



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
Monday – Saturday 10am
Reconciliation Saturday 10.30am
during Exposition. All Masses are
livestreamed [Livestream Mass](#)

Newsletter No 2040

25th March – 1st April 2023 – 5th Sunday of Lent - Year A

Prayer for Ukraine: God of peace and justice, we pray for the people of Ukraine; for peace and the laying down of weapons. Give comfort to those who fear for tomorrow. Grant wisdom, discernment and compassion to guide those who have power over war and peace. Hold and protect your precious children, at risk and in fear. We pray in the name of Jesus, Prince of Peace. Amen.

Readings Ez 37:12-14, Rom 8:8-11, John 11:1-45

Entrance Antiphon: Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

Psalm: **With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.**

Intercession: Lord, hear us

Response: Lord, graciously hear us!

Next Week: Is 50:4-7, Philip 2:6-11, Matt 26:14-27:66

Ramblings The Spirit of God is a Spirit of life. This Spirit is the *breath* of God that brought creation into being and our first parents. The Old Testament refers again and again to the breath of God that brings and sustains life in many different ways. The Spirit of God is present in the air we breathe continually giving us life and we do well to reflect on this.

In the Celtic tradition, the Spirit of God was not represented as a peaceful dove but as a “wild goose.” The wild goose possesses a spirit which is passionate, noisy, and courageous. This symbol makes clear that the Spirit is not something we can tame or contain like a possession, it is a free spirit within us. It is suggested that this Spirit, like a wild goose, was at work in the election of Pope Francis who continues to stir up the world through his poignant language, prophetic actions and continual challenges.

There is an ancient tale about a flock of geese that through their loud cackling forewarned the lookouts in a Roman city-state of an invading army. Throughout Christian history the prophetic cries of saints, movements, and religious communities - like the calls of those geese - have alerted the Church to the need for renewal and reform. The work of renewing and reforming is never done in isolation but as part of the community of the faithful which is very human and often fearful and uncertain. Today we are challenged to respond to climate change, to wars and injustice, to the cry for hope, for dignity and honour.

The Spirit works through human beings like you and me to bring God’s healing and purifying presence to all creation. This Spirit, breathed in us in baptism, is inspiring, motivating, challenging, puzzling and continually calling us to respond actively. In Lent we seek to let this Spirit free!

Diary Dates

Sun 26 March 10.30 Children’s Mass



Coffee Morning after 8.30am and 10.30am Masses is in support of **the Hitchin Pantry**. Proceeds from this

Sunday’s coffee morning will go to support the Hitchin Pantry which provides subsidised shopping for many local people who are struggling with the cost of living. All are welcome. Cakes, preserves and books will be on sale.

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3pm Let’s Talk about.... Reconciliation. The next in our synodal journey discussions. With input from Fr Adams and Fr Tom and discussion from all. Please join us in the Hall.

Mon 27 March

6pm Beavers & 7.15pm Cubs Scout Hall

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2pm Funeral service for Linda Jude. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

Tues 28 March

10.30am “Tuesday Chat” Hall

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2pm Craft Circle LCR

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7pm Confirmation Session 4 Hall

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7pm Scouts Scout Hall

Weds 29 March

6pm Feed Up Warm Up Scout Hall

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7pm RCIA EC

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7.30pm Lent Reconciliation service with three priests. A moment of opportunity to talk to God about the things that are bothering you and need help with or ask forgiveness for so you can welcome the Lord wholly prepared at Easter.


Thurs 30 March



11.30am Funeral Mass for Mary Gill. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

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6.30pm Brownies Scout Hall

Diary Dates cont...

Fri 31 March
10am-4pm Warm Spaces Hall includes coffee after morning Mass. Do pop in. †††††††††† 
2-4pm Hitchin Pantry Scout Hall ††††††††††
2.30pm Scripture Fr Andrew Christopher House ††††††††††
6pm-8pm Youth Group Hall Year 9 and above welcome for Faith, Food & Fun with Rob, Fr Adams and others, every fortnight.
Sat 1 April
1-3pm Hitchin Pantry Scout Hall

 **Prayer diary** 

Opportunities for communal prayer

- Tuesday** **11.30am Meditation** Emmanuel Centre
7pm Eucharistic Service Church
 To Zoom click on [Eucharistic Service](#)
- Wednesday** **9.30am Rosary** Church
2pm Charismatic Prayer UCR
- Thursday** **6.30pm Meditation** Emmanuel Centre
Friday **10.30am Stations of the Cross** Church

All are welcome for private prayer at any time in the church which is open 8.30am - 7pm

The next gardening group session is on **Saturday 25th March**. All welcome to join this friendly group with any time you have to spare between **9am – 12pm**.



Many thanks for your continued generosity to all who supported the recent Coffee Morning by the One World/Live Simply Group. A total of **£145** raised will go to support Baghita House, a charity which offers emergency support to victims of human trafficking.



