

# St. Vincent de Paul (Osterley) Newsletter

Parish Priest: Fr. Mark Leenane, 2 Witham Road, Osterley, TW7 4AJ.

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## 3rd May 2020 Fourth Sunday of Easter Yr A Vol. 1 (Pg 262)

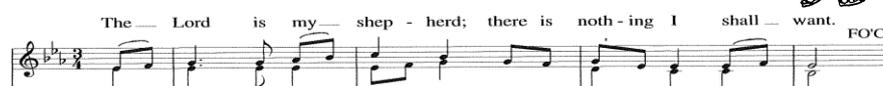
**1st Reading: Acts 2:14, 36-41. God has made him both Lord and Christ.** Peter exhorts those who listened to the Gospel to repent and be baptised for the forgiveness of their sins. In response to Peter's speech, the crowd of three thousand people affirm that Jesus is Lord.

**2nd Reading: 1 Peter 2:20-25. You have come back to the shepherd of your souls.** Through his life, death and resurrection, Jesus gives us an example to follow.

**Gospel: John 10:1-10. I am the gate of the sheepfold.** Christ, the good shepherd, brings the fullness of life to those who follow him. Jesus is the door through which the sheep enter the fold, the shepherd who leads his sheep to life.



**Psalms 22: The Lord is my shepherd; there is nothing**



**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 is closed until further notice. We continue to pray privately, in our homes and online in union with the church worldwide.*

*3rd May 2020*

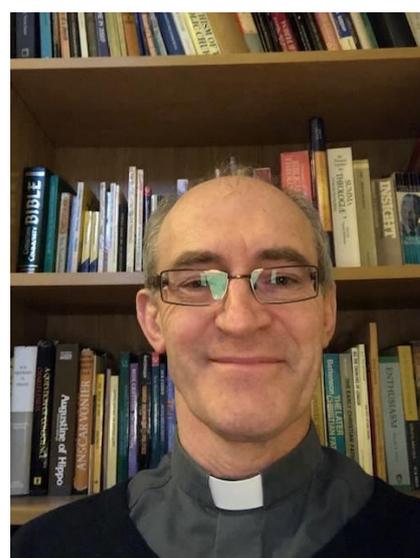
Dear Parishioners,

Last Friday we celebrated the Feast of St Joseph the Worker. I prayed for all those whose work is particularly affected by this crisis. I think especially of all those who work in the NHS and in all the other services and trades that require them to go out to work. I pray especially for all those who have lost jobs and income or who are worried about their futures. We ask St Joseph to give them strength and perseverance in these uncertain times.

May is also the month of Mary and so we ask Our lady to keep us faithful to our prayers just as she was faithful to her son Jesus until the end.

Rain is seen as a blessing from God in the Holy Land where Jesus grew up. It was good to see the rain this week falling on parched gardens and green spaces.

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday when the Gospel talks about Jesus being the gate to the sheepfold (enclosure). Priests are sometimes referred to as shepherds of their flock. The inability to meet parishioners as usual recalled to my mind a book about priests, written by children from the schools in our diocese. It is clear that the children have a great respect and love for their priests and recognize that the priest is a shepherd called to serve both God and people.



*Some children wrote:*

- *His most important job is to worship the Lord and spread the message*
- *At weekends they go to church to do Mass and then they can watch a film with their priest friends and they can also order a pizza*
- *Thanks for praying for my baby lizards but only 3 out of 10 survived.*
- *Priests do many different jobs for people but priests only truly do it for God.*

The book is called “our Priests” and is published by St Paul’s publishing.

As you will see from this newsletter we are in the fourth week of Eastertide when we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and the hope it gives to us. It is good to pay attention to the seasons of the church and to particular feast days such as the Feast of St Joseph the Worker mentioned above.

This can be easily done by using the “Universalis” app from the internet. You can access this site for free at [Universalis.com](http://Universalis.com) or download it for a small fee (£10 or £20 for life). It provides the readings for every mass, details of every saints day, the daily prayer of the church and much else besides. Using this or similar resources helps us to mark the passage of the liturgical year and so give our lives a sense of the ordered passing of time rather than one day seeming just like another.

Mass is being celebrated in the parish each day and if you would like a mass offered for a particular intention please see the notice about how to do this below.

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.

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

The sufferings of Christ which we have recalled have given way to the joy of his resurrection.

May this joy remain in your hearts until you see God face to face.

**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 5<sup>th</sup> April those who give by planned giving envelopes will run 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](mailto:osterleybk@rcdow.org.uk) or 079 3278 3647. Thank you. *Fr Mark*

**EASTER OFFERINGS:** The salary for parish clergy comprises the Christmas and Easter offerings, donations for baptisms, weddings and funerals and offerings for masses. Envelopes for Easter offerings will be available after movement restrictions are lifted.

