

ST THOMAS MORE – PARISH NEWSLETTER

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SUNDAY 17TH MARCH 2024

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (Year B)

Veiled Images

Today marks the beginning of what is sometimes referred to as “Passiontide”. Already the Church has Holy Week and the Passion of our Lord in view and wants to help us prepare ourselves for this very special period of the liturgical year.

To help us do so, there is the custom of placing purple veils over the Crucifix on the altar and the statues of saints. This reminds us of the special time we are in, leading up to the Sacred Triduum (the liturgy of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil). With images hidden from our sight, our other senses become more alert: we can focus more on the words at Mass, for example, and cultivate a longing in our heart to be able to see God “face to face”. We also look forward eagerly to the unveiling at Easter, when once again we will see the images in all their splendour.

On a deeper level, the custom reminds us that we live in a “veiled” world, in exile from our true home. It is only through our own death that the veil is lifted and we are finally able to see the beauty of everything in our lives.

Still further, we might be reminded of how in his Passion, the divinity of Jesus was

almost totally eclipsed, so great was his suffering. Similarly, his sacred humanity was so disfigured by blows and scourges that it was hardly recognisable!

This custom, therefore, can help us prepare to commemorate Jesus’s Passion, Death and Resurrection, which in turn are a precondition for our own entry into eternal Life.

The veiling of images can have greater effect for each of us personally if we come to Church more often during these coming two weeks. It could be to attend the Sacrifice of the Mass more often, to join one of the devotions, or simply to spend a few moments kneeling before Jesus in the tabernacle and telling him we do not want to leave him alone in his sacred Passion.

Saint Joseph (...and veils)

This Tuesday the Church celebrates the great Solemnity of St Joseph, husband of Mary. He is held in such high esteem, that, even though we are in Lent, the Church marks the day by celebrating the liturgy with white vestments and permits us to decorate the altar with flowers. In general, in places where the custom of veiling images is kept, the veils remain in place on his feast.

However, it seems quite fitting this year that we should delay the veiling of our statue of St Joseph for a couple of days so that it can help us venerate him around his feast.

If we were simply to think of what the Gospels tell us about St Joseph, we might be tempted to pass over him as just one more person in Scripture about whom we know very little. But with a little prayerful effort and imagination we can discover many helpful things about him. This has been many saints' experience and can be ours too.

We don't have to agree with the way he's depicted by some artists as a senior citizen. In many ways it seems more fitting that he be a young man, maybe just a little older than Mary, his wife. Perhaps in his late teens or early twenties. That idea can help us admire his qualities as a father and bread winner for his family, seeking to excel in his work: responsible, reliable, resilient, a cheerful, trustworthy and courageous man, wisely resolving all the problems life throws at him. He lives up to the title he's given in the Gospels: a "just man" – which in biblical terms means fully upright and holy: the sort of person everyone would like as a friend, a colleague or a boss, for example.

The mere fact that God chose him to be the husband of Mary and as the man to educate Jesus already tells us so much. No wonder he has been nominated patron saint in so many ways: of fathers, expectant mothers, families, workers and craftsmen, of exiles and immigrants, of a happy death (as tradition tells us, Jesus and Mary were at his side when he died), and more. Indeed, the patron of the Universal Church, as he was proclaimed in 1870.

In spite of this, we could say that the life of St Joseph is *veiled* in the Scriptures; not one of his words is recorded. But his actions speak loudly. We can learn so much from meditating on his life and virtues!

He is *[Joseph, the Silent](#)*, as the title of a book by Fr Gasnier O.P. has it. And we can also understand why St Josemaría Escrivá in his homily *[In Joseph's workshop](#)* calls him *Master of the interior life*.

Pope Francis in his *[Patris corde](#)* (8 Dec 2020), and St John Paul II in *[Redemptoris custos](#)* (15 Aug 1989) tell us many things. Both of these quite short documents can be found on the web and are well worth reading and pondering.

St Joseph, pray for us!

Lenten Stations of the Cross

The Way of the Cross is taking place in the church every Friday of Lent at 6pm. (This simple devotion lasts about half an hour.)

First Holy Communion Classes

First Holy Communion classes are taking place on Saturdays in the parish centre 11.00 am to 12 noon.

Repository Items

Devotional items from the parish repository will once again be on sale in the Narthex after the morning Masses this Sunday.

Adult Baptism

There is now a small group of adults in the parish interested in learning more about the Catholic Faith, with a view to being baptised. At present meetings are held fortnightly at 4.30pm on Sundays. If you know anyone who is considering baptism in the Catholic Church do mention this to them and encourage them to contact Fr Nicholas for more details.

