

St. Vincent de Paul (Osterley) Newsletter

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21st May 2020 +THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Yr A Vol. 1 (Pg. 272)

Acts 1:1-11. He was lifted up while they looked on. The risen Jesus, departing from his apostles, instructs them to await the arrival of the Holy Spirit who will empower them as his witnesses.

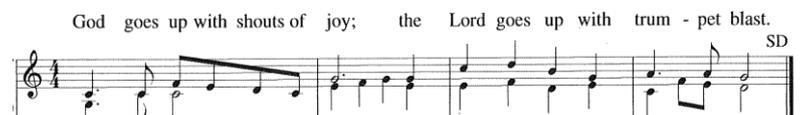
Ephesians 1:17-23. He made him sit at his right hand in heaven.

A prayer that God the Father may empower us to know and appreciate the inheritance to which he invites us, in raising and exalting Jesus.

Matthew 28:16-20. All authority, in heaven and on earth has been given to me. The risen Jesus commissions his disciples to make disciples of all nations by baptising them and teaching them to observe his commandments.



Psalm 46: God goes up with shouts of joy; the Lord goes up with trumpet blast.



24th May 2020 Seventh Sunday of Easter Yr A Vol. 1 (Pg. 2275)

Acts 1: 12 - 14. The apostles returned to Jerusalem. After the resurrection the Apostles, Mary and others returned to the upper room in Jerusalem where they were staying and remained in prayer for nine days until the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. These nine days became the model for all of the nine day “Novenas” of prayers which are offered up until the present day in our church for various needs.

1 Peter 4:13 – 16. You can have some share in the suffering of Christ. Even at this early stage it was clear that to be a Christian is challenging and will involve suffering for what we hold to be true as did Jesus.

John 17: 1-11. They have truly accepted this that I came from you, and have believed that it was you who sent me. This passage from St John’s gospel makes clear the evangelist’s belief in the divinity of Jesus. For St John, knowing and accepting Jesus as the eternal Son of God is what wins us eternal life. It is not a case of “earning” eternal life because Jesus has already done that for us. Of course good works (in their broadest sense) are an essential mark of any Christian disciple.

**Fr. Robin Burgess has prepared a homily for today
You can read it on our website in the section entitled ‘Homilies/Pastoral
Letters’ or scroll to the end of this page.**

To protect all people, the church building is closed until further notice. We continue to pray privately, in our homes and online in union with the church worldwide.

24th MAY 2020

Dear Parishioners,

You will see below a picture of a pendulum clock. This one is in the parish House. There is also one in the sacristy. On closer examination they are made by a company called Camerer Cuss & Co. The diocesan Surveyor Chris Fanning once told me that many parishes in West London have these clocks, and that the company that supplied them was owned by a Catholic family.

In any case they chime once every quarter of an hour and between one and twelve times each hour depending on what time it is.

Unlike modern clocks they give a real audible sense of time passing and there is something curiously reassuring about the sound of them ticking and chiming.

Some years ago my father visited me and I showed him the clock. I said “you will never guess but you can make the clock go slower or faster by using this small nut at the end of the pendulum to adjust its length. My father said “My own father used to adjust the time in the pendulum clock in our kitchen like that when I was growing up”!

I am sure that on occasion many of you have lost track not just of the odd minute during lockdown but of whole days. My sister Miriam, who is working from home, attended a virtual meeting recently and it became clear half way through that nearly everyone assumed it was Friday when in fact it was Thursday (an unhappy mistake)

Last Thursday was the solemn feast of the Ascension of the Lord into heaven after his Resurrection. It occurs forty days after Easter Sunday, and we refer to this day as Ascension Thursday. Some years ago the bishops of England and Wales transferred this feast to this Sunday so that more people would celebrate it. It has since been restored to Thursday. On balance I think it is better celebrated on its proper day.

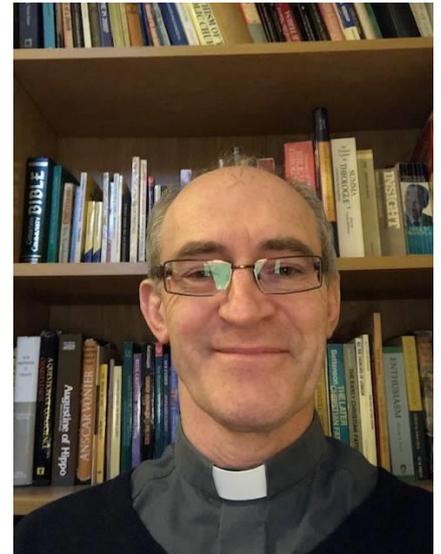
When we celebrate the feast of the Ascension on the Thursday it occurs forty days after Easter Sunday. Forty days reminds us of the forty days of fasting during Lent, the forty days Jesus spent in the desert prior to his public ministry and the forty years the Israelites spent in the dessert after they escaped from Egypt.