**300 CLUB:** The lucky winner of the March 2020 Draw for the 300 Club is Tim O'Connor, Ticket No. 504 Congratulations!

**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**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> April – 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020**

<b>SUNDAY 3 May</b> 4th Sunday of Easter	
Mon 4: Easter Feria	
Tues 5: Easter Feria	Margaret Curren RIP Anniv
Wed 6: Easter Feria	
Thu 7: Easter Feria	
Fri 8: Easter Feria	Anton Joseph RIP 3 <sup>rd</sup> Anniv
Saturday 9 May: Easter Feria	People of the Parish
<b>SUNDAY 10 May</b> 5th Sunday of Easter	

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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 6<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:osterleysg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)
- **WEST MIDDX HOSPITAL RC CHAPLAIN:** Tel. 020 8321 5447.

**CONFIRMATION 2020:** Preparations will continue online as advised to candidates.

The celebration of the sacrament of Confirmation is a wonderful time for families to gather and is often very important in the lives of grandparents and the extended family. With the present uncertainty about the length of time that the pandemic will last, and both the travel and social restrictions will apply, the confirmations in parishes that were scheduled for April and May have been postponed. A new date will be arranged in due course.

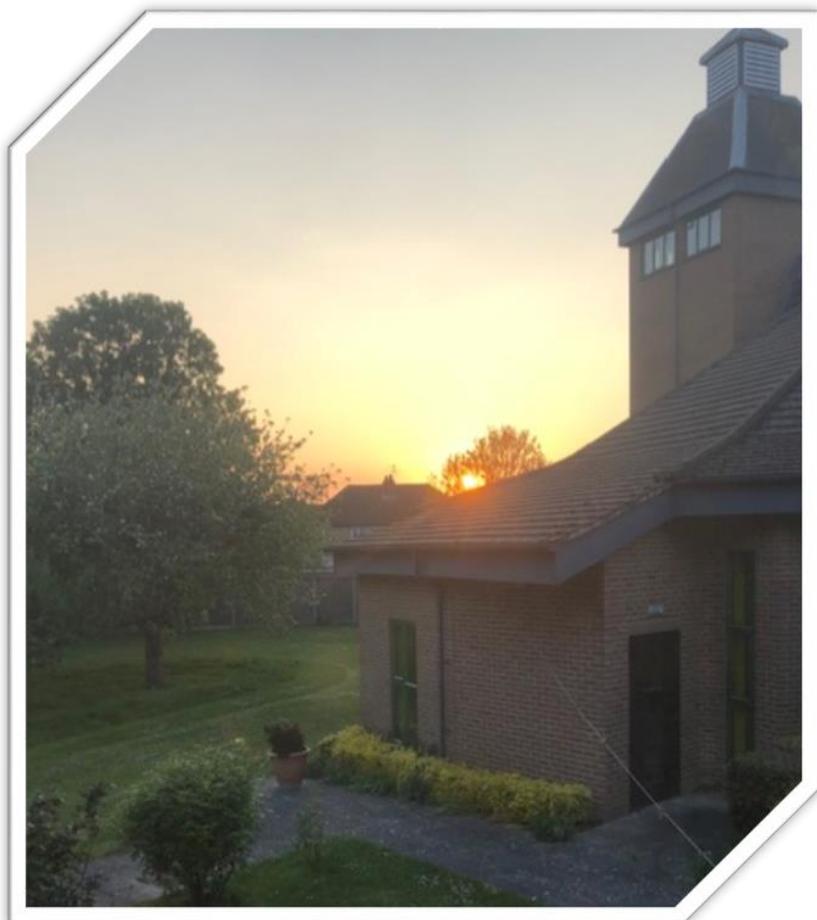
**REDEMPTORIST PUBLICATIONS** bring the Sunday Holy Mass, celebrated by Fr. Denis McBride into your home every Sunday. Each Sunday service will be accessed at: <https://www.rpbooks.co.uk/holy-mass-online> Visit their BLOG section for a variety of reflections.

**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 items below which I am very happy to do. He writes:**

“A practical things have emerged in recent days which I would like to put before you.

The first 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.



**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020**



**African Lily and European bluebells**

## Homily for Fourth Sunday of Easter

Fr Robin Burgess writes

My father-in-law was a sheep farmer in County Derry, Northern Ireland, a man of great patience, ever willing to take any amount of trouble to look after his sheep and their welfare. They were his livelihood, certainly, but the quality of his care came I think from a deeper concern, even love for these loveable creatures. And they do need a lot of looking after: so many things can go wrong with them and they easily get themselves into all sorts of scrapes. On visits to the farm I would sometimes help with counting the sheep at the end of a day to make sure they were all there, and there would nearly always be at least one missing and unaccounted for, whom we had to search for high and low. No wonder Jesus made a parable about the lost sheep!

