**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**

**SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT – 24th /25th February 2024**

Prayers & Readings for this Sunday’s Mass can be found on p. 151 in the Parish Mass Book.

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

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View from the Presbytery

This weekend marks the second anniversary of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia. It’s a conflict that has slipped from the headlines somewhat, but the fighting remains intense and the suffering is great. We have in Central London, just off Oxford Street, the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Holy Family. Bishop Nowakowski, who looks after the UK’s Ukrainian Catholic Community, in a special Lenten message emphasises that, although we live miles away from the conflict, during this Lenten time of fasting and almsgiving, the other main pillar of the season – prayer – is where our focus should lie: “We can’t help everybody throughout the world with our limited means, but surely we can pray. Pray for peace, pray for justice, pray for those who are alone. Pray for those who are suffering – especially for those who are suffering separation. We think of the families that have been torn apart because of the war in Ukraine, the tens of thousands of young women who have fled to the United Kingdom with their children while their husbands have had to remain behind to defend Ukraine.”

On a far more mundane topic, the closing date for applications for the role of Parish Secretary here is 28th February. I hope we are able to appoint someone to manage the day-to-day office work and the parish accounts. We heard recently that the external auditors of the Diocese – Buzzacott – have selected our Parish, along with a number of others – for auditing this year! They are paying us a visit on Monday 4th March. I am very grateful to the Chair of the Parish Finance Committee – Richard Edgell – for all the time he has been giving recently to the accounts. I am sure that will put us in good stead with Buzzacott! Recently we also had a building survey of the Church and Presbytery carried out. I went around with the surveyor – visiting parts of the buildings I had not seen before! While the part of the Church which you can all see facing the car park and hall looks in pretty good order – the North side – out of sight and mind – is in a much worse state! When the full survey report arrives, I will let you know what needs to be done.

Audits and surveys – well in keeping with this Lenten season. Let’s continue to audit and survey our closeness to the Lord!

*Fr Séamus*

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

**CAKE SALE TODAY:** the Friends of St Joseph’s School are holding a Cake Sale in the Hall after the 10.30 Mass today. Come along and have a cuppa and a slice of cake. Children are welcome to decorate their own cake as well. All proceeds to the School.

**LENT LUNCH:** Friday 15th March at 1pm. Please sign the sheet at the back of the Church if you would like to share this simple meal.

**ST PATRICK’S DAY:** there are cards and gifts for St Patrick’s Day available in the shop at the back of the Church.

**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*

**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, Julia Rochford.

**FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY:** Ann Vetere. May she 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 24th February**

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

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

**8.30am:** Alice Hurley RIP

**10.30am:** People of the Parish

**Monday 26th February**

**10.00am:** Vetti Vettivelu RIP

**Tuesday 27th February**

**12.15pm:** Private Intention

**Wednesday 28th February**

**10.00am:** Private Intention

**Thursday 29th February:**

**CHURCH CLOSED**

**Friday 1st March**

**12.15pm:** Private Intention

**Saturday 2nd March**

**6.00pm:** Private Intention

**Sunday 3rd March** *III Lent*

**8.30am:** People of the Parish

**10.30am:** George Robert Emmett RIP