

Holy Rood Catholic Church

Holy Rood Rectory, Exchange Road, Watford,
Hertfordshire. WD18 0PJ

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Office Hours: Limited this week but open on
Friday, 10am – 12noon.

Office Location: Percy Road, WD18 0QA

Parish Priest: Fr Gerard O'Brien

Assistant Priest: Fr Tim Mangatal

Deacon: Rev Neville Dyckhoff
nevilledyckhoff@rcdow.org.uk (☎Opt 2)

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Web & Streaming: parish.rcdow.org.uk/watford

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Fifth Sunday in Lent

17 March 2024

Sadly, on Monday we heard that France becomes world's first country to enshrine abortion rights in constitution. Lawmakers from both houses of the French Parliament voted 780 to 72 in favour of the measure. The French Senate and National Assembly each overwhelmingly approved the amendment earlier this year that states that there is a "guaranteed freedom" to abortion in France. Some groups and lawmakers had called for stronger language to explicitly call abortion a "right." "Lawmakers hailed the move as a history-making way for France to send a clear signal of support on reproductive rights, with abortion under threat in the United States, as well as in parts of Europe, like Hungary. The Eiffel Tower was lit up with the words "my body my choice." Prime Minister Attal said before the vote that lawmakers had a "moral debt" to women. "Above all, we're sending a message to all women: your body belongs to you." French President Macron said the government would hold a formal ceremony *celebrating* the amendment's passage on Friday, International Women's Rights Day. France first legalised abortion in 1975, after a campaign led by then-Health Minister Simone Veil, an Auschwitz survivor who became one of the country's most famous feminist icons. While abortion is a highly divisive issue in US politics that often falls along party lines, in France it is widely supported. Many of the lawmakers who voted against the amendment did so not because they opposed abortion, but because they felt the measure was unnecessary, given the wide support for reproductive rights. This is seen as a clear

victory for the French left, which has been pushing for years to guarantee abortion rights in the constitution. Before 2022, President Macron's government argued, like the amendment's current opponents, that the move was unnecessary. In 2022, when the US Supreme Court ruled against *Roe v. Wade* and let states individually decide on the issue, France acted. French Justice Minister Dupond-Moretti said previously, before debate began in the National Assembly in January, that history was full of other examples where "fundamental rights" were believed to be safe but then taken away, "as we were recently reminded by the decision of the US Supreme Court." We now have irrefutable proof that no democracy, not even the largest of them all, is immune," he said. The Catholic Church was one of the few groups to announce its opposition to the amendment. The Pontifical Academy for Life, the Vatican body which focuses on issues related to bioethics, said in a statement that "in the era of universal human rights, there can be no 'right' to take human life. "...French bishops also reiterated the church's opposition to abortion ahead of the vote.

St Patrick's Day is on a Sunday this year and superseded by the celebration of the resurrection. However, we still ask his intercession for our faith journey and thank him for the conversion of so many.

Caritas Supermarket Vouchers available for those in need. Please contact, in confidence, the parish office.

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

Sunday 17 March

Fifth Sunday in Lent

8am Stanley McCarrick anniv.
9.30am Daisy Birikorang RIP
11am Nunnziata Caroleo RIP anniv.
12.30pm Emanuele Civiello RIP

Monday 18 March

Lent Feria

8.30am Susan Pullen Int.
12noon Otu, Leanlage & Pearson families Int.

Tuesday 19 March

St Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

8.30am Mary Phillingham RIP
12noon Freda Patmore RIP

Wednesday 20 March

Lent Feria

12noon Protection of the pre-born.

Thursday 21 March

Lent Feria

12noon *Joseph Kulanthai RIP Requiem Mass*

Friday 22 March

Lent Feria

7.15am Samson D'Souza Int.
12.30pm Stations of the Cross
6pm Paolino Salamone RIP
followed by Stations of the Cross with
visiting priest

Saturday 23 March

Lent Feria

11:00am V S Eappen RIP
6:00pm People of the Parish

Sunday 24 March

Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

8am Kennedy Nkemdirim Int.
9.30am Deceased Carty & Clancy families
11am Geoffrey White RIP
12.30pm John Rellis RIP anniv.

BLESSED SACRAMENT LAMP

Avrille Bailey Int.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT & BENEDICTION

Tuesday 9am-11.30am; Friday 6.30pm-7.15pm

SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION

Friday 6.30pm-7pm
Saturday 11.30am-12noon & 5pm-5.30pm

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK by request

BAPTISMS

Rev. Deacon Neville - 01923 224085 (Opt 2)

Catechism Corner Why is water added to the chalice? The mixing of the water and wine in the chalice before its consecrated is required. What makes this act significant is what it represents: the water is Christ's humanity and the wine his divinity. The mingling of the water and wine in the chalice symbolizes the Incarnation of Christ. It also recalls Christ's Passion when the soldiers pierced his side with a spear and out flowed blood and water (John 19:34), thus signifying baptism and Eucharist.

Anton Cataldo, a local artist, teacher and parishioner, was given the honour of impacting our young people's spiritual journey, with Fr Alex asking him to paint a Crucifixion scene for the new chapel at St Anthony's Primary School. Anton was delighted and began the painting. He drew inspiration for the shape of the painting from Byzantine crucifixion paintings and the figure itself was inspired by a beautiful work by Diego Velázquez. The work was painted in oil, on a cut wooden base. On the 20th of September, the new chapel was blessed by Bishop Paul, and it was wonderful to see the painting in situ, as Mass was celebrated with children, staff, and governors at St Anthony's. To share this work with a wider audience, Anton has created a limited edition print of the painting. Printed on exquisite Perlino Cotton textured paper (size A3), this artwork is not just a decoration but a testament to faith. Limited to 150 pieces, each signed and numbered, it's available for a modest £20. Importantly, 50% of all profits will directly support Holy Rood Parish, reinforcing our commitment to our community's spiritual and material well-being. Below the depiction of Christ, the print features the powerful words from Isaiah: "By his wounds we are healed." It's a message of hope and healing that resonates deeply, especially in our current times. Examples of the print can be seen at the back of the church.

The Croxley Green Community Choir & Gerry O'Beirne are presenting a concert "A Feast of Fauré" in the church on Wednesday 20 March at 19:45 Ticket reservations: 07858 210168 email: choir.cgcc@gmail.com . See notice board and rep .after Mass.

Easter Offering If you are going to be away over Easter, please consider making your offering before you go. The offerings at Christmas and Easter make up Fr Tim's & Fr Gerard's annual stipend of £10,900 each. It is not, as well as. The diocese do not allow the Easter Sunday standing orders to go to the priests. We are so grateful for your constant kindness and support.