

**Fr Brian writes ...**

**VOCATIONS MASS ON SUNDAY 24TH MARCH AT 6 PM ST JOSEPH'S:** Please come along to this Mass to pray for vocations to the Priesthood and to Religious Life. Our diocesan vocations promoter Canon Stuart Wilson will be here as the main celebrant, and several of our 30 seminarians will be here sharing some of their own stories during Mass of how God called them to the Priesthood. There will be refreshments and a talk after the Mass, whether you sense God calling you to be a Priest, a religious sister, or whether you generously regularly pray for more vocations.

**SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT. YEAR C. Background on the Gospel Reading. Jesus is transfigured in the presence of Peter, John, and James:** On the first Sunday of Lent, our Gospel always tells the story of Jesus' temptation in the desert. On this the second Sunday of Lent, we always hear the story of Jesus' Transfiguration. The Transfiguration occurs on a mountain in the presence of just three of Jesus' disciples—Peter, James and John. These are among the first disciples that Jesus called in Luke's Gospel. Only Luke's Gospel, which often describes Jesus at prayer, indicates that Jesus is praying as his appearance changes to bright white. Luke indicates that the three disciples were sleeping while Jesus prayed. As they awake, Peter and the disciples see Jesus Transfigured and Elijah and Moses present with Jesus. Elijah and Moses, both significant figures in the history of Israel, represent Jesus' continuity with the Law and the Prophets. On witnessing Jesus' Transfiguration and seeing Jesus with Elijah and Moses, Peter offers to construct three tents for them. Having just awoken, perhaps Peter's offer was made in confusion. We also notice that Peter reverted from his earlier confession that Jesus is the Messiah, calling Jesus "master" instead. As if in reply to Peter's confusion, a voice from heaven speaks, affirming Jesus as God's Son and commanding that the disciples listen to him. This voice from heaven recalls the voice that was heard at Jesus' baptism which, in Luke's Gospel, spoke directly to Jesus as God's Son. In his Transfiguration, we see an anticipation of the glory of Jesus' Resurrection. In each of the reports of the Transfiguration, the disciples keep secret what they have seen. Not until they also witness his Passion and death will the disciples understand Jesus' Transfiguration. We hear this story of Jesus' Transfiguration early in Lent, but we have the benefit of hindsight. In our hearing of it, we anticipate Jesus' Resurrection even as we prepare to remember Jesus' Passion and death. Are you listening to Him in prayer. Every day?

**ST PATRICK'S DAY – TODAY: A VERY HAPPY ST PATRICK'S DAY TO ALL OUR IRISH AND NIGERIAN PARISHIONERS:** St Patrick was born in Roman Britain around the end of the 4th century, and died in Ireland about the middle of the 5th century. As a missionary bishop, he endured many hardships. Nevertheless, he worked hard to evangelise, and to educate local chieftains and their families. He is remembered for his simplicity and pastoral care, for his humble trust in God, and for his fearless preaching of the gospel to the very people who had enslaved him in his youth.

**CAFOD COLLECTION TODAY:** Please place your envelope in the basket as you leave Mass.

**ST JOSEPH'S DAY – TUESDAY: Tuesday 19th March is our patronal feast.** Do join me at 7:00pm on Tuesday 19th March for a Mass in honour St Joseph, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Nothing is known of St Joseph except what is said of him in the Gospels. He was a carpenter; he accepted the will of God; and he supported Mary and brought up Jesus. From the human character of his son we can see that he was a good and responsible example of what it is to be a man. He is widely venerated as a patron of artisans who honourably do good work with the gifts God has given them, and of workers in general.

**EVANGELISATION: FOLLOW UP GET TOGETHER AFTER 'PROCLAIM SPRING CONFERENCE:** Thank you very much to those parishioners who generously gave up their free time to attend the 'Proclaim Spring Conference.' Lots of good ideas were circulated and received. As Stevenage parishes we have urgent work to do in the area of Evangelisation, that is, telling as many people as possible about the good news that is Jesus Christ and what he has done for us. This will probably involve reaching out to inactive Catholics as well as those who have never heard the Gospel before, by using a number of different approaches. **So let us get together on Monday 25th March at 8pm to plan practical ACTION to make IT happen!** Do come and join us in the church hall at St Joseph's, Bedwell. You don't have to have attended the recent 'Proclaim Spring Conference' to be there -just baptised! See you then.

**THE BIG GIVE:** The Passage is raising funds through the Big Give from 12 noon Tues 19th March – 12 noon Tues 26th March to support its work with homeless people moving from Street to Home. **Double your Donation, Double your impact.** This is a matched giving scheme for online donations. For more information ring Andrew Hollingsworth 020 75921856 [andrew.h@passage.org.uk](mailto:andrew.h@passage.org.uk)  
Donate at [www.thebiggive.org.uk/theassage2019](http://www.thebiggive.org.uk/theassage2019)

**FATIMA DEVOTION DAY:** Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March at Our Lady Immaculate, Chelmsford. Please see the poster.

**SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION MASS 2019:** I am pleased to let you know that the date of the Confirmation Mass has been changed to Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> June at 3pm. Do spread the word.

**EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION:** If you were not able to attend the Recollection Day last Saturday for any reason, and wish to continue serving in this important role, **please email [stevenagebedwell@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:stevenagebedwell@rcdow.org.uk) with your telephone number** and Lynne will continue to add you to the rota. **Please confirm in your email you are happy for your email to be shared with other Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.** As of today, each of our four Masses will need four Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Any queries about this, please have a chat to Mike.

**SALE OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION GIFTS AND CARDS:** On Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> March 10:00am in St Vincent de Paul School infant Hall.