

OUR PARISH NEWS

DEVOTIONS

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: St Gabriel's: Monday 10.30am - 11.00am
St Bernard's: Thursday 10.30am - 11.00am
Saturday 10.30am - 11.00am

Devotion to Sacred Heart (Frist Friday only): St Gabriel's: **Friday** 10.30am -11.00am

Holy Rosary: Monday - Friday: after Mass

Morning Prayer of the Church: Monday - Friday at 9.40am before Mass

February is the month of devotion to the Holy Family

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS: Offertory - £1094.56

GAZA COLLECTION: £892.08

CRIB (CHILDREN SOCIETY): £1577.03

Thank you for your generosity and commitment.

PLEASE RETURN PALM CROSSES: To allow preparations for Ash Wednesday, please return your Palm Crosses to the basket provided in church during the week or on **Sunday (11th February)**. These are burnt to provide the ash for Ash Wednesday. Please DON'T return any palm crosses after 11 Feb. *When you return your cross, make a prayer of penitence in church and make a plan to come to the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Lent.*

CRIB APPEAL - THANK YOU! The Crib Appeal this year raised £1577.03 for the work of the Catholic Children's Society for the Diocese of Westminster. Thank you for your sacrificial generosity to this very valuable work.

SYCAMORE GROUP NEXT MEETING: The group will next meet on **Monday 12 February, 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. Coming meeting we will discuss about Synodal Journey questions to share our faith with people who do not know Jesus; who do not practice catholic faith. All are welcome.

SVP GROUP MEETING: Our SVP (Society of St Vincent de Paul) Society will meet on **Tuesday 13 February at 7.30pm at St Gabriel's**. A relatively brief meeting for existing members, but a chance for anyone interested in the SVP to come and find out more. Those needing help with practical assistance or just feeling isolated can contact our SVP members on **+447596462206**.

ASH WEDNESDAY, 14 February: Although *not* a Holy Day of Obligation, however it helps us to begin the Lenten season with the proper attitude and reflection. Mass with the blessing and imposition of ashes will be at **St Gabriel's at 10am and St Bernard at 7.30pm**. *Ash Wednesday is a day of both fasting and abstinence. (Fasting means eating less than normal or leaving out a meal completely. Abstinence means not eating a particular thing, which for us means usually meat.)*

SYNODAL JOURNEY: GATHERING ONE: We will gather on **Thursday 15th February** for the first synodal gathering one at St Gabriel's Church Hall at 7.30 pm. We will discuss: **How do we witness as a Parish and proclaim our faith to:** (1) *those who have never heard about Christ;* (2) *those who have ceased walking with Christ;* (3) *those with whom we worship Christ (those who go to church)?* **How should we organise ourselves as a Parish to do this more effectively?**

SYNODAL JOURNEY: GATHERING TWO: We will gather on **Tuesday 20th February** for the first synodal gathering one at St Gabriel's Church Hall at 7.30 pm. We will discuss: **What concrete steps/formation opportunities would help us begin to witness and proclaim our faith more effectively? What structures may need to change? How might we need to develop the way we are organised currently?** We invite all parishioners to participate to journey together as people of faith.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Our *Stations of the Cross* will be at: **St GABRIEL'S: Fridays at 10.30am**, immediately after Mass at 10.00am. *Of course you can come to church anytime to make private Stations of the Cross in Lent, or any other time of year.*

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION IN LENT: Confession helps us to experience the central message of our faith: that God in Christ has redeemed us by His Passion, Death and Resurrection transforming us to live a holy life. The Catholic Church invites its faithful 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*) **Let us renew ourselves in Reconciliation this Lent.**

In our parish, we already have Reconciliation available on **Thursday Morning 9 to 9.40am at St Bernard's and Saturday morning 11.00 am to 12 noon at St Bernard's/evening 5 pm to 5.40pm at St Gabriel's.** During this season, we will **also** offer the opportunity to come to Confession on **Wednesday 10.30 am - 11.30am at St Gabriel's.** Embrace this opportunity of God's Mercy and Grace.

