**CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION & SAINT JOSEPH**

**23 ST JOHN’S STREET, HERTFORD SG14 1RX**

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**Parish Priest: Monsignor Séamus O’Boyle**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – 17th /18th February 2024**

Prayers & Readings for this Sunday’s Mass can be found on p. 148 in the Parish Mass Book.

Please note that there is a Loop system in the Church.

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View from the Presbytery

And so, our Lenten journey for this year has begun. It was heartening to see so many gather for the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday. Let us pray for each other during these days that we may have the strength to persevere in whatever ways we have decided to grow and change leading up to Easter. As I mentioned last weekend, the four members of this year’s RCIA group were at the Cathedral on Saturday afternoon to join with all the other candidates for the Sacraments from across our Diocese in being presented to the Cardinal. Please keep a special remembrance in your prayers for Mariette and Darren who are to be received into Full Communion with the Church, and Caro and Louise who will be completing the Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil. It is a time of intense preparation for them.

As always during Lent, CAFOD ask us to mark Family Fast Day in our diaries – this year it is next Friday, 23rd February. There are envelopes for the fruits of your fasting available at the back of the Church today. These can be handed in next weekend and the weekend after. CAFOD’s focus this Lent is on helping the fishing communities in Liberia – some of whom have only small canoes from which to fish. Many of the very young inexperienced fishermen lose their lives in the stormy seas. CAFOD seeks to help provide them with better equipment to help them fish safely to feed their families – simple things like compasses, life jackets and better places to store their catch.

I am going to be away from the Parish from Monday - Friday of this coming week. I did not manage to get any time away after Christmas for various reasons – mainly the CSSA Audit of the Diocesan Safeguarding Service during much of January. It is not great timing – being during the first full week of Lent - when I know some of you like to attend a daily Mass. Although there will not be weekday Masses here in the Parish, there is a daily Mass at 10.00am in Sacred Heart, Ware – on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and 11.00am on Wednesday. Apologies for any difficulty this might cause you. All should be back to normal next week!

*Fr Séamus*

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS:** each Saturday during Lent at 5.15pm.

**THANKSGIVING FOR MATRIMONY:** The Cardinal invites all couples who are celebrating 5th, 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th, 60th, and 60+ wedding anniversaries during this year to a special Mass of Thanksgiving on Saturday 25th May at 2.30pm in Westminster Cathedral. If you are a couple celebrating one of these milestones and you would like to attend the Mass, please let me know. The easiest way to do so would be to send an email with your details to the Parish email address: [hertford@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:hertford@rcdow.org.uk)

*Fr Séamus*

**IF YOU GO IN TO HOSPITAL**: If someone is sick in hospital, please let us know here at the Presbytery, and/or ask the staff on the ward, so that your loved one can be visited whilst in hospital, and receive Holy Communion and any other Sacraments from the Chaplain.

At the Lister & QE2 hospitals, the Chaplain is: John O’Neill 01438 314333

**ROSARY GROUP:**  Come and join us in thechurch hall on **Tuesday evenings** at 7pm for recital of the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

**PRAYERS ASKED PLEASE –**

**FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:** Elizabeth Barnes, Ursula Partner, Jan Kracinski, Stephen Carey, Paul Cox, Malcolm Gilbert, Enzo Andrean, Miriam Matthews, Ruth Featherstone, Stephen Judd, Mary Ward, John Sweeney, Pam Gates, Juliet Davis, Phyllis Read, Jo Black, Robbie Robinson, Fr Terry, Angela White, Manuel Lopez, Lyn Carroll, Linda Abeysundera.

**FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY:** Norene Hristov and

Ann Vetere. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

**POPE FRANCIS’ PRAYER INTENTION FOR FEBRUARY**

***For the Terminally Ill***

*The Holy Father encourages prayers “so that terminally ill patients and their families always receive necessary medical and human care and support.”*

**MASS INTENTIONS:**

**Saturday 17th February**

**6.00pm:** Peter Matthews (Anniv.)

**Sunday 18th February***I Lent*

**8.30am:** John McKenna (Anniv.)

**10.30am:** People of the Parish

**Monday 19th - Friday 23rd February**

**NO MASSES THIS WEEK**

There is Mass at Sacred Heart, Ware

at 10.00am on Monday, Tuesday & Thursday and 11.00am on Wednesday.

**Saturday 24th February**

**6.00pm:** Mary & Kathleen Sullivan RIP

**Sunday 25th February** *II Lent*

**8.30am:** Alice Hurley RIP

**10.30am:** People of the Parish