Celebrating the Ascension on a Thursday is a reminder that we cannot always live according to the demands of our own timetable, but have to make time for God and for the needs of others. The current lockdown has made us conscious that we are all interdependent in society and in our world.

Celebrating the feast on a Thursday also re-establishes the period of nine days between Ascension and Pentecost during which the Apostles and Mary prayed together in Jerusalem. These nine days became the model of all of the “Novenas” of prayers which we offer in the Catholic church for various needs and intentions.

This year of course none of our parishioners were able to come to church on Ascension Thursday. On the bright side this meant you did not have to listen to your Parish Priest give his rendition of “Love lifts me up” by Joe Cocker which I have used to begin my homily on this feast.

The Catholic Church in England and Wales is in active discussions with the government to establish when churches can re-open for private prayer and eventually for services. We the church want to play our part in controlling Coronavirus so our leaders will ensure that we observe what social distancing measures are necessary.



It has been wonderful to see so many resources online for Catholics to use during these times. Cardinal Vincent has recorded a message for us all as we approach Pentecost. You can watch it by following this link <https://rcdow.org.uk/cardinal/news/cardinal-pray-fervently-for-the-coming-of-the-holy-spirit/>.

This link brings you to the diocesan website. This has many prayer resources and information on the practical steps being taken by the people of our diocese and by Caritas Westminster to help people in material need. Caritas Westminster was established by Cardinal Vincent using funds donated by parishioners during the “Growing in Faith” campaign which ran in the diocese some years ago.

Once again I send particular greeting to those who are sick or living alone. You are in my thoughts and prayers. We also pray for those who have died, may they rest in peace, and for those who mourn, may God console them with Easter hope.

I publish below some new photographs of the parish garden for your enjoyment.

Whilst we wait patiently to be re-united in body as a community, I ask God to bless you all in the following words. (Your response is four times Amen!)

May Almighty God bless you this Eastertide and keep you free from sin.

People: Amen

Through the resurrection of Christ may you be given new hope, healed in body and spirit and, in the fullness of time, enter into eternal life.

People: Amen

Christ has ascended to the Father. May you be given a spirit of joyful hope as you await a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

People: Amen

May almighty God bless you.

The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit

People: Amen Alleluia! Alleluia!





SUNDAY OFFERING AND SUPPORTING THE PARISH:

Dear Parishioners,

We are conscious that many parishioners may be struggling financially, if however, you are able to continue your weekly donations please see how to do this below:

- 1) On Sunday 5th April those who give by planned giving envelopes ran out of envelopes. It is not currently possible to distribute new boxes of envelopes.

If possible, please set up a Standing Order to replace your Planned Giving Envelopes. To see how to do this electronically please See “Donate to our parish” on our website. Should you wish, you can change this back to planned giving envelopes when they are distributed and movement restrictions lifted.

- 2) If you give cash, you can set up a standing order in favour of the parish electronically. For our bank details please see “Donate to our parish” on our website.
- 3) You can use the donation facility on our website to make your donation each week by credit or debit card. See “Donate to our parish” on our website.
- 4) If you do not already do so, you can Gift Aid all your donations. This increases your donation by 25% at no costs to you. You simply have to pay sufficient tax to cover 25% of your donations to the parish. If you do so the government will refund this money direct to the parish. Please follow the instructions on the parish website under “Donate to our parish”

We know that those who are able, will sustain the parish financially during this challenging time and enable us to minister to our parishioners and those in need.

If you have any queries you can contact the parish bookkeeper Steve McEvoy on osterleybk@rcdow.org.uk or 079 3278 3647. Thank you. *Fr Mark*

POPE FRANCIS: Pope Francis called for all Christians to respond to the coronavirus pandemic “with the universality of prayer, of compassion, of tenderness”, adding, “Let us remain united. Let us make our closeness felt toward those persons who are the loneliest”. Speaking after the traditional recitation of the Angelus, the Holy Father called on all Christians to join together in prayer. “In these trying days, while humanity trembles due to the threat of the pandemic, I would like to propose to all Christians that together we lift our voices towards Heaven

MASS INTENTIONS: *Mass intentions can still be requested via e-mail or by ringing the parish office. Please leave a message and phone number if there is no reply from the office. Offerings for such masses can be made using the online donation link on the website or submitting it to the parish only when movement restrictions are lifted. Masses offered prior to the reduction in Sunday masses will be allocated to the nearest free mass.*