CARDINAL'S LENTEN APPEAL 2024: If you can, please show your support for the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal. All funds raised go to towards projects across our Diocese. Each year, the Diocese uses donations made to support the work of our services, such as Marriage & Family Life; Youth Ministry, and Education. Funds are also used to support the Work of Caritas Westminster, who work for and with some of the most vulnerable people in the Diocese. His Eminence, Cardinal Nichols, has expressed his gratitude to everyone who support the Appeal, with whatever they can afford. So, please take a donation envelope today, for more information. You can use the QR code to make your donation on line. Thank you for your generosity.

LENT "WALK WITH ME" BOOKLET: A journey of prayer for Lent 2024: a good resource for Lent. The edition of the ever-popular book of daily prayers and meditations for Lent is available today priced at £1, or during the week from the Parish Office.

ALTAR SERVICE TRAINING: Anyone who has received their first Holy Communion is welcome to become an altar server in our parish. The most important characteristic for an altar server is the ability to be invisible. There will be a training for all altar servers at St Gabriel's church **on Saturdays in February at St Gabriel's Church at 11 am.** We invite all those who are interested.

CHANGES IN PARISH OFFICE TIME: Please take note the changes in parish office time: Mon/Wed/Fridays 9am

- 2pm; Tue/Thursdays 10am – 3pm.

PLANNED GIVING BOXES: We have started to prepare the new boxes which will start 7 April 2024. Please let the office know as soon as possible if you wish to transfer to a Standing Order or if you no longer want a box of envelopes for your offerings.

HOLY FATHER INTENTIONS FOR FEBRUARY: For the terminally ill: Let us pray that the sick who are in the final stages of life, and their families, receive the necessary medical and human care and accompaniment. Let us pray for all our parishioners who are terminally ill and need Lord's touch!

WESTMINSTER YEAR BOOK 2024 – There are few copies available at the Parish Office.

READERS FOR YOUR PARISH: The best way to serve the church community is to come forward to read at mass. We thank all our readers, altar servers, volunteers all those who are offering their service. We invited all those who are interested to become Readers for Mass. We are making Rota for each Sunday mass in both St Bernard's and St Gabriel's Church. Our little way to help our church is to offer ourselves to read, arrange, help and clean our church. Please call parish office to give your name as volunteers to read, serve the church.

CALLING ALL SINGERS/MUSICIANS! MUSIC FOR SUNDAY MASS: *"Be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, 20 always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father."* **(Ephesians 5:19-20).** The one who sings with love prays twice. 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. 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 if you can offer your talent in this way...and don't be shy!

MISSIO" RED BOXES: We thank Linda Roxas - our parish representative of MISSIO, for volunteering to take Missio Red Boxes for the parish. You may wonder how can you help. For more information visit missio.org.uk or speak with one of the clergies. 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.*** We would like to invite parishioners to use our contactless (DONA) machine for your contributions.

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.

Welcomers (Stewards): You can offer yourselves serving the Lord and community by becoming welcomers for each Sunday masses. We want to welcome everyone coming to celebrate the Eucharist by providing book and newsletters to the celebration Those who are interested, please give your names calling the parish office.

OTHER NEWS

THE SYNOD JOURNEY CONTINUES: Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Bishop Nicholas Hudson have written to all the priests of the Diocese with an invitation to arrange two parish meetings before the next Deans meeting on 6th March to reflect on two themes of the Synod: Co-responsibility and Formation. The time is short but materials are available to help and will be published on the Diocesan website shortly here <https://rcdow.org.uk/synod/> . The Cardinal writes: "It will be a moment for us to pause and consider how we are, in fact, keeping this mission before our eyes and in doing so striving to act in a participative manner."



WESTMINSTER DIOCESE ANNUAL REPORT & ACCOUNTS 2022: A copy is available in the Parish Office, and a summary at the back of church. If you wish to read further the details financial report for the diocese, and an activity report, see the poster in church for a QR code link, or visit www.rcdow.org.uk/about-us.

VOCATIONS WEEKEND FOR WOMEN (20s & 30s): Theme: Discerning God's Call in your life Dates: **16-18 February 2024 Location: Liverpool:** the weekend is organised by the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus

(FCJ). Jesus invites each of us to 'Come and See' - this weekend will give the opportunity to explore the vocation to religious life and to reflect on God's call to you.

If you are wondering if God is calling you to religious life and would like to find out more why not come along? You are welcome to stay for the weekend or just come along on Saturday for the day. There will be opportunity for prayer, reflection and input, chance to ask questions and to meet others who are also wondering where God is calling them.

