



CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND ST ANDREW

16 Nightingale Road, HITCHIN, SG5 1QS
(In the care of the Augustinians of the Assumption)



Newsletter No 1680

30th April - 7th May 2016 6th Sunday of Easter Year C



Mass Times

Saturday anticipating 6pm
Sunday 8.30am, 10.30am and 5pm
Monday – Saturday 10am
Reconciliation Saturday 10.30am

Contacts

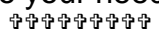
Parish Priest Fr Michael Lambert	E-mail: michaellambert@rcdow.org.uk
Fr Tom O'Brien	frtomaa@gmail.com
Fr Euloge Kasine	eulogeka@gmail.com
Pastoral Assistants Trish Bonnett	Tel: 01462 455577 trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk
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Parish Administrator Carol Cooper	Tel: 01462 459126 carolcooper@rcdow.org.uk
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Parish Office Tel: Mobile: Website: E-mail:	01462 459 126 07958 575 442 parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin hitchin@rcdow.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Representative

Trish Bonnett Telephone: 01462 459126 (Parish)



If you are going into hospital please take a copy of the leaflet in the church porch and notify the RC Chaplain on **07884 187463** directly, as the Hospital is not able to pass on the information to them. If you are in Pinehill Hospital, please contact the parish directly. When you come out of hospital or if you are ill and housebound please ring the parish office so we can minister to your needs if required.



If you have a need for prayer, please contact Mary on 07759195487 and let her know your prayer intentions.



Year of Mercy Prayer Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with its anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, so that our Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Diary

Sunday 1st May	Coffee Morning – Diapalante Baptism Preparation Course Hall 3-4.30pm
Monday 2nd	Bank Holiday Mass 10am as usual
Tuesday 3rd	Morning Prayer Church 9.30am Bethany Club Hall 10.30 – 3.30pm Eucharistic Service Church 7.15pm Steps to Pentecost Choir practice Church 8pm UCM LCR 8pm
Wednesday 4th	Rosary Group for All Hall 9.30am Sacramental Prep LCR 4.30-6pm
Thursday 5th	Rosary - Church after Mass ELECTION Hall All day Christian Meditation Group Pastoral Office 6.30pm
Friday 6th	Lectio Divina - Pastoral Office 2pm
Sunday 8th	Coffee Morning – Bethany Club Baptism Preparation Course Session 2 Hall 3.30-4.30pm

Readings: Acts 15:1-2,22-29, Apoc 21:10-14,22-23, John 14:23-29

Entrance antiphon Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard; proclaim to the ends of the earth: The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.
Psalm: Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Intercessions: Father hear us
Response: Send us your Spirit

Next week Acts 1:1-11, Eph 1:17-23, Luke 24:46-53

This week's counting teams:

Sunday Team 5 Monday Team 2
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First Holy Communion cards and prayer books are on sale in the hall after the 8.30am and 10.30 am Masses.
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There will be a **Bereavement Service on June 3rd at 7.30pm** led by Fr Tom. All who have been bereaved are very welcome. After the service there will be refreshments in the hall.

Faith Development Helpline

If you (or someone you know) needs to chat about your faith or have been feeling lost ring

07582 648433

Tues/Wed/Thurs 8pm-10pm.

Confidential service provided. No need to identify yourself

If someone close to you has died our Bereavement Team is specially trained to help. You can contact them through the Parish Office on 01462 459126.

This Weekend: We wish all the couples who shared in Saturday's Marriage Preparation Day, many blessings in their forthcoming Celebrations of the Covenant of Marriage and their future happiness.

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Sunday 3pm Hall - First Session of Preparation for the Sacrament of **Baptism** for the Parents who have signed up for it.

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Last Sunday: we had a wonderful celebration of Confirmation with our 13 Candidates. We welcomed Bishop Paul on his first official Visit to our Parish and he related wonderfully to our young people with his simple message on the importance of the Sacrament in their lives and the commitment they were making to the Lord and our Community. The Candidates proclaimed the Word, the Intercessions and presented the Gifts and after the Mass there was a Reception for them in the Hall with a wonderful cake which had been created by one of our Confirmation Catechists, Maeve, to whom we are very grateful. We look forward to seeing our young people continuing to take an active and visible part in the life of our Parish.

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Leonard Scott's family would like to thank the parish for their welcome at his funeral and the support we gave to Leonard.

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KISS - Wanted - Excess Baggage - a group of John Henry Newman School students and adults will be visiting the KISS community in Uganda in the summer and will be taking various items as additional luggage for the charity. If you have suitcases that you no longer use, please bring them to the Church or contact Greg Hewitson (07850 273234) for collection.

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 3 May

8pm UCM (Union of Catholic Mothers). Meeting Tuesday in the Lower Committee Room. WUCWO preparation and meditation.

Wednesday 4 May

Fr Michael is presiding the Funeral of Deacon Paul Strickland, a great friend for over 40 years and who spoke at the Reception in the Hall at his Jubilee. We pray for Lindy, his wife and their children Jenny, Nicola and Richard in particular. The Funeral is in Berkhamsted. May he rest in peace and rise in glory!

Friday 6 May

11.30am Funeral of Brian Green, father of Victoria McNiff, who moved from our Parish recently.

Future Dates


May 2 10am Quaker Peace Garden The Hitchin Society of Friends is making a Peace Garden at their Meeting House on the corner of Brand Street and Bedford Road and they invite members of all churches in Hitchin to help them - and to use it when it is complete. They particularly invite anyone to join work parties to enlarge the existing pond in the shape of a dove on and volunteers are asked to bring a spade for some digging, Refreshments will be provided. If you are interested, just turn up and you will be warmly welcome.