We pray for Regina Lorenzetto whose funeral is on **Thursday 13 April 2023** at 11.30am. May she rest in peace and rise in glory and may the Lord comfort her family.



Next Sunday is Palm Sunday and the start of Holy Week. We will have blessing of palms at all Masses in the garden (if the weather is inclement it will be in the hall) On arrival to church please collect your palms and be in place in the garden at the start time of the Mass ie 6pm, 8.30am or 10.30am. There will be children's liturgy in the hall at the 10.30 Mass for all ages, children age 5 and under should be accompanied by a parent. We will return to the

church just before the offertory and the children will take the gifts up on this occasion.



Holy Week services schedule

1/2 April	Palm Sunday Masses Sat 6pm, Sun 8.30, 10.30
3 April	Passover Meal 7.30 pm
6 April	Maundy Thursday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning prayer 10 am • Mass of the Last Supper 8 pm • Watching with the Lord at the altar of repose til midnight
7 April	Good Friday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning prayer 10 am • followed by Walk to Town Square 10.40am for 11am • Liturgy of the Passion 3 pm • Stations of the Cross 6.30 pm
8 April	Holy Saturday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning prayer 10 am • Easter Vigil 8 pm
9 April	Easter Sunday Masses 8.30, 10.30

Confessions will be after every Mass in the week before Holy Week beginning 25th March. Please speak to the Priest if you wish to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



Charismatic Group A small group of Parishioners meet on a Wednesday at 2pm in the Upper Committee room and we sing songs of worship and praise the Lord! Come along as it might be something you would be interested in to experience the Holy Spirit. Everyone welcome.



The Cardinal, with the other bishops, have agreed that the parish priest may decide to resume the reception of Holy Communion under both kinds at the Mass of the Lord's Supper in Holy Week 2023, given the theological significance of the celebration. Frs Tom, Adams and Andrew have agreed they would like this to resume. We should remember that the totality of the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of the Lord is received in either the bread or the wine or both. The decision will be yours to make as to whether you receive the Precious Blood. The Eucharistic minister will wipe the cup after each communicant as we always used to do.



We will need two additional Eucharistic ministers (EMs) at each Mass to help with the chalices. It is hoped that Communion under both kinds will be offered at the Mass of the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday, the Easter Vigil and both

Easter Sunday Masses. This will be dependent on our ability to secure enough EMs. We would like to continue this at all Sunday Masses in the future but again this will entirely depend on the number of EMs who are available to help. If you are willing to help in this way full training is available. Please speak to or email [Teresa Hyde](#) or [Trish Bonnett](#)

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Full sized replicas of the Stained Glass from the old church are now in position in the church for your comments. They will be fully backlit which will look like natural sunlight. It is hoped that the first one will be in place on or around the time of Fr Andrew's 60th anniversary Mass. It is intended that the Madonna and Child picture will be moved to above the adult Library area and the Theodor Kern Madonna and child will be moved to above the children's library area. Your comments on the sheet provided are welcome about this choice of location.

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Last Chance to sign up for Monday 3rd April 7.30pm Passover Meal in the Church Hall. To celebrate Passover is to do what Jesus did with his disciples at the Last Supper. It is a chance for us to understand more deeply our Jewish roots and our Christian Eucharist. The Passover Meal is a family occasion and children form an integral part of the proceedings, so all are very welcome. You need to bring a number of things with you: **a baked potato for each person, cooked and wrapped in foil (to keep warm), sufficient wine for 4 toasts, soft drinks/water, cutlery, plates and glasses for each person.** Roast lamb is provided. (You can bring salad and toppings for the potatoes as well – to share with those around you, if you wish.) **Please sign up on the board in the porch** as we need to know numbers by **27th March** so that we can order the meat

Other Dates

The Divine Mercy Novena starts on Good Friday. **Sunday 16th April at 3pm**, there will be a dedicated service at Holy Trinity, Baldock, followed by Confessions. All welcome.



Other items of interest

The Holy Father Pope Francis has said that the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord which will be celebrated on Saturday turns our thoughts to March 25 of last year, when, in union with all the Bishops of the world, the Church and humanity were consecrated, especially Russia and the Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

Let us never tire of entrusting the cause of peace to the Queen of Peace. He therefore wishes to invite each believer and community, especially prayer groups, to renew the act of consecration to Our Lady every March 25, so that she, who is a Mother, may keep us all in unity and peace. And let us not forget, in these days, battered Ukraine, which is suffering so much.

ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY

O Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, in this time of trial we turn to you. As our Mother, you love us and know us: no concern of our hearts is hidden from you. Mother of mercy, how often we have experienced your watchful care and your peaceful presence! You never cease to guide us to Jesus, the Prince of Peace.

