



# CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND ST ANDREW

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



**Mass Times**  
Saturday 6pm  
Sunday 8.30am, 10.30am & 5pm  
Monday – Saturday 10am  
Exposition Thursday 7pm-8pm  
Reconciliation Saturday 10.30am during Exposition



Newsletter No 1882

14-21 March – 3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT Year A – the gospel according to Matthew

**Parish Prayer:** Lord Jesus, as the world copes with coronavirus, help us to remember that you are always with us. Grant wisdom to decision makers and bless all health workers. Bring healing to the sick; give peace to the anxious and comfort those who are sad. Stir us to show your love and mercy most especially to the poor and weak. This we ask in your name. Amen.

**Readings:** Ex 17:3-7, Rom 5:1-2.5-8, John 4:5-42

**Entrance Antiphon:** My eyes are always on the Lord, for he rescues my feet from the snare. Turn to me and have mercy on me, for I am alone and poor.

**Psalm: O that today you would listen to his voice: 'Harden not your hearts'.**

**Intercession:** Lord, in your Mercy

**Response:** Hear our Prayer!

**Next week:** Sam 16:1.6-7.10-13, Eph 5:8-14, John 9:1-41



**Ramblings** Last September, Herts County Council warned us that water levels were low and we would probably have water restrictions this year. Six months later we have had so much water that the prayer for rain has been answered. However, I heard that recently someone was seen watering his garden – maybe he was growing rice!! Lack of rain in Australia has led to devastating fires. There are major droughts throughout the world. Today, we are asked to prevent the spread of coronavirus by washing our hands in soap and water. Water is absolutely necessary for life - the lack of it brings death in many different forms. Water can also protect, cleanse and purify. No wonder it is used in baptism to open us to new life in Christ. This new life stays active within us if we but welcome and respond to it. Going into the desert, as Jesus did, reminded him of the value of water but also of his thirst for God and the importance of that water which we call grace. Coronavirus has arrived in our Lenten season. We are unable to stop it and are forced to recognise our utter dependence on God. We may well develop a vaccine in the future but at present we are faced with a force we are unable to prevent from spreading. It clearly teaches us the true power of sin to destroy. Just as prayer reversed the water shortage, prayer – along with all the precautions we are taking - will see us through this Lenten challenge, and lead us to new life: just as it did for the woman Jesus met at the well. *“Individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean.”* (Ryunosuke Satoro) *“If the earth is a mother then rivers are her veins.”* (Amit Kalantri)

Whilst there will be no coffee mornings for the time being, there will be a sale of Easter Cards in the Hall after the morning Masses.

## Diary Dates

Sun 15 March			
<b>Coffee Morning – Cancelled</b> ††††††††††			
<b>Baptism Course – Cancelled</b> ††††††††††			
<b>Confirmation Session - Cancelled</b>			
Mon 16 March			
Parents & Toddlers Hall	9.30am	Beavers	6pm
Christian Meditation Grp	11.30am DH	Cubs	7.15pm
		Scout Hall	
<b>Mass at Elmside Cancelled</b> ††††††††††			
<b>6.30pm – OWG/LS Meeting - EC</b>			
Tue 17 March St Patrick			
Morning Prayer Church	9.40am	Scouts	7pm
		Scout Hall	
Bethany Club Church Hall	<b>Cancelled</b>	Eucharistic Service	7.15pm church
<b>UCM - Cancelled</b>			
Wed 18 March			
Rosary Church		RCIA EC	7.30pm
<b>10.30am – Lent Course – LCR Room</b> ††††††††††			
<b>6pm – Feed Up Warm Up – Scout Hall</b>			
Thurs 19 March St Joseph			
Italian Club Hall	<b>Cancelled</b>	Christian Meditation Grp	6.30pm EC
Brownies Scout Hall	6.30pm	Choir Church	8pm
<b>Craft Circle - Cancelled</b>			
Fri 20 March			
Parent & Toddlers	<b>Cancelled</b>	Lectio Divina EC	2pm
Sat 21 March			
<b>Christian Meditation - Cancelled</b>			
Sun 22 March			
<b>Coffee Morning – Cancelled</b> ††††††††††			
<b>Confirmation Session - Cancelled</b>			