There is a painting by Holman Hunt called *Our English Coasts* (he also did the well-known *Light of the World* showing Jesus with a lantern knocking at a door overgrown with creepers, begging admittance to the dusty soul). He depicts a flock of appealing, delightfully woolly sheep, but oh dear, things here are going badly wrong. They have strayed dangerously near the edge of a steep cliff. One has already slipped further down and is tangled in a thorn bush. Two are lying down, looking very ill: they have probably been eating something they shouldn't, clover perhaps, which does not agree with them. A companion painting shows the cause of this disarray. It is called *The Hireling Shepherd* and shows the shepherd who should be looking after the sheep canoodling with his sweetheart. In this picture, likewise the sheep in the background are getting into various kinds of trouble. (You can find these paintings online: they are well worth looking at).

This 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter is often known as Good Shepherd Sunday, the Gospel readings on each of the three years of readings being passages in which Jesus describes himself as the Good Shepherd or this year the gate into the sheepfold, through which the sheep can go to and fro in safety. He contrasts himself with the hired shepherd, who is only working for pay and does not really care about the sheep. The Good Shepherd, by contrast, knows his sheep through and through, he calls them by name and he cares about them so much that he is prepared to give his life to save them.

In the British Isles the countryside is for the most part fairly gentle: there is usually plenty of grass for sheep to eat and not too many large dangerous predators about likely to attack them. The Palestine of Jesus' day was very different. The countryside was harsh and bare, sheep might need to go far and wide to find food, and the shepherd, who went in front leading them, might have to fight off fierce wolves. At the birth of Jesus, the shepherds of Bethlehem were, we remember, keeping their flocks by night. They needed to stay awake to protect them as the darkness could hold many perils.

It is of a major part of our Christian belief that Christ gave his life for his people to save them from their sins, but I have often wondered what exactly this means. It is sometimes suggested that there was some kind of price that God in Christ had to pay in order to redeem (a word that means 'buy back') humankind, but it is notoriously difficult to frame this idea in a satisfactory way, that holds together and makes proper sense. Many have preferred to say, more simply, that Christ gives his life as an example, to show how far God is prepared to go for his people, to the very shedding of his blood. This is the nature of God's love: it is freely given, not constrained in any way, not necessitated by any conditions, entirely gratuitous.

One of the clearest signs of this is the ceremony we sadly could not hold this year on Maundy Thursday, when Christ bends down to wash the feet of his disciples. He did not need to do this, but he did it anyway because he wanted to demonstrate the depth of his care and concern for his people, and in doing so he gives us a model of how we can and should treat each other. Christ the Good Shepherd is the one who leads his flock to pasture, knows them intimately, lovingly, by their individual names, protects them from anything that may threaten them and is willing to go to any length to keep them safe.

The converse of all this, if Christ is our shepherd, is that we are his sheep – and we might ask whether it feels quite comfortable to be cast in this role. When we say that people behave like sheep it is not exactly a compliment! Sheep, after all, may be cute and loveable, and are very useful, but they can also be troublesome in many ways. As my father-in-law knew well, they need a lot of caring for. But then that is surely true of we human beings too. We are useful and loveable, but things go wrong with us, and there could be no clearer sign of how badly things can go wrong in human affairs than the current Coronavirus crisis.

In time we may be able to see more clearly how this crisis has come about, but many are already beginning to wonder if it is in some sense a consequence of our own behaviour, the way we organise our social life and how we treat the earth which is given to us as our home. Animals can only behave by instinct, in accordance with their own nature, but human beings have powers of thought and reflection which enable us to look at ourselves, assess our situation and work out how we can carry on, in we hope, better ways in the future. But for now so much is unclear. We can only live the lockdown as best we can and find whatever means will help us to endure the present until we can return to more normal living. Our faith and prayer can certainly help us in this, and in particular enable us to live with the questions we cannot for the moment answer without losing hope. Looking back in our lives and remembering how God has led us thus far is a good way of deepening our assurance that he is guiding us now and will continue to lead us into his future.

This last week I have been listening to a radio play made from *The Pilgrim's Progress*. Its author, John Bunyan, was put in prison for opposing the religious establishment of his day. In one scene his wife tries to persuade him to give up his mission and come back to the family, but she really knows that he can only continue on the way he believes God has laid out for him: 'Once you have set your hand to the plough ...' she says to Bunyan, words we might want to echo, 'I don't know what the Lord God thinks he is doing, but I dare say he does, and if he cares to make his mysterious ways known to us I for one will be very grateful.' Bunyan replies, 'And if he doesn't, then we must still have faith and hope for the best.'

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Wishing you every blessing in Eastertide, *Fr. Robin*.

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