shops now have a large selection of items in preparation for Christmas - Advent Calendars, Christmas Cards, Cribs etc. and Calendars & diaries for 2024. Prices are very reasonable. There is not a huge stock so we recommend buying early.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTRIBUTION:** We would like to thank your generous contributions for Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD) and Mission Sunday collections: CAFOD £516.89; World Mission Day £496.36. We will inform you about Sick and Retired priests' collection soon.

**FLOWER ARRANGING:** Flowers beautify altars and invites us to pray. We see some parishioners volunteer to arrange flowers. Sonia is ready to teach those who want to learn arranging flowers for the church. Those who want to learn to arrange flowers please call the parish office.

**REPAIRING OUR GATES:** Last week some one hit exit gate of St Bernard's Church. We have found the metal things that were pulled out of the gate. The work looks simple enough welding it together. We would like to know if any one can volunteer to see the gate work is done.

**MISSIO" RED BOXES:** 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/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 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.*** We would like to invite parishioners to use our contactless (DONA) machine for your contributions.

**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 Red 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**

**ADVENT RECOLLECTION MORNING:** Fr Jonathan Goodall, parish priest of Stanmore, will be offering us a morning of recollection on Saturday **16th December** under the theme 'A new heaven and a new earth' beginning with Mass at 10am and including an opportunity for Confessions from 12noon. Many thanks."

**ELEVATE – PARENT WEBINAR** We were delighted to see over 50 parents from St Joan's had attended the Elevate 'Supporting your Child's Resilience' webinar this week! Elevate's next live webinar will be taking place on **December 12th** and will help parents to support their child in alleviating stress. As the new school year is often a period of adjustment for students, encouraging open communication around mental wellbeing at home can help prevent isolation when it comes to exam and revision anxiety. Sign up for the session below to learn how you can help your child. How to Help Your Child Alleviate Stress 12th December 6:00-7:00pm (GMT) Click the link below to register for free <https://go.elevateeducation.com/ukschoolwebinar>

**DIVINE MERCY ADVENT REFLECTION:** The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London is holding a Divine Mercy Advent Reflection 2023 at Church of Mary, Mother of God, 192 Nags Head Rd, Enfield Middlesex EN3 7AR on Sunday **16 December 2023 from 2 pm to 4:30 pm** led by the Marian Fathers. The Retreat will include teachings on the Message of Mercy, Stations of the Cross, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. All Welcome. Please call Millie on 07957594646 for more information

**WINTERSHALL NATIVITY STORY EXPERIENCE** the Christmas story **14th-18th December** Discover the true meaning of Christmas with an unforgettable event for all the family. It's a Nativity like no other, placing you in the middle of an immersive theatre experience. Stand with the shepherds, walk with Mary, Joseph and the donkey, journey with Roman soldiers and enter the stable to watch the miracle unfold. To book tickets go to: <https://www.wintershall.org.uk/nativity-journey-0>

**CHRISTMAS CARD OUTREACH PROJECT** To support your evangelizing mission, we would like to help each worshipping community create and deliver Christmas cards to a new housing estate, or the whole parish. For full details, resources, costs & ideas go to: Outreach Projects - Diocese of Westminster ([rcdow.org.uk](http://rcdow.org.uk))

**THRIVING OR CLOSING:** Where is your parish going? "Will my parish still be here in 10 years?" Be part of the Catholic Parish Summit conversation. Join Bishop David Oakley and Fr. James Mallon on Thursday, 7th December for this online event. Sign up today at [www.catholicparishsummit.com/webinars](http://www.catholicparishsummit.com/webinars)

**CELEBRATE Trust** is a Catholic ministry that inspires and equips people of all ages to live an authentic Christian life in the power of the Holy Spirit, in support of the family, to form the next generation and encourage local community. Just download the Advent Family & Matchbox Manger and share the joy.

**THE SECRETS OF ST PAUL: reflection on life of St Paul:** An opportunity to reflect on the life of St. Paul, as a model missionary disciple via a 10-WEEK Zoom course run by Mission Northampton from Wednesday **10th January 2024 to Wednesday 20th March 2024** (7.30-9pm) <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/secrets-of-paul-online/>

**HOME FOR UKRAINE MATCHING SERVICE:** Caritas Social Action Network, in partnership with St John of God Hospitaller Services, an international Catholic charity with many services for the vulnerable in the UK and Ireland, are matching Ukrainian people displaced by the brutal war with people in the Catholic community willing to host them in their homes for six months. If you have room in your home and in your heart to consider welcoming a stranger displaced by war, then we'd love to hear from you. Please visit <https://sjog-homesforukraine.uk/> for more information.

**ESCORTED PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK & Co Mayo, 10th March 2024.** £899.00 pps. Price includes flight, 10kg hold luggage, 5 nights' in 4\* Castlecourt Hotel, Westport with Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Lunch on three days. All entertainment, excursions and transport included. Visit Knock, Galway City, Kylemore Abbey, Croagh Patrick & Ashford Castle. Single supplement on Enquiry. Contact Patricia or Natali on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email [knockpilgrimages@gmail.com](mailto:knockpilgrimages@gmail.com).

**FIVE ADDITIONAL FOUNDATION DIRECTORS:** The All Saints Catholic Academy Trust (ASCAT) 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 the Diocese of Westminster's Academy 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. 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 Director is incredibly rewarding and the benefits include personal and professional development; supporting the local and wider Catholic community; gaining insight into the Education Sector; and having impact on the Schools in the Trust. If this is something that is of interest please contact Christina Reffold at [governance@ascat.co.uk](mailto:governance@ascat.co.uk)

More information is available on the Trust website <https://www.ascatonline.co.uk/Become-a-Foundation-Director/>

**MIDDAY SUPERVISORS (SMSAs)** THE SACRED HEART LANGUAGE COLLEGE Blessed Holy Family Catholic Academy Trust 186 High Street, Wealdstone, Harrow, Middlesex, HA3 7AY Telephone: 020 8863 9922 Required as soon as possible 12:30 – 1:40 (1 hour & 10 minutes) each day, term time only Salary: £3,517 per annum (Grade G2, point 8). We currently have vacancies for Midday Supervisors to supervise and support pupils during the lunch break each day. Applicants must display a positive attitude towards all pupils and have an understanding of young people. Please visit our websites for application forms and further details for this post: [www.tshlc.harrow.sch.uk](http://www.tshlc.harrow.sch.uk) / [www.blessedholymfamily.co.uk](http://www.blessedholymfamily.co.uk) Completed applications should be emailed to Mrs Lewis, P.A. to the Executive Headteacher: [llewis@tshlc.harrow.sch.uk](mailto:llewis@tshlc.harrow.sch.uk) Alternatively, please print and send your completed application to the school office for the attention of Mrs Lewis (address as above).

**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.

**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/Vgxxvakd-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)

Last month Catholic Listeners launched a website to respond to people, who are searching for answers about the Catholic faith online. Catholic Listeners: <https://www.jesuit.org.uk/news/catholic-listeners-launch-next-phase-with-new-website>



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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.