## Corona Virus Update

Following the increase in spread of the corona virus the Cardinal has issued further instructions to all parishes to follow to try to minimise the spread of the disease within our church whilst trying to maintain our ability to hold the Mass and liturgies for as long as possible. We put much of the advice into action at the weekend but there are other things we need to do.

The new advice we need to implement is as follows:

① When receiving communion please cup your hands so that the Priest or Eucharistic Minister can drop the host into your hands and avoid touching your hand and it minimises the risk of the host dropping off your hand onto the floor. At most Masses there will be 3 Eucharistic ministers as well as the priest giving out communion. Please go to whoever has the shortest queue.

② The Cardinal advises those most vulnerable (elderly, people with weakened immune systems and long term conditions like cancer, diabetes and heart disease) to refrain from large parish gatherings and stay at home. It is not a sin to **not** come to mass for this reason as it is for your own safety and protection. It is also possible to see and hear Mass on line or on the television.

On line daily Masses can be found at a variety of sites including

<https://www.portsmouthcatholiccathedral.org.uk/live-mass.php> (UK)

<https://www.churchservices.tv/> (Irish)

<http://www.catholictv.org/masses/catholictv-mass> (US)

Also on the TV EWTN offers daily and Sunday Mass at 12pm and 4pm

If you would like communion brought to you home we can arrange that at least monthly but will try more frequently depending on the numbers of people involved. To arrange this either email [trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk) or ring the parish office on 01462 459126.

③ If you have cold or flu symptoms you are advised to refrain from attending Liturgy, public events, or the Sacrament of Reconciliation if symptomatic (You may have an ordinary cold but equally it is important to ensure a precautionary approach).

If you are self-isolating we will not be able to bring communion or visit for two weeks but

please let the parish know so we can keep in touch and keep you in our general prayers.

④ Maintain good hygiene by hand washing before coming to Mass; refraining from touching your face and use the gel on arrival. (We will endeavour to keep a supply of gel in the porch)

⑤ Generally follow

Catch it - sneeze into a tissue.

ii. Bin it – bin the tissue.

iii. Kill it – wash your hands with soap and water.

iv. Do not touch your face unless you've washed your hands.

v. If you cough try to do so into your elbow.

⑥ The collection will not be taken up by passing a bag, there will be baskets as you go up to communion and you are asked to put your offering there. You may wish to change to a direct debit at this time to make it easier. Please let Trish know if you want to do this and she will ensure that David Wilson, who co-ordinates the planned giving will send you the appropriate forms. Please note **we have made a decision to temporarily suspend second collections.**

⑦ We have been advised to suspend catering (teas, coffees, etc.) at large parish gatherings where multiple people touch mugs, utensils, biscuits, etc. so we are immediately suspending coffee after 8.30 and 10.30 Masses. Please note this does not stop people from gathering in the hall for a chat but there will be no catering or raffles. Hopefully this will be a short term pain to give us the long term gain of stopping the spread of the virus and keeping our parishioners healthy.

⑧ Candle lighters have been removed from the votive candle stands so please light candles from the candles that are already lit on the stand. If there are no candles lit please pop to the parish office and Cheryl or Trish will assist.

⑨ We will leave the church doors open (if it is not too cold so that parishioners after having used the gel on their hands do not then have to push open the door.


Thank you for your patience and co-operation at this time. Please keep everyone who is being affected by Corona virus in your prayers. I am sure by the grace of God we will get through this difficult time and hopefully become a more united community and country as a result.