SERVICE TIMES & INTENTIONS
24th May – 31st May 2020

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| SUNDAY 24 May 7th Sunday of Easter | Ciaran Reilly (Int) |
| Mon 25: Easter Feria | Tanios Ghossoub Intention |
| Tues 26: Philip Neri Priest | The Griffin Family Intentions |
| Wed 27: Easter feria | Tanios Ghossoub Intention |
| Thu 28: Easter Feria | Intention all Care workers & Key workers |
| Fri 29: Easter Feria | The Griffin Family Intentions |
| Saturday 30: Easter Feria | |
| SUNDAY 31May Pentecost | People of the Parish |

PARISH OFFICE:

Please do not call to the parish office without an appointment. Enquiries can be made by telephone or you can e-mail the parish at osterley@rcdow.org.uk

- **PARISH ADMINISTRATOR:** Mrs. L. Faria
- **PLANNED GIVING CO-ORDINATOR:** Mr. Steve McEvoy
- **PARISH BOOKKEEPER:** Mr. Steve McEvoy
To contact Mr. McEvoy by email: osterleybk@rcdow.org.uk
- **300 CLUB:** Enquiries to Parish Office.

ADMIN

• **PARISH WEBSITE ADDRESS FOR ONLINE NEWSLETTER:**

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/osterley/>

- **PARISH REGISTRATION:** Please take a Welcome Pack from the lobby when the church re-opens in due course. Completed Registration and Planned Giving forms should be posted through the door of the Parish house. Thank you.

• **BAPTISM:** Contact Fr. Mark to arrange a baptism date and attend a course. Please complete a form (available in the lobby or online) and submit to the Parish Office. Next course: TBA.
 NB Unfortunately courses are now cancelled until further notice.

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE: This parish operates a system of Mass Attendance Cards. This is only applicable for parents who wish to send their children to a Catholic primary or secondary school. Attendance at 75% of masses at which stickers are given out will be deemed to comply with the conditions for receiving a Certificate of Catholic practice. Parents can apply to Catholic schools without a Certificate of Catholic practice but will usually be considered after those who possess one. The Certificate of Catholic Practice should be downloaded from our website. (Do not use the form provided by the school). Please print one for every school to which you are applying.

Parents/Guardians should begin collating forms two years before the closing date for their child's application to Nursery, Reception, Secondary and 6th Form.

IMPORTANT UPDATE: Mass attendance stickers were not distributed on Sun. 15/3/2020.

They will not be distributed in the near future until further notice. These weeks will be omitted in our calculation of the 75% attendance for school admission

• **MARRIAGES:** 6 months' notice required. Please ring the office for initial discussion with Fr. Mark.

CONTACTS

- **SAFEGUARDING REP:** Mrs. A. Trigger. Tel. 07764482186
Email: osterleysg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk
- **WEST MIDDX HOSPITAL RC CHAPLAIN:** Tel. 020 8321 5447.

Truda Weiler RIP. The death has occurred of Truda Weiler, aged 93, wife of the late Terry Weiler, one of our longstanding parishioners. We express our condolences to her children Martin, Michael, Teresa and Frances and to her grandchildren, great grandchildren, family and friends. Truda's funeral will take place on Thursday 4th June at Hanworth Crematorium. Family mourners only in accordance with current regulations. A Memorial Service will be organised in due course. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

REDEMPTORIST PUBLICATIONS bring the Sunday Holy Mass, celebrated by Fr. Denis McBride into your home every Sunday. Each Sunday service will be accessed at: <https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/holy-mass-online> Visit their BLOG section for a variety of reflections.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols has written to the Priests of the diocese and asks us to publicise the item below which I am very happy to do. He writes:

There is a small initiative agreed by the bishops in England and Wales that every Thursday evening, at 7pm, a bishop, in turn, will celebrate Mass in his cathedral, live streamed, for all those frontline workers in the NHS and care homes, for the sick and their families. This will begin next Thursday with Mass in our Cathedral. There will be publicity about this initiative which I ask you to share. More importantly I would like every priest to celebrate Mass for this same intention each Thursday, if possible.



Homily for Seventh Sunday of Easter 24th May 2020

Fr Robin Burgess writes

Dear Friends,

During Eastertide I have been following daily readings from the Acts of the Apostles. Apart from anything else, it is a good story with lots of interesting detail. I am looking forward to reading about Paul's arrival in Malta, an exciting account of the shipwreck which landed him there. Do look it up in chapters 27 and 28, as I don't think it is ever read at Mass.

