

Church of St John the Evangelist, Islington

39 Duncan Terrace, N1 8AL

Parish priest: Fr Rajiv Michael, **Asst Priest:** Fr Jakub Jozsko, **Administrator (Mon/Thu/Fri):** Grace Wu

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2nd Sunday of Lent (Year B – 25th Feb 2024)

This Week		
Weekday masses (this week)	Sunday masses	Confessions
Mon-Tues: 6 PM	Saturday Vigil at 6 PM	Saturday: 5:30 – 5:50 PM
Wed-Fri: 10 AM	Sunday at 9:30 & 11 AM	(and anytime, as possible, on request)
Stations: Every Thurs, 10 AM (Fri 7 PM at Bl. Sacrament Church)	Bible Study Mons 6:30 PM (Weds Bl. Sacrament 7:00pm) Adoration: Tuesdays 6:30 PM	

Our Parish Meeting

Thanks to all who attended the Parish Meeting last Sunday! To give a recap: the Bishops requested another parish consultation for the second phase of the Synod and asked us to reflect on the themes of Mission and Formation. As baptised Catholics, we are a people on Mission. For some, talk of evangelisation conjures up images of coercion, deception and perhaps colonisation but, as Pope Francis constantly insists, evangelisation is markedly different from proselytization. Evangelisation is not an attempt to impose ‘my values’ on someone else, and it is certainly not one to do by coercion. It is rather a movement of love inspired by the gospel: the Father gave up his Son for the whole world. We do not have the luxury of keeping this immense gift to ourselves, nor do we have the option of doing so. Our baptismal mission compels us to let others know that Christ loves them. The question of how we share this though, in a loving and sensitive way is a perennial one. We were given three questions: (a) how do we share the gospel with those who do not know Christ – maybe those in the workplace, our neighbours, etc. (b) How do we share the gospel with those who have lapsed from their faith, and (c) how do we accompany and support each other as we worship together? And more, how can we make sure our parish structures are helping us on our mission?

There were some great ideas. For the first one, there were thoughts on things like being part of, or creating some faith networks at work, greeting our neighbours, and getting to know them and inviting people to activities like organ concerts in Church and more. There are plenty of people who have stopped going to Mass even since covid – do we know anyone like that? Maybe we can ring them and find out how they are doing? And invite them back to Church? Maybe they have gone through a difficult time and would like to talk to someone. There are lapsed Catholics even in our own families and among our friends. Are we there to encourage them and listen to their concerns and disappointments? Finally, to support even those next to us at Mass – do we know the people who worship with us? Know their names? Maybe they could use someone to talk to.

In terms of changing structures – we spoke of having **Ushers**: ushers are those who welcome people at the door, perhaps give out books, maintain order if necessary and keep an eye on whether there is someone in trouble. Most of the time this is a simple enough job, but a very important one. It makes a whole difference for people to see someone is glad to see them, to genuinely welcome them. It is part of being a loving community. We spoke of making it better for **families** perhaps with a **Children's liturgy**. This would help children connect with the gospel at their own level. There was a request for homilies to be shorter which we have taken into account! Furthermore, people expressed interest in Eucharistic Adoration and having Confession available during that time, perhaps a Saturday evening. There was also great interest in building our **Community**. There was a suggestion of having an **International Evening** with people bringing their native food. An introduction of **Coffee after Mass**.

We also spoke of the current difficulty of having two priests, rather than three, when Fr Larry was here, alongside two parishes to maintain. We've not been able to do much at Blessed Sacrament in terms of Masses, except on Sunday, but the people have taken up to organising some evening activities in the Church. We would love to do more to serve the people in both places well but are presently limited by a number of circumstances.

Finally, speaking of circumstances, a big bottle-neck currently are our physical structures, namely our parish presbytery building which is crumbling. We've been burdened with a huge amount of essential works without which the building will not survive and are in need of raising funds towards this. There

was a suggestion of doing **sponsored walks** and also putting our parish on EasyFundRaising (details below) which we have done. We will reflect on more of the ideas raised over the coming weeks – in the meantime, there is a comprehensive summary of the issues raised on the website – please take a look!

