**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**

**FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT – 16th /17th March 2024**

Prayers & Readings for this Sunday’s Mass can be found on p. 169 in the Parish Mass Book.

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

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**View from the Presbytery**

A very Happy St Patrick’s Day to all our parishioners with Irish connections – and, indeed, to all those without! Today is one of those days in parts of the world where the Irish diaspora reached in the 19th Century for many to claim Irish roots. I remember as a child that just before St Patrick’s Day a small package would always arrive from my Granny in Ireland containing sprigs of Shamrock! We used to wear it with pride attached by a safety pin to our school uniform. We were told that Shamrock only grows in Ireland – and nowhere else! I wonder what Kew Gardens might have to say about that! My late father was named Patrick, and he prided himself on never having worked on 17th March! It was also my parents’ wedding anniversary – so for us that was an added part of today’s celebration. If they were still alive, today would have been their 69th anniversary. I will be joining a family gathering to mark the day.

Spring certainly seems to have sprung if the warm weather is anything to go by – and the trees are coming into bud as well as lots of Spring flowers. Easter is only two weeks away – and the celebration of the central events of the Christian calendar. Please take a copy of the leaflet giving all the timings for the Holy Week and Easter ceremonies.

Here are the words of a prayer – the Deer’s Cry - attributed to St Patrick, which we could make our own today:

*I arise today*

*Through God’s strength to pilot me;*

*God’s might to uphold me, God’s wisdom to guide me,*

*God’s eye to look before me, God’s ear to hear me,*

*God’s word to speak for me, God’s hand to guard me,*

*God’s way to lie before me, God’s shield to protect me,*

*God’s hosts to save me,*

*Afar and anear,*

*Alone or in a multitude.*

*I arise today*

*Fr Séamus*

**ST. JOSEPH’S DAY – Tuesday 19th March**

As well as the usual 12.15pm Mass here, there will also be a Feast Day Mass celebrated at our Parish School at 10.30am. Parents are very welcome to attend.

**HOLY WEEK & EASTER: please pick up from the back of Church one of the leaflets giving details of the various Masses and Services taking place here in Holy Week.**

**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)

**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, Linda Abeysundera, Julia Rochford, Eugene Martin, Gerry Goss.

**FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY:** Lyn Carroll, Martin Ratcliff (son of Fee Ratcliff), Lynette Mary Skrebels, Christine Shears (*a former parishioner – her Funeral will be at Sacred Heart, Ware at 10am on 18th March*). May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

**POPE FRANCIS’ PRAYER INTENTION FOR MARCH**

***For the new martyrs***

*We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.*

**MASS INTENTIONS:**

**Saturday 16th March**

**6.00pm:** People of the Parish

**Sunday 17th March** *V Lent*

**8.30am:** Bridget Peters (Anniv)

**10.30am:** John Pearson RIP

**Monday 18th March**

**10.00am:** Private Intention

**Tuesday 19th March** *St Joseph*

**12.15pm:** Sean Deroe RIP

**Wednesday 20th March**

**10.00am:** Private Intention

**Thursday 21st March**

**CHURCH CLOSED**

**Friday 22nd March**

**12.15pm:** Private Intention

**Saturday 23rd March**

**6.00pm:** Private Intention

**Sunday 24th March** *Palm Sunday*

**8.30am:** People of the Parish

**10.30am:** Tricia Flach RIP