For more information contact Sr Lynne fcJ at fcjvocationeurope@gmail.com or visit our website www.fcjsisters.org

WHITE FLOWER APPEAL 2024: The society for the Protection of Unborn children (SPUC) vision is for a world where abortion is unthinkable. This year appeal calls for the Government to end the pills-by-post DIY abortion policy.

As well as ending the lives of precious babies, this policy lacks safeguards against illegal late-term abortions, and puts mothers at physical and psychological risk. 86% of GPs are concerned that this scheme leaves women vulnerable to coerced abortion.

Please be as generous as you can to help SPUC defend unborn babies and their mothers by highlighting this urgent crisis.

EVANGELISING POST-CHRISTIAN BRITAIN | Monsignor James Shea | Tuesday, 20th February 2024, 7 PM | St James' Church, Spanish Place, Marylebone | Tickets £5 Monsignor James Shea, President of the University of Mary (Bismarck, North Dakota) co-authored the extraordinary book From Christendom to Apostolic Mission. In a lively lecture and Q&A, he will draw bridges between the different visions that the Church and the world have for our society, and suggest effective strategies to engage our own time and culture with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The lecture will be followed by a Q&A and then refreshments will be available. Book your tickets at guild-ransom.co.uk/events

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER AND FASTING FOR LIFE: "On Saturday **10th January**, the Vigil of the Feast Our Lady of Lourdes, please pray and fast for the end of abortion in this Country. Through God's grace we have seen thousands of Mothers in our counselling centre continue their pregnancies in very difficult circumstances. Pray especially that National buffer zones won't be introduced. Please help us to help save lives with your prayers, fasting and support. www.GoodCounselNetwork.com"

GOOD COUNSEL NETWORK CAMPAIGN INFO: "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. **There are cards in the foyer to help you get involved.** Please also share the article, <https://mariastopsabortion.blogspot.com/>.

MEDJUGORJE APOSTOLATE ANNUAL RETREAT: The Medjugorje apostolate annual retreat will be conducted from **Friday 23 February to Sunday 25 February 2024** at the Kairos Centre, Roehampton, London. Fr. Svetoza Kraljevic OFM an English speaking Franciscan who spent 16 years serving the parish of Medjugorje will lead the retreat. The retreat is a residential retreat but there are places for day participants. For more information and to book please contact Paul Spencer at pilgrimsofmary@hotmail.com or on 07710567183.

PILGRIMAGE TO FATIMA: A DAY WITH MARY organises pilgrimage to Fatima from **Friday 7th June to Friday 14th June 2024. COST £ 870 .00/ per person, twin room (T). £ 950 Single room (S).** All rooms are en suite. DEPOSIT £ 300 to be sent with the booking application. Confirmation will be sent by post (or e-mail if preferred and indicated). Bank transfer also acceptable. This pilgrimage cost includes British Airways Return flight: London Heathrow – Lisbon- London Heathrow and chartered coach travel with 6 Days full board accommodation, 1day Half board. Booking Form with full details available on request or at www.adaywithmary.org

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 8 – 11 February 2024 or a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 14-16 June 2024, call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443 or email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com – or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

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.

SPREAD THE PRO-LIFE MESSAGE: SPUC: We need your help to broadcast the pro-life message loud and clear across all platforms and to everyone you meet. We want to build a culture of life. People need to know the facts about abortion and to hear the pro-life case.

- 1. Leafleting Teams:** Could you join one of our leafleting teams? To make sure everyone gets the pro-life facts, we have to go back to what every political organisation or campaigning charity does and deliver them to people's doorsteps.
- 2. Social Media:** Could you be one of our online advocates? Follow @SPUCProLife and @SPUCScotland on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube and don't be shy about standing up for what you believe in. Are you a content creator? If you are, why not create something that speaks for the pro-life cause and share it with us?
- 3. White Flower Appeal:** Every year hundreds of churches across Britain take part in the SPUC White Flower Appeal, making it one of our largest and most important educational and fundraising events of the year. Many appeals take place in January, but they can be held at any time of year. A pro-life educational talk is given, campaigning postcards distributed, and generous volunteers collect donations to help us carry out our life-saving work during the coming year. We rely primarily on volunteers for this appeal and are always in need of new speakers, local area contacts and collectors to help the appeal run smoothly.

