



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY, ST JOHN'S WOOD



+ 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A - 16 July 2023

Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust: Registered Charity Number 233699

To Be Christian is Heroic, Not Nice

The reading from Isaiah and the Gospel, this Sunday, focus on the sower and the seeds which are being sown. On one level this can all strike us as very straightforward: the seed is sown and it grows with the help of the warmth of the sun, the nutrients of the earth, and water. We could see this as a metaphor for the spiritual life: the seed of the Word is sewn into our hearts, minds, and bodies, and with the help of grace - divine light and water from heaven - we grow into a Saint.

But how woefully and misleadingly inadequate that understanding is; indeed, actually, that metaphor would be profoundly un-Christian. The Christian life is not a 'nice' life; it is, rather, heroic; purifying; sublime; holy; sacrificial. Aspects of the Christian life do indeed look sweet and cute: think of the young children making their First Holy Communion, or the newly baptised infant draped in a flowing white garment. And yet these touching externals point to an internal fire of suffering sacrificial love, Whose risen life is able to dismantle sin and death victoriously. And we, each of us, are called to enter *that* life. Take these lines from Saint John, "And Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of man to be glorified. Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life'" (Jn 12:23-25). These words are directed to each of us, too.

So this seed, the word of God, which is sewn into our souls, is the way, the narrow gate (Mt 7:13-14), by which are hearts - and this is a concrete, a physical transformation (think of how the grace of Jesus physically touched the hearts of Saints Teresa of Jesus and Philip Neri) - are able to cry with Saint Paul, "I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us" (Rm 8:18).

The seed that is sown within our hearts is the risen life of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who suffered, died, and rose to eternal life. He brings a radiance which is not of this world (Jn 18:36), indeed, He shatters any false attachment to this world. We need His light, that He will further magnify His love within us. So how will we respond and so live? *Fr Ben*

Mass Times

Sunday

6:00pm (Saturday)
9:00am, 10:30am, 12:00 noon,
6:00pm

Weekdays

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday:
10:00am
Thursday: 7:00pm
Friday & Saturday: 10:00am

Rosary

After weekday Mass

Exposition & Confessions

Saturday 10:30am—11:00am

Confessions

Saturday 5:15pm—5:45pm

Music for Sunday

Guerrero - *Missa Inter vestibulum*

Fux - *Ad te, Domine, levavi*

Palestrina - *Ego sum panis vivus*

170 Who are these, like stars
appearing

244 My God, accept my heart
this day

208 Blest are the pure in heart

Sunday Readings, page 102

Isaiah 55:10-11

Psalms 64:10-14 R. Luke 8:8

Romans 8:18-23

Matthew 13:1-23

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Facebook: Our Lady's RC Church, St John's Wood <https://www.facebook.com/ourladysjw>

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Next Sunday is World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly The theme this year is 'His mercy is from age to age'. For ideas, ways to celebrate, and helpful resources see <https://www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org> plus an invitation to attend Mass on the day at Walsingham with Bishop David Oakley of Northampton. For the Pope's message visit <https://www.ukvocation.org/grandparentsday>.

Tea & Coffee after 9:00am Mass Please join us for our last get together before the Summer break.

Next Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM) Meeting takes place on Monday, 17 July 2023 at 8:00pm in the parish hall. Last meeting before the Summer.

Over 50's last session Tuesday 18 July, resuming Tuesday 5 September.

Parents' & Toddlers' Group last session Thursday 20 July, resuming Tuesday 12 September.

Art Class will run throughout the Summer except Wednesday 26 July and 30 August.

Creative Writing last session Thursday 20 July, resuming mid-September, date to be confirmed.

'Sight for the Blind' - A mini retreat for spiritual renewal on 22 July 2023 from 10:00am—1:00pm, only on Zoom. Guest speaker: Marcin Stetner of the Cor et Lumen Christi Charismatic Community who will focus on showing why healing was such an important element of Christ's mission. Register at bit.ly/ADOREJUL2023.

Rest in Peace: James Mellon. Requiem Mass at Our Lady's on Thursday 27 July 2023 at 1:30pm.

The 13th Annual GK Chesterton Pilgrimage will take place on Saturday 29 July 2023. Bishop David Oakley of Northampton will preach at the 2:30pm Mass at The Bridgettine Convent, Fulmer Common Road, Iver, SL0 0NR. Please send any prayer requests to; CatholicGKCSociety@yahoo.co.uk or text 07795 205114. For more details visit www.CatholicGKChestertonSociety.co.uk.

'New Dawn in the Church' Catholic Conference for young and old takes place at the Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, Norfolk from Monday 31 July to Friday 4 August 2023. Visit <https://www.newdawn.org.uk/>.

Pilgrimage to Walsingham in Reparation & Prayer for the Sanctity of Life led by Most Rev. Kevin McDonald, Archbishop Emeritus of Southwark, on Saturday 5 August 2023 commencing with the 12 noon Pilgrim Mass. Pick-up points: Westminster Cathedral, Harpenden, St Albans and Letchworth so visit www.prolifepilgrimage.org or call 01858 571242 / 07779 122365. Follow online at walsingham.org.uk/live-stream/.

Young Adults Formation The Community of Our Lady of Walsingham (COLW) is offering an opportunity to Catholic men and women aged 18-35 to live alongside their community in Norfolk for a week this summer. Choice of two dates: 14—21 August or 30 August—6 September 2023. Email freetobe@walsinghamcommunity.org by 31 July; <https://walsinghamcommunity.org/news-events>.

March for Life, 2 September 2023 This year's theme is Freedom to Live'. 10:30am: Mass at Westminster Cathedral; 10:30am-1:00pm: Events/Stalls/Talks/Testimonies at The Emmanuel Centre' 1:30pm: March for Life (Emmanuel Centre to Parliament Square); www.marchforlife.co.uk.

Social Media. Do visit <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/stjohnswood/>, and Our Lady's RC Church, St John's Wood Facebook page which are regularly updated.

Your Offerings can be given electronically via <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/stjohnswood/donating-to-the-parish/> but please remember to say what your donation is for, and if you pay tax, please complete the *Gift Aid* form. Standing orders, the easiest way to give regularly, can also be set up there. To *Gift Aid* using the *CollecTins* follow the prompts to register each card or 'phone on the machine, or scan the QR code and register them at home. God bless you for whatever and however you give to us and to those in need.

Day	Location	Time	Group
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	Upper Hall	9:30am-11:30am	Parents & Toddlers
Tuesday	Upper Hall	1:00pm-4:30pm	Over 50's
Wednesday except 26/7, 30/8	Upper Hall	1:00pm-2:00pm	Art Class
Thursday	Lower Hall	10:30am-12 noon	Creative Writing