Yet we have strayed from that path of peace. We have forgotten the lesson learned from the tragedies of the last century, the sacrifice of the millions who fell in two world wars. We have disregarded the commitments we made as a community of nations. We have betrayed peoples' dreams of peace and the hopes of the young. We grew sick with greed, we thought only of our own nations and their interests, we grew indifferent and caught up in our selfish needs and concerns. We chose to ignore God, to be satisfied with our illusions, to grow arrogant and aggressive, to suppress innocent lives and to stockpile weapons. We stopped being our neighbour's keepers and stewards of our common home. We have ravaged the garden of the earth with war and by our sins we have broken the heart of our heavenly Father, who desires us to be brothers and sisters. We grew indifferent to everyone and everything except ourselves. Now with shame we cry out: Forgive us, Lord! Holy Mother, amid the misery of our sinfulness, amid our struggles and weaknesses, amid the mystery of iniquity that is evil and war, you remind us that God never abandons us, but continues to look upon us with love, ever ready to forgive us and raise us up to new life. He has given you to us and made your Immaculate Heart a refuge for the Church and for all humanity. By God's gracious will, you are ever with us; even in the most troubled moments of our history, you are there to guide us with tender love.

We now turn to you and knock at the door of your heart. We are your beloved children. In every age you make yourself known to us, calling us to conversion. At this dark hour, help us and grant us your comfort. Say to us once more: "Am I not here, I who am your Mother?" You are able to untie the knots of our hearts and of our times. In

you we place our trust. We are confident that, especially in moments of trial, you will not be deaf to our supplication and will come to our aid.

That is what you did at Cana in Galilee, when you interceded with Jesus and he worked the first of his signs. To preserve the joy of the wedding feast, you said to him: "They have no wine" (Jn 2:3).

Now, O Mother, repeat those words and that prayer, for in our own day we have run out of the wine of hope, joy has fled, fraternity has faded. We have forgotten our humanity and squandered the gift of peace. We opened our hearts to violence and destructiveness. How greatly we need your maternal help!

Therefore, O Mother, hear our prayer.

Star of the Sea, do not let us be shipwrecked in the tempest of war.

Ark of the New Covenant, inspire projects and paths of reconciliation.

Queen of Heaven, restore God's peace to the world.

Eliminate hatred and the thirst for revenge, and teach us forgiveness.

Free us from war, protect our world from the menace of nuclear weapons.

Queen of the Rosary, make us realize our need to pray and to love.

Queen of the Human Family, show people the path of fraternity.

Queen of Peace, obtain peace for our world.

O Mother, may your sorrowful plea stir our hardened hearts. May the tears you shed for us make this valley parched by our hatred blossom anew. Amid the thunder of weapons, may your prayer turn our thoughts to peace. May your maternal touch soothe those who suffer and flee from the rain of bombs. May your motherly embrace comfort those forced to leave their homes and their native land. May your Sorrowful Heart move us to compassion and inspire us to


open our doors and to care for our brothers and sisters who are injured and cast aside.


Holy Mother of God, as you stood beneath the cross, Jesus, seeing the disciple at your side, said: "Behold your son" (Jn 19:26). In this way he entrusted each of us to you. To the disciple, and to each of us, he said: "Behold, your Mother" (v. 27). Mother Mary, we now desire to welcome you into our lives and our history.

At this hour, a weary and distraught humanity stands with you beneath the cross, needing to entrust itself to you and, through you, to consecrate itself to Christ.


The people of Ukraine and Russia, who venerate you with great love, now turn to you, even as your heart beats with compassion for them and for all those peoples decimated by war, hunger, injustice and poverty. Therefore, Mother of God and our Mother, to your Immaculate Heart we solemnly entrust and consecrate ourselves, the Church and all humanity, especially Russia and Ukraine. Accept this act that we carry out with confidence and love. Grant that war may end and peace spread throughout the world. The "Fiat" that arose from your heart opened the doors of history to the Prince of Peace. We trust that, through your heart, peace will dawn once more. To you we consecrate the future of the whole human family, the needs and expectations of every people, the anxieties and hopes of the world.

Through your intercession, may God's mercy be poured out on the earth and the gentle rhythm of peace return to mark our days. Our Lady of the "Fiat", on whom the Holy Spirit descended, restore among us the harmony that comes from God. May you, our "living fountain of hope", water the dryness of our hearts. In your womb Jesus took flesh; help us to foster the growth of communion. You once trod the streets of our world; lead us now on the paths of peace. Amen.

 The Assumption has been a great promoter of Pilgrimages. The early ones were to the Holy Land before the growth of modern travel. This year marks the 150th National French pilgrimage organised by the Assumption around Our Lady's Feast in August.

 **Amoris Laetitia the joy of love 328** *Love made fruitful - Being sons and daughters* We must reawaken the collective sense of gratitude, of appreciation, of hospitality, which makes the elderly feel like a living part of the community.

Safeguarding reminder EduCare (now part of Tes) leaflets can be downloaded from our website at <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/diocese/safeguarding-in-our-parishes/>

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

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