



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY, ST JOHN'S WOOD

+ 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B - 11 February 2024

Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust: Registered Charity Number 233699



Lent Yet Again!

There's an apocryphal story of a bishop who used to record his pastoral letters on tape to be played in the parishes. Every pastoral letter he began with the phrase "brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ". However, this year the recording tape had started to late, so his pastoral letter began, not with his usual greeting, but the phrase "Christ, it's Lent again".

The story is funny because there can be a temptation to think "oh no, we're at Lent again". We've got to think of something to give up, to remember to fast on certain days. To come to Mass and services at different times. Lent can quickly become something we need to "do" on that list with everything else.

But we should approach Lent in a very different way to our day-to-day tasks and errands. This year Ash Wednesday falls on Valentine's Day, which is fortuitous since Lent is a chance to renew our relationship with God. A chance for us to fall in love with God once again.

Lent is a time when we strip things away. We stop indulging so much in chocolate, drink or other pleasures we enjoy. We do so, not because they are bad, but because the desire for them and saying no reminds us to pray to God. It reminds us to think of the one who loves us so much, even though we rejected him, died for our sins.

Some people find giving things up not to be difficult. Others, like myself, find Lent to be a season of repeated failures and compromises. If you're the same as me, don't worry, because the purpose of Lent is not that we make it through without slipping up on our abstinence. It's meant to show us our weaknesses, how easily we are tempted and how suddenly we can fall. When this happens, we shouldn't flee God, but like the leper today run closer to him. It should motivate us to pray, to ask for more help from God in our daily lives to be the Christians he wants us to be.

Alongside fasting and prayer, we are called to remember the poor in a particular way in this season. Whether that be local or international, on pro-life or social action, we are reminded that what we do to the least of our brothers and sisters, we do also to Christ our Lord.

Fr Alex

Mass Times

Sunday

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

Weekdays

Monday & Tuesday: 10:00am
Ash Wednesday:
10:00am & 7:30pm
Thursday: 7:00pm
Friday & Saturday: 10:00am

Stations of the Cross

(During Lent)

Thursday 6:15pm

Rosary

After weekday Mass

Exposition & Confessions

Saturday 10:30am—11:00am

Confessions

Saturday 5:15pm—5:45pm

Music for Sunday

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 200 | All My Hope on God is
Founded |
| 133 | All Ye Who Seek a
Comfort Sure |
| 126 | O Thou, Who at Thy
Eucharist Didst Pray |
| Palestrina | <i>Missa Ad Fugam</i> |
| Hassler | <i>Jubilate Deo omnis
terra</i> |
| Byrd | <i>Beati mundo corde</i> |

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Sunday Readings

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Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
Psalm 31:1-2,5,11 R v7
1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1
Mark 1:40-45

The Parish Office will be closed to personal callers for the next few weeks. Kathleen, the Parish Administrator, will however be working remotely so please email any requests to: stjohnswood@rcdow.org.uk during office hours. Thank you for your understanding.

Tea & Coffee will not take place after the 9:00am Mass today. We look forward to welcoming you back after half term on Sunday 25 February.

The SVP Foodbank collection takes place this weekend. Please leave non-perishable items on the table in the porch. Thank you for your support.

This weekend the Good Shepherd Company from the Holy Land (Bethlehem), based in Nottingham, will be at our church after all Masses to sell olive wood carvings from the Holy Land. Their goal is to support and help the Christian families in the Holy Land to stay at work, as olive wood carving is one of the most important sources of income for them. Ninety per cent of the Christians rely on this sale. By selling their produce here on their behalf, this will prevent the Christians from leaving the country in search of better work opportunities, as a test survey from the bishops of Jerusalem shows there are only 41,000 Christians left in the area. Thank you for your support.

Parent and Toddler Group/Over 50's/Art Class/Creative Writing: no sessions during half term. Parents & Toddlers and Over 50's resume on Tuesday 20 February, Art Class on Wednesday 21 February and Creative Writing on 22 February.

Ash Wednesday—14 February. The first day of Lent. Day of fast and abstinence. Masses at 10:00am and 7:30pm with distribution of ashes.

Cardinal's Lenten Appeal 2024. All funds raised go towards projects across our Diocese. Each year, the Diocese uses donations made to support the work of our services, such as Marriage & Family Life, Youth Ministry and Education. Funds are also used to support the work of *Caritas* Westminster, who work for and with some of the most vulnerable people in our Diocese. Please take a donation envelope today for more information. You can use the QR code to make your donation online. Thank you for your generosity.

CAFOD's 'The Big Lent Walk'. Challenge yourself to walk 200km over 40 days. Walk when and where you choose, alone or with friends. Sign up at: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/>, get sponsored and raise money to help people overcome poverty.

Rest in Peace

Souhail Isaac Yonan. Requiem Mass at Our Lady's on Thursday 15 February at 11:00am, committal at St Mary's Cemetery, Harrow Road.

Stations of the Cross during Lent will take place every Thursday at 6:15pm before evening Mass from 15 February.

First Holy Communion Programme continues after half term on Saturday 24 February from 12:00pm—1:00pm in the parish hall. **Confirmation Programme** continues after half term on Sunday 25 February from 4:00pm— 5:30pm in the parish hall.

The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London is holding a Divine Mercy Lenten Retreat on Saturday 24 February from 1:30pm - 4:30pm at St. Lawrence Church, 1 Hamilton Road, Sidcup Kent DA15 7HB. The retreat will include teachings on the Message of Mercy, Stations of the Cross, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. Contact Millie on 07957 594 646 for more information. All are welcome.

The Annual Mass for Matrimony will be celebrated in the Cathedral by the Cardinal on Saturday 25 May at 2:30pm for couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries. Full information to follow when available.

If you are sick or in hospital, please make it known to the ward staff that you are a Catholic and that you want to see a priest so that arrangements can be made for a Catholic Chaplain to visit you. Please let Canon Kevin or Fr Alex know if you are housebound, even temporarily, so they can arrange to visit you.

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.