Last week there was the account of Paul's time in Ephesus, a major city of what is now Turkey, with its great temple of the goddess Diana which was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. When Paul started telling people and persuading them that gods made with hands were not gods at all, local craftsmen who made and sold images of Diana started to be worried and fearful for their livelihood – you cannot really blame them. They got together a great demonstration against Paul in the city's theatre, where, we are told, 'some were shouting one thing, some another; for the assembly was in confusion, and most of them did not know why they had come together.' This is an acute observation: I should imagine that in any big demonstration there will always be plenty of people who are there just for the fun of it and do not know or even care what the demonstration is about.

But then I wonder how often it is the case in human affairs that we do not know what is going on. We know what is happening at the surface of things, but what is going on underneath at the heart of them may not be apparent to us. The universe is infinitely mysterious. To give a full explanation of even a simple action like writing something down on paper, all the many elements and processes that are involved, would lead us into endless detail. We could imagine, for instance, that the desk we are writing on is a solid object, but if we could see into the heart of it at the microscopic level we would be aware of streams of atoms whizzing about at high speed. Although invisible to us that is just as much part of the reality of what is happening.

This is also true, I believe, of our spiritual life. We go along doing what we do, but where God is in it, what God may be saying to us in what goes on and in the people we deal with may not always be clear. These days, people tend to use the word *discernment* for the business of seeing where God is, and the great guide here is St. Ignatius of Loyola. His 'Spiritual Exercises' have a couple of pages of rules for discerning spirits and discerning the will of God, and you can tell that this is not a simple or straightforward matter by the fact that the standard commentary on

this part of his work consists of two thick volumes. Even then we get things wrong, make mistakes and misinterpret: discernment can never be totally certain.

This is why we need the presence of God's Spirit to help us be aware of how God is moving in us. And the great thing is we do have the Spirit! In the letter to the Romans Paul says, 'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.' *Has* been: it is not something that will happen in the future or may happen if we deserve it by living a good life, it has already happened. Simply by virtue of being born into this world the Spirit of God is given to us, so in a sense we do not really need to pray for the coming of the Spirit, as we are invited to do in these days between the Ascension and Pentecost, the original Novena. It commemorates the nine days when the apostles gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem together with Mary and other women and other followers of Jesus, after they had seen him return to God and were waiting for the promised Spirit to come to them. We hear of this episode in the first reading at Mass on this 7th Sunday of Easter.

There is always more of God for us to know and experience, more of the Spirit that may be given to us, but perhaps we can say that we are praying to become more aware of the Spirit present in us, more in touch, that is, with the centre of our own human being. It is not a matter of trying to influence God to behave in certain ways, but of being open to God's reality and presence with us already. In order to do this, we need to spend time in silence and stillness, letting go of our own thoughts and ideas and concerns and being present where we are – which is where God is.

It is easy enough to think that there is a loving and caring God we can be in tune with when things are going well, when the sun shines, we are happy and everything seems rosy. Much more difficult when the going gets tough, when we face hardships and difficulties, when we face situations like the current pandemic. Here it becomes even more vital to keep faith, to go on trusting in God's providence and care for us against all the odds. And if we can do so we can come through to a better place.

I was once taking part in a retreat at Damascus House in Mill Hill. It was something I had wanted to do and had booked a long time ahead, as one often has to do with retreats. It may be, however, when the time comes round that the prospect is not quite so inviting, it may even be the last thing in the world you feel like doing! But you have booked it and paid the money, so off you go. During the week of this particular retreat I felt more and more out of place, I could not get into it and started to be irritated by the other people, the leaders, the things they were saying. One afternoon I went out for a walk determined that when I got back I would say, "I've had enough of this, I'm going home!" But I remembered another precept of St. Ignatius. that if you have made a decision and believe it to be in line with God's will when you made it, do not go back on it when you are feeling let down and ill at ease. That is more likely to be your own state of mind, the effect of passing circumstances, than a sign from God that you decided wrongly. So, believing this to be good advice, and recalling how deciding to do the retreat had

seemed right at the time, I carried on to the end and could say looking back that it was a good and beneficial experience from which I gained a great deal.

This is not maybe a very important event, but it was significant to me, a most useful learning curve. We as the Church are the ones who have chosen to follow God because we believe it to be the right thing for us to do and what will eventually bring us fulfilment, but it is in the nature of things that this will be a journey, and like most journeys full of ups and downs, twists and turns, times of hard going as well as the easy stretches. At present the whole world and we with it is in the Slough of Despond, a trough of doubt, fear and uncertainty - all the more important, therefore, that the Church keeps faith with God and continues on our path in hope and trust.

Jesus says, 'When the Spirit of truth comes he will lead you to the complete truth.' In these days leading to Pentecost let us be open to the Spirit within us and ask the Spirit to help us to be faithful to our calling as God's people.

With all best wishes and prayers, Fr. Robin

Fr Robin is happy to receive any comments or questions you may have. He can be contacted at robinburgess@rcdow.org.uk