“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

COULD YOU BE A FOUNDATION GOVERNOR AT A CATHOLIC SCHOOL? Foundation Governors are appointed in the name of the Archbishop and form the majority of the governing body of a Catholic school. They have a legal duty to preserve and develop the Catholic character of the school and to ensure that the school is conducted in accordance with its trust deed.

Governing boards have three core functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

The ministry of Foundation Governor is an important one, because the Catholic character of our schools depends on committed Catholics being willing to undertake this service. The Archbishop is therefore very appreciative of all those who offer to assist him in this vital task. Because of our baptism, all Christians are all called to serve the Church's mission.

General Criteria: To become or remain a foundation governor, a person must be and remain: a practising Catholic; providing education for his or her own children, if of school age, in a Catholic school or college (unless exceptional circumstances apply); able to give priority of attendance at meetings of the governing body to ensure representation of the Archbishop; in possession of a valid DBS disclosure certificate. To become or remain a foundation governor, a person must not be disqualified from becoming or remaining a governor in accordance with: the current School Government Regulations (or the college's Instrument of Government); the Charities Acts; and the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

Specific Criteria: In respect of the school or college for which a person is or is to be a foundation governor, he or she must not at any time be: related to any member of the school or college staff, teaching or non-teaching; related to any governor whether elected, appointed or ex-officio, of the school or college; employed (whether as a teacher or otherwise) at the school.

A person (other than the parish priest) will not normally be re-appointed as a foundation governor of a particular school or college if he or she has just completed three consecutive terms on that particular governing body.

WELCOME TO YOU CAN UK: We are a religious group for practicing young Catholic adults in the UK, and stay in touch through a network of WhatsApp Groups. Our simple mission is to connect all young Catholic adults with one another. No one can practice their Faith on their own! Within the YouCAN "family" are: **YouCAN** for young Catholic adults between ages 18 and 35; **YouCAN+** for Catholics between ages 30 and 45; **YouCAN Families** for Catholic families with children under 18 years. For more information you see <https://youngcatholicadultnetwork.uk/>

NEWS FROM CARITAS WESTMINSTER:

1. SNOOP DOGG TEAMS UP WITH LONDON HOMELESS FILM DIRECTOR FOR CHRISTMAS SINGLE:

Sleeping rough on the streets of London (or any major city for that matter) can be hazardous. David Fussell, a homeless film director, had glass bottles smashed in his face seeking shelter on London's park benches and in shop doorways. That is, until David was handed a pop-up tent by street workers concerned for David's safety. David, with London band Ooberfuse, have joined forces with rap royalty's Snoop Dogg to challenge hidden prejudices around homelessness. These prejudices recently erupted in UK when former Home Secretary, Suella Braverman promised to crackdown on tents and said that rough sleeping in a tent is a 'life-style choice'.

2. Finding a way through the Energy Crisis: Thursday 18th January 2024, 18:00 - 19:15 Online A look at the current situation, what it means for us now, and how to help ourselves, and those in need: including ways to ensure people stay on top of the situation, how to maximise income, how to find help if needed and finally some ways to save energy and money in general. The session will be led by Olivia Mackay, National Energy Action Project Development Co-ordinator for London, and will include - How to help people deal with the increased cost of living, and of energy bills; Available energy discounts; Where to find support and financial assistance; Energy tips to save money in the home This online session will be delivered via Zoom, and is being organised and hosted by Caritas Westminster, on behalf of our communities throughout London, Herts and Spelthorne. Please sign up on Eventbrite.

COST OF LIVING HUB: The rising costs of fuel, food and other essentials are combining with existing disadvantage and vulnerability within our communities to put many households at greater risk of both immediate hardship and reduced opportunity and wellbeing. Councils and local partners have delivered remarkable services and support and will continue to do what they can to protect people against higher costs,

targeting help at those facing the most complex challenges. This hub has been designed to share best practice and help councils to support their residents with the rise in the cost of living. Examples of the work of councils and resources can be found for each topic area in the pages below. We will be updating the hub on a regular basis. If you would like your council's work featured please email welfare@local.gov.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. 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>



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.