Parish Film Club

There will be another meeting in the hall at **10:45am Wednesday, 20th March** (after the 10am Mass). This week the film will be *Faustina: Love and Mercy*, a docudrama tracing the life of St Faustina Kowalska, whose visions inspired the devotion to the Divine Mercy.

Cardinal's Lenten Appeal 2024

Please try to support the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal. All funds raised go towards projects across our Diocese. Each year, the Diocese uses donations made to support the work of its 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. Archbishop Cardinal Nichols has expressed his gratitude to everyone who supports the appeal, with whatever they can afford. Donation envelopes are provided in the entrance to the church during Lent. One of the collection boxes in the wall of the Narthex is used for this purpose. You can also use the QR code to make your donation online. However, it is not possible to use the card reader in the Narthex for this appeal due to difficulties with regard to gift aid issues. Thank you for your generosity.

March Magnificat

Apologies to those who normally buy this: the March edition has gone astray.

Young children during Sunday Mass

If you are new to the parish it may help to know that during the 9.30am and 11am Masses on Sundays we generally open the parish hall and project a view of the sanctuary onto the screen in the seminar room (top floor). This enables parents with small children who become restless to follow the Mass from there if they so wish. Please help to make newcomers aware of this helpful area in the parish hall.

Mass Intentions

Please use the brown Mass Offering envelopes in the Narthex to request a Mass and provide the information requested. These envelopes can be handed to a priest or put through the letterbox of the presbytery. Please speak to Maggie Ainsworth in the Parish Office (Tuesday or Friday mornings)

or email her at swisscottage@rcdow.org.uk about any Masses you wish to be offered on a specific day.

If your Mass intention is for someone who has recently died or is seriously ill, we shall try to allocate a Mass as soon as possible. However, bear in mind that it is not unusual for Masses to be offered several weeks after they have been requested.

Please do not use the Mass Offering envelopes for general donations to the church, as there are separate larger blue donation envelopes for this purpose.

Annual Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony

The Cardinal is inviting to a Mass in **Westminster Cathedral, 2:30pm, Saturday 25th May 2024** all couples in the Diocese, who are celebrating their 5th, 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th (and every year over 60) wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage in 2024. If you are celebrating an anniversary, please give Fr Nicholas the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and email (or telephone number, if no email).

The Cardinal writes: *This occasion is one where joy, gratitude and also the deep emotions of a shared journey are celebrated. During the liturgy the couples will be invited, in a simple way, to renew their marital commitment and we shall pray for them and their families. The Mass will be an opportunity to acknowledge the joys and blessings of marriage, while remaining mindful of the need for healing and compassion for those who have experienced upset and suffering in their married life. The order of service will contain information on opportunities for enrichment, support and healing, highlighting agencies and movements who work to support marriage and family life both within the Diocese and nationally.*

Note: We look forward to Fr Nicholas' return on Tuesday 19th.

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Tel: 020 7435 1388

17th March-23rd March 2024

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

	MASS	OTHER ACTIVITIES
SUN 17th March Fifth Sunday of Lent (Readings. Year B)	9.30am People of the Parish 11am Mass Blanca Aurora Castanio (intentions) 6pm Mass Pauline Ainsworth (intentions)	The Church opens at 9.15am 10.30am Confessions 5.30pm Confessions
MON 18th March Lent Feria	10am Mass Stella Acquarone (in thanksgiving)	Church opens at 9.30am Monday to Saturday Church closes about 1pm on Mondays, other weekdays about 6pm
TUE 19th March SAINT JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN Mary	10am Mass Andrei Karlsson (intentions)	
WED 20th March Lent Feria	10am Mass Richard F Pearson (RIP)	10.45am Film Club (6): <i>St Faustina:</i> <i>Love and Mercy</i>
THU 21st March Lent Feria	10am Mass Kazunari Sugimoto (intentions)	
FRI 22nd March Lent Feria Friday abstinence	10am Mass Holy Souls	10.30 – 12 noon Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 6pm Stations of the Cross
SAT 23rd March Lent Feria	10am Mass Rose Marie Karlsson (intentions)	The Church opens at 9.30am 11am-12pm First Holy Communion Class (19)

Prayer Intentions:

Recently deceased: Joan Ross; Maria Maguire; Mervyn Agnew; Fr Terry Murray OMI; Brian Ainsworth; Vasil Chornay; Evenamede Afiavi

Anniversary: José Miguel Vargas Alvoraz; Mark Sharman; Mabel Bull; Nick Aldridge; Letizia Goodfellow; Patrick O'Donnell; Helen Birch

Confessions:

Weekdays: before and after 10am Mass

Saturday: before and after 10am Mass

Sunday: 9.30am then 10.30am and 5.30pm (before Mass)

Forthcoming liturgical celebrations:

24th March: **PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD**

25th March - 30th March: **HOLY WEEK**

31st March: **EASTER SUNDAY**