



ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

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Registered Charity 234436



Fr. Pat (pfcp44@yahoo.com) Fr. Tiernan (tiernanpc@gmail.com)

Masses: Sunday: (7pm Saturday) 8am, 10am, 12noon, 1.30 (Polish), 7pm.

Holydays: 6.30pm vigil, 9.30am, 11am, 6.30pm

Weekdays: 9.30am, 6.30pm. **Saturday:** 9.30am, 7pm. **Bank Holiday:** 9.30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 10-10.30am, 6.30 -6.45pm

Weekdays: immediately after Mass (on request)

11th February 2018 – 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

ISOLATION ISN'T SO SPLENDID!

Our Gospel reading this week tells of a rather curious event in the life of Christ. At a surface level it looks like a relatively straightforward story of a miracle worked by Christ. It tells of a leper coming to Jesus, and rather than making a request that Jesus cure him – which is what we would be inclined to expect – he simply states “If you want to, you can cure me.” Now, I don’t know how it is with you, but where I come from usually if you said to someone to “do it if you want to” there was often the implication of “I couldn’t care less” – though you probably did care. Like, for instance, an unpopular neighbour saw you smoking with some class-mates in the shopping centre on a day when you should be at school, and says “I’ll be letting your parents know when I next see them” and you say “Go ahead, see if I care” – but of course you did care very much! (Let me stress, this is a made-up example – I didn’t play truant from school, nor smoke, and there were no shopping centres then! And, of course, I was never caught!)

Sorry, back to the Gospel. So I’m certain the leper really did care – and, more importantly, so did Jesus. And Jesus cures him. And then we see an extraordinary change in circumstances. Remember that lepers in those days had to stay away from people, as people were afraid that they would catch leprosy from them. So they had to live outside the towns, where nobody else lived. But now that this leper is cured he is free to mix again with others. But see what’s happened to Jesus. The ex-leper is telling the story of his cure by Jesus everywhere, and the gospel tells us “Jesus could no longer go openly into any town, but had to stay outside in places where nobody lived.” A kind of role-reversal has taken place. For different reasons both the leper, and Jesus, have had to experience being somewhat cut off from people.

Unfortunately there are many people in our world today who can feel that same sense of being cut off from people – that they’re living ‘outside’, as it were. And that’s true not just of our world, but even of our own parish. For one reason or another they rarely get to be with people and can spend much of their time alone, in isolation. There may be some among them who prefer it that way, but my experience tells me that there are many, who if they were given the opportunity – and maybe help and encouragement – would love to get out and be with people more.

We were discussing this at a recent Parish Council meeting, and felt that as a parish we could do more to help such people feel less isolated. As an initial experiment we’re thinking of having an afternoon tea and chat on Wednesday, March 21st. But we need your help – this needs to be a Parish project. For instance, if you know of people who might wish to be invited to such an event – and if the demand is there we would hope to do this very regularly – perhaps you could speak to them and check if they would like to come, and if they would need help in getting here. Of course we also need help with running such gatherings – tea makers, scone makers, drivers, tidy-upers, etc. etc.

If you want to you can help – show yourself that you do care.

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We pray for the sick and housebound of our Parish – Elizabeth Rodgers; **we pray for those who have died recently** - Estrella Murray (funeral 12.30pm Tuesday 13th February), John Shiels (funeral 1.30pm Tuesday 20th February), Eileen Hughes, Robert Robson, Tony May, Peter Mullins; **and we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Fr. Colum Devine CP, Brendan Plunkett, Mary & Thomas Foley, Patrick Garvey, Helena Meade.

Ash Wednesday:

This Wednesday, 14th February, is Ash Wednesday. Ashes will be blessed and distributed at the usual weekday Masses at 9.30am and 6.30pm.

Stations of the Cross:

During the season of Lent there will be Stations of the Cross immediately after the 6.30 pm. Mass each Friday. This is a particularly appropriate form of prayer during Lent, especially in a Passionist church, as it encourages meditation on the profound mystery on the depth of the Lord's love for us as expressed in His passion, death and resurrection. Of course, if the set time is not suitable for you, you can also do this particular form of prayer at any time on your own or with some friends.

Confirmation Group Cake Sale:

This year's Confirmation class have been making cakes and will be running a coffee morning after 10am Mass this Sunday. They will also be selling them after 12 o'clock and 7.00 pm Masses, in aid of Haiti and the Cardinal Hume Centre.

Cardinal's Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony:

This annual event will be taking place this year in Westminster Cathedral, on Saturday 19th May 2018 at 3pm. The Cardinal will be inviting to this Mass 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 2018. If you are celebrating one of those anniversaries, please give to Fr. Pat the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and email (or telephone number, if no email).

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £1,239. In addition to that we receive an average of over £900 per week in standing orders. We very much appreciate that you have very many other calls on your finances, so we are very grateful for your outstanding generosity in supporting your parish.

Lent Groups:

Details of the ecumenical Lent Groups meetings this year are available in the porch. There is a range of courses with daytime or evening meetings to choose from. Courses begin in the week of 18th February so please pick up a leaflet and sign up on the list in the porch as soon as possible. St. Joseph's Group will be studying this year's York Course *On The Third Day: The Resurrection then and now*, and will be meeting in the Red Room, 10.45am–12 noon on Tuesdays beginning February 20th.

Upcoming Events, etc.:

Please read the article on the front page about our wish to show in a practical way our concern for sick or housebound members of our parish. Any further suggestions you may have would also be greatly appreciated. We also mentioned a little while ago our intention to have a celebration in the Red Room on Mothering Sunday, 11th March, in which we would also like such people to participate. We have modified the original plan, and now hope to run the morning from approximately 11am to 2pm – so that people at both the 10 and 12 masses can easily participate.

We are also aware that there must be quite a few people living within our parish who may not be easily able to get out, but would appreciate a visit from either the priests or fellow-parishioners. If you know of such people, then please let us know – it's also helpful, if possible, to have a word with them first, just to be sure that we are not intruding on their right to privacy.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes – helpers needed:

If you are over 18, your help would be very much appreciated as a St Frai Helper. Some of our sick pilgrims in most need of support and medical care stay in a hospital-like building called the Accueil St Frai in the centre of Lourdes. It is well-equipped for their care and they are looked after by a team of doctors, nurses and volunteer St Frai Helpers.

The role of a St Frai helper is to support the nurses and provide the sort of care for which you don't need a medical qualification. This includes helping the pilgrims get up and ready in the morning; making large amounts of tea; taking the pilgrims to various pilgrimage events; shopping and socialising with them and other helpers; and putting them to bed at night. The timetable is shared across two shifts so there is enough time to rest, make your own pilgrimage, spend time with your groups and make new friends.

Helping in the St Frai is an extremely moving and rewarding experience. Working in the St Frai is an opportunity to give our care and company to our pilgrims and make a huge difference in their lives.

If you're interested in helping in the St Frai in Lourdes, please email chief helper Nick Leonard and team at westminsterstfrai@gmail.com