Action Points: Are you interested in serving in any of these roles – Ushers / Coffee / Children's liturgy / Catechesis / Fundraising / Socials or anything else which might interest you? Would you like to participate in the life of the parish more? There is a lot of talent and gifts in the congregation, and it requires all of us to make this parish work and be a community which can witness to the love of the Gospel. Please get in touch at the office!

Mass Times: To ensure more people can come to Mass more easily, **we are adding an Evening Mass at St John's!** The Mass times though have to be changed slightly so that the Masses are staggered with the Blessed Sacrament so if one of us is sick, all Masses can be covered by one priest at a push. We considered moving the Saturday Evening Mass to Blessed Sacrament to serve the parish better, but for now, we will keep it as it is. These times will take effect closer to **the end of May** – exact days will be announced shortly. The new proposed times are as follows:

St John's

6 PM: Saturday Evening Vigil

10 AM: Family Mass with Children's liturgy

12 Noon: Solemn Mass

6:30 PM: Evening Mass

Blessed Sacrament

9 AM : First Mass

11 AM: High Mass

Lent: Quite a few people participated in our Bible Study on the Passion. This was very powerful and a rich resource for your Lenten meditation. We've just started so do join in – it will be about 6:30, immediately after Monday 6:00pm mass. We will also have a **half hour of Adoration** immediately after Mass on Tuesdays, finishing by 7 PM.

Food Bank: Thanks to all those who have already started donating food items. Those not aware, we've set up a collection for (not immediately perishable – please make sure they are not expired!) food stuffs which people might wish to donate towards

our Food Bank at Bl. Sacrament Church. You can drop this off in the basket in the foyer on Sundays or at the Presbytery on weekdays **before Thursday**. Thanks to Patrick Carroll for volunteering with doing a food run!



Some pictures to give you an idea of how things are in the Presbytery! From top: part of a door frame which crashed last year; the bottom pictures show some places where the water is leaking through the walls and walls with deep water ingress. The last picture is the hole in the roof we've been working on the last five months. Just some of the work that needs doing!

Fund Raising: Thanks to all of you who donate on a regular basis which is a big help! Our roof works, long neglected and finally done have depleted our funds and we are still paying the loan for the Church Roof done a year before. As the pictures above show, there are a lot of critical works that just need to be done and cannot be neglected; there are a couple of low hanging fruit which we can use immediately

though: **Gift Aid**. If you donate by Standing Order or use the Cashless terminals at the back of the church, please do consider gift aiding your donation which will raise 25% more without any effort! If you fill in a gift aid at the Cashless terminals once, it will automatically take into account for all future payments without much effort. You can also fill in a form which the office can supply.

A couple of initiatives to help below!

Fun Evening to Raise Funds! We have an exciting event, a lively Ceilidh 🎵👯 coming up on the 20th of March, 7:15 PM. It will be in the luxurious St Columba's hall, Chelsea. This traditional Scottish dance event promises to be an evening of fun, laughter, and a great chance to come together as a parish. But that's not all – this ceilidh is usually run as a fundraiser for charities and this time, **it's being donated towards the needs of our own parish**, to support the restoration of our church buildings, which are in desperate need of repair. You'll not only be enjoying a fantastic night out but also helping St John's! **Tickets for the ceilidh are available starting from £16**, and profits will go directly towards the restoration efforts. If it goes well Carver Ceilidhs have said we may be able to do it every year as a fund raiser for the church! Do join in! Details in the QR. Thanks to Fiona Hicks for coordinating this.



EasyFundRaising: This is a website where charities can register their cause and raises money just from your shopping, at no additional cost to you! Your everyday online shopping, whether it's Sainsburys and Waitrose, or a bigger John Lewis buy can raise a significant amount of money for the Church. Please do take a look at <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/st-john-islington-church/>. It is very simple to use – if you need help, please ask at the office.



Parish Mission! Lastly, we mentioned last week that the **Franciscan Friars of the Renewal** will be coming to do a combined parish mission for Blessed Sacrament and St John's from the 9th March – 14th March. The Friars are great examples of living out the gospel in a radical way, serving the poor and ministering the love of Christ. This will be an amazing week of grace. They will be available for personal ministry, Confessions and counselling should you need it. They are also happy to visit your homes if you would like. Do get in touch if you would benefit from their ministry!