The decision has been made to cancel all sacramental programme meetings for the time being. It is not seen as an essential gathering at this time. To reduce the risk to participants there will be no more instruction on the Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage prep and RCIA. All these programmes will be resumed when the current health crisis has abated.

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The Parent & Toddler group are meeting this Monday and a decision will be taken about future gatherings. Friday sessions are **cancelled** for the time being.

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 Let's not forget the vulnerable - In light of the uncertainty over the Coronavirus, it is understandable that we want to ensure our kitchen cupboards are well stocked. However, we must not forget that this can leave foodbanks struggling. Hundreds of people rely on generous donations from our parishioners. This includes the need for hygiene items, toilet paper, sanitary products etc, as well as sealed packages of dry food, tins, and long-life milk etc. Foodbanks also welcome donations of money - please give what you can. Please also consider if you could spare some time to volunteer – perhaps by driving to collect food for a foodbank – or simply by looking out for your neighbours. Many thanks for your support..

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**The Meditation Day** which was due to take place on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> March has been **postponed** at the current time and will be rearranged at a future date. Apologies for the disappointment.

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In view of the recent advice given regarding the Coronavirus, the Bethany Club have decided to **suspend** their weekly gatherings until after Easter. This is also the case for the Italian club. We will let you know when they resume. Many thanks.

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The Masses at Elmside care home this Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March and Milford Lodge care home on 24<sup>th</sup> March have been **cancelled**. The future of the care home masses will be reviewed in light of the current health crisis.

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A needy family in the parish would like to get a microwave. If anyone in the parish has one to donate can you please contact Charmaine Ball at [tonyandcharmaine@gmail.com](mailto:tonyandcharmaine@gmail.com)

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**KISS Tea & Coffee** morning – Many thanks for your generous support in so many ways to raise £122.00 for KISS at last weekend's Tea & Coffee morning. Wonderful cakes and gifts for the raffle

and true Parish Community Support! – Thank you!!

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### **Sunday lunches for the priests.**

For the past year or so, a group of parishioners have been cooking a vegetarian or fish lunch for the priests every Sunday. The meals range from frozen dishes brought to the priests' house with instructions so that the priests can reheat the meals themselves, to something that has been freshly cooked and served on the day. The priests clear up after themselves and leave the clean dishes in their kitchen or by their door for you to collect. Full reimbursement for the cost of the meal can be provided. The priests always look forward to this lunch which adds surprise and variety to their week! There have certainly never been any complaints!

If you think that you would like to join this group, or give it a go, you would be extremely welcome! The current rota runs to June. Please email Catherine Muncaster at [perrymuncaster@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:perrymuncaster@yahoo.co.uk) or phone her on 01462 422578.

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Frances Chamberlain is happy to order Fairtrade Easter eggs for people if anyone would like them. Please leave a message with your name and contact details and how many eggs you would like in the parish office and

Frances will get back to you.

### **Other Dates**

**20th March at 11am PHASE** are holding a short **Fair in the Square planning meeting** in the Phase office. If you would like to lend a hand (you don't have to take on loads, we promise!!) we would really welcome you to this meeting. It will last about an hour. We are also on the lookout for advice from keen gardeners about what plants would be best for a plant stall, and perhaps you will have some spare seedlings we could sell? Again, we would be very grateful for some advice on the best way to do this! **Phase's Fair in the Square is taking place on Saturday 27th June.**

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**St Mark's Craft Fair Saturday 2nd May** St Mark's invites talented people - artists, woodturners, embroiderers etc - to book a table for £10.00 and sell their wares at a Craft Fair being organised by the church on 2nd May. A limited number of tables so book early - Kevin Banks 01462 635336 or Val Chamberlain 01462 458827.



**Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 11am MASS FOR MIGRANTS**, Banner Procession and Mass, St Anthony of Padua RC Church, Forest Gate, E7 9QB. Everyone is warmly welcome to this wonderful Mass, celebrating the tremendous contribution of migrants to the London and South-East Dioceses of Brentwood, Southwark and Westminster. The Mass will include the newly painted icon of Our Lady of Walsingham, recently blessed by Pope Francis, and will be celebrated by the Bishop of Brentwood, Bishop Alan Williams, in honour of St Joseph the Worker. If you are a group bringing a banner please email [frdominic@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:frdominic@dioceseofbrentwood.org) for more information.

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**Saturday 30 May 2020 3pm - Thanksgiving for Matrimony** - Mass for couples celebrating 5, 10, 25, 30, 40, 50, 60 and 60+ Wedding Anniversaries at Westminster Cathedral. Cardinal Vincent will be inviting married couples in the Diocese who are celebrating particular wedding anniversaries during 2020 to join him in the Cathedral for a thanksgiving Mass for Matrimony. If you are interested in attending this event, please supply Cheryl in the office with your names, wedding date, full postal address, email address and telephone number by **Saturday 28 March 2020**

**Other items of interest**


**Running for Phase!** If you would like to run to raise money for Phase and run a route in some of the most iconic parts of London, consider signing up for the Royal Parks Half Marathon, taking place on Sunday 11th October. Contact the Phase office to find out more [office@phase-hitchin.org](mailto:office@phase-hitchin.org).


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There is a short but beautiful video by **Pope Francis calling for Catholics worldwide to celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his encyclical *Laudato Si'*: On the Care of Our Common Home** during the week of **16-24 May 2020**. Please watch and share the video widely: <https://westminsterjp.wordpress.com/>

**And finally in a message to all the priests in the Diocese from the Cardinal he says**

'We all know that the fight against this virus will be a long haul. Please don't take too much to heart the anxiety that is felt by many, but rather embrace the reassurance that in this communal effort, we are being guided by the best possible advice. And please let us pray for each other, and for those who are caring for the sick and those searching hard to develop a treatment and a vaccine for this illness.'

 We must encourage all people of goodwill to join the work of abolishing war and weapons - not out of fear of dying, but out of the joy of living. *Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Irish peace activist and Nobel Peace laureate*

 It is not always the superiors of religious orders who have an important role. For many years a brother worked quietly making the habits for all the religious of his province. Brother Bernadino Delgado did this hidden but important work. He did his work despite the handicap of having only the thumb and one finger on his left hand.

**To donate to Our Lady's through text giving on your mobile phone !!**  
**Just text [Parish HITCH](tel:70800) to [70800](tel:70800) to donate £5.**

**Faith Development Helpline**

If you (or someone you know) needs to chat about your faith or have been feeling lost ring  
**07398821315**  
 Tues/Wed/Thurs 8pm-10pm.  
 Confidential service provided.  
 No need to identify yourself



**AMORIS LAETITIA THE JOY OF LOVE 171**

Joy increases our pleasure and helps us find fulfilment in any number of things, even at those times of life when physical pleasure has ebbed. 'Joy' refers to an expansion of the heart'.  
 (St Thomas Aquinas Summa Theologiae I-III. q31, art 3, ad 3)



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

<b>Parish Priest</b> Fr Tom O'Brien 07547 171570	<b>Assistant Priest</b> Fr Euloge Kasine 07424 004647	<b>Parish</b> <b>01462 459126</b> E-mail: <a href="mailto:hitchin@rcdow.org.uk">hitchin@rcdow.org.uk</a> Website: <a href="https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/">https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/</a>
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**Parish Administrator** Cheryl Saunders [cherylsaunders@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:cherylsaunders@rcdow.org.uk)  
**Pastoral Assistants** Robert Hitchcock [roberthitchcock@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:roberthitchcock@rcdow.org.uk)  
 Trish Bonnett [trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk)

This week's counting teams:  
**Sunday Team: 1 Monday Team: 4**



If you are going into hospital please notify the Chaplain on Tel: **01438 285519** or Email: [spiritualcare.enh-tr@nhs.net](mailto:spiritualcare.enh-tr@nhs.net)