May 7 10-12noon **Come to Coffee+@Christchurch**, Every 1st Saturday of the month. **FREE** entry, toddler toys, space to run around, filter coffee 50p, great for new mums & dads, those new to area, & for those who fancy a quiet cuppa & a natter with their friends. With a Daisychains charity cake stall, & Tradecraft shop. ALL welcome.

May 9 8pm MICHAELMAS FAIR PLANNING MEETING in the Lower Committee Room. You are warmly invited to attend a planning meeting for this very popular annual event. New ideas and more helpers are very welcome. PLEASE NOTE The date in last week's newsletter was incorrect. The date is Monday 9th May.

May 15 Pentecost Sunday 10.30 Mass will be a celebration with a real difference. This Mass will see the Baptism and confirmation of Luis Gil who has been preparing for this with the others newly baptised at Easter. This is also the Mass where we give thanks for Fr Michael's years as Parish Priest and he officially hands over to Fr Tom in the presence of our Bishop Paul. The Mass will be followed by a bring and share picnic (garden weather permitting or in the hall if wet) Please sign up on the notice board in the porch stating what you will be bringing if you plan to come if you plan to come.

Other items of interest

 Colin Blake is the Christian Aid Area Leader for the Wymondley Road/Benslow Lane area and needs some new collectors to help with this most important cause. You need to deliver and collect envelopes during the period 15-21 May 2016. Typically 50 envelopes per street. If you are able to help in this way please contact Colin on 07980 934491.

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,
WESTMINSTER, LONDON, SW1P 1QJ



30 April 2016

Pastoral Letter on 'The Joy of Love', Amoris Laetitia

My brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ

Just three weeks ago, Pope Francis made public his Apostolic Exhortation on love in the family, entitled 'The Joy of Love'. It followed wide consultation and two Synods of Bishops. Many have started reading it and find it quite remarkable. I heard from one husband who found his wife in tears. He asked her why. She said she was weeping because the words of Pope Francis touched her so deeply.

This Exhortation embraces many topics; it also embraces the reality of our lives. Pope Francis talks to us as if he had his arms around us. He speaks of the beauty of love, reflecting on the words of St Paul that love is patient and kind, not jealous or boastful, arrogant or rude, never rejoicing in what is wrong, but hoping and enduring all things (1 Cor. 13. 4-7). He writes of how this love finds its place in family life and grows through many crises and difficulties. Indeed he speaks of love as a craft, something at which we have to work hard, with care, understanding and perseverance. Love is always a journey, in all true friendship and especially in family life. It was these reflections that brought tears of recognition to the eyes of that good woman.

The Holy Father spells out three reasons why this sensitive appreciation of the journey of love is so crucial.

Firstly, he tells us how important it is to prepare for this journey. This begins within a person's own experience of family life. Then, as young people grow, this preparation continues with clear guidance and a vision of the dignity of love. The Pope reminds us of the importance of 'positive and prudent' sex education (280) and says that 'it is always irresponsible to invite adolescents to toy with their bodies and their desires as if they possessed the maturity, values, mutual commitment and goals proper to marriage' (283). He lays great stress on the importance of the ways in which we prepare couples for marriage itself.

Secondly, Pope Francis speaks very realistically about the problems which we face on this journey of love. He appeals again and again that we learn to help each other and work always for the strengthening of marriage and family life.

Thirdly, he explains that we always have to work out, step by step, the journey that we are on. He puts this very simply: 'No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed' (352). At every stage of this journey he asks that we never lose sight of our true goal, and never give up on it. That goal is expressed in the vision of faithful married love, which he describes as a place where God truly

dwells and a true and precious pathway to holiness on which we are never without His presence. Family love, he says, is 'a God enlightened space' (317) always to be revered and nurtured. For this reason he insists that we must never stop proposing 'the full ideal of marriage, God's plan in all its grandeur' (307).

Pope Francis speaks so sensitively about all these matters. While expressing beautifully God's plan for marriage, he wants the Church to be like a 'field hospital', with a particular concern for all those who, as he puts it, are in 'situations which do not yet or no longer correspond to her teaching on marriage' (292). This is the most sensitive part of his message. He presents afresh the clear teaching of the Church about marriage and reminds us persistently of the truth of the endless mercy of God for each one of us.

At this point, it is so important not to reduce this great Exhortation to being simply about whether people who have been divorced and remarried can go forward to receive Holy Communion. The quest is much wider. It is a quest for every person to understand much more deeply their situation before God. When we hide nothing from the Lord, when we reflect carefully in prayer, when we open our hearts to the wonder of God's plan for our happiness, we begin to sense the call of our conscience, that inner core and sanctuary where God's voice echoes within us. Here we are led both to a painful admission of our past failings and to a careful consideration of what the next step in our journey might be. Such considerations, which the Holy Father speaks of as discernment, are always best carried out in thoughtful dialogue with an experienced guide, usually a priest.

I thank God that this great Exhortation has come to us during the Year of Mercy when so many people are turning again to Confession, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. That is a good place and a good time to start this discernment, accompanied by a priest. Pope Francis puts it like this: 'I encourage the faithful who find themselves in complicated situations to speak confidently with their pastors or with other lay people whose lives are committed to the Lord. They may not always encounter in them a confirmation of their own ideas or desires, but they will surely receive some light to help them better understand their situation and discover a path to personal growth' (312).

Love in the family is 'a never-ending vocation' (325), 'a shepherding in mercy' (322), across the generations. Indeed it is the first way in which God's love is made real in our world and by which the Gospel of Hope is proclaimed in situations that can be demanding and harsh.

Our study of this Exhortation will take time and effort. For all of us it will be a great source of joy and encouragement. Please do read it, at home, together with loved ones. You too may share its beauty in tears of joy.

Yours devotedly

✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster