



# ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

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**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)

## 28th February 2016 – 3rd Sunday of Lent

### Missing a Slate?

I don't know what was the predominant image of God that I had while growing up, but there certainly were a few weird angles to it. Growing up in the north-eastern side of Dublin city meant that I lived directly under one of the most commonly used flight-paths between Dublin and London. In those days there were no jet engines, just the propeller kind – the Vickers Viscount was one I remember – and these took off and landed on a much less steep plain than modern aircraft. With the result that it seemed you could almost reach up and touch the under-carriage as they prepared to land. While they may not have been as noisy as the modern jet engine, they did actually make quite a din, but living with it from birth one hardly noticed it until maybe we had visitors and they would ask how we could possibly put up with the noise! What noise?

But occasionally I would become very conscious of the sound of plane engines. It would generally be after a day that hadn't gone too well. Maybe I had had a row with someone, or had behaved in a way that I knew I shouldn't have – possibly told a lie to avoid getting into trouble or helped myself to a forbidden biscuit – you know, some major felony of that sort! And as I would be lying in bed, tossing and turning in torments of guilt – OK I exaggerate a little! – I would hear the sound of an aircraft engine revving up at the airport, and I knew that shortly it would be passing over the roof of my home – or should I say, I hoped it would pass over the roof of my home rather than come down on it! Because I knew God would not have been pleased with what I had done, and He had been probably just waiting for this opportunity to catch me red-handed and consign me to hell for all eternity, or at the very least purgatory for a very long time! But all was not lost – I probably still had time to make an act of 'perfect' contrition! Except that it wouldn't be perfect – because I knew it was more out of fear than sorrow! And then there was the promise that I would be off to confession at the first opportunity! (I know – weird! How did I ever turn out as sane as I am now? – No need to reply!)

The Lord must have heard my prayers, because none of those planes landed on the roof! Or alternatively I had got it all wrong. God was never like that. Rather than waiting for the opportunity to catch out the sinner, He was waiting patiently for the opportunity to forgive him. But that we should have such weird notions of God is not too surprising – after all we are very limited intellectually. Every day, for instance, scientists are discovering 'new' things that in fact have been there from the start of the world. And misunderstanding the nature of God is as old as history itself.

In our gospel today Jesus addresses some of these misunderstandings. Particularly the issue of a possible link between people suffering and people sinning – and He makes it very clear that there is no such link – sometimes good people suffer; sometimes bad people prosper. It is quite common to meet people who believe that negative events are acts of punishment by God, or at least trials that He sends to test us. And often people will ask why a loving God does not prevent disasters happening. It's as if they have this image of God as the great puppet-master, pulling all the strings. Jesus puts a different challenge before us today – the fig tree. Are we, or are we not, bearing fruit – or simply taking up space? Whatever the answer He's always willing to give us another chance. The roof's not likely to fall in on us at this stage. (I must be getting obsessed with roofs!)

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**We pray for those who have died recently** – Herbert Trent, Mary Boyle, Maria O'Brien, Raymond Hogan, Patrick Considine, Martin Kerins; **and we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Cyril & Ellen Emery, Mary Hannaby, Theresa & Frank Rooney.

### **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.

### **Christian Stewardship:**

Last week's collection amounted to £1,360. In addition we also receive over £1900 in standing orders each month. We really do appreciate your continuing generosity.

### **Lent Projects:**

During previous Lents you have been very generous in your support of Fr. Rick in Haiti, and the Cardinal Hume Centre. Both charities are particularly worthy in that they not only provide emergency help to those in need, but concentrate much of their resources in finding long-term solutions for their clients through education and training. For the six Sundays of Lent we will be having an exit collection after all Masses, the proceeds of which will be divided between Haiti and the Cardinal Hume Centre. In addition, two wall-boxes at either side of the church are devoted to the same causes. I know you will be as generous as usual in your support of these worthy causes.

### **Womens World Day of Prayer:**

*Receive Children, Receive Me* is the theme of this International Day of Prayer, prepared this year by women in Cuba. There's a choice of two celebrations on this Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March - **either** 10.30am Muswell Hill Baptist Church, Dukes Avenue, N10 2PT, **or** 2.00pm at Highgate URC Chapel, Pond Square N6 6BA. All welcome, men too!

### **100 Club Results:**

The February Draw for the 100 Club was held in the Monastery during the week. The number of entries was 122 and the winners were: £400 Anne Miles (91), £100 John Hedderson (103), £50 J.M.David (183). A copy of the results may be obtained from the Parish office on request. The February draw will be held as usual in the last week of the month, and monthly subscriptions should be paid by **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March**. Thank you once again to all who support the parish in this way.

### **Year of Mercy Pilgrimage to the Holy Land:**

Cardinal Vincent will lead the 6<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Pilgrimage to the Holy land, 4 -12<sup>th</sup> November. Price £1495 per person sharing; £320 single supplement. Full board. Contact Gil Didino at Tangney Tours for a booking form. Gill@tangney-tours.com; 01732 886666

### **St. Gabriel's Archway Rome Pilgrimage:**

Our neighbouring Parish, St. Gabriel's, are running a pilgrimage to Rome from May 30<sup>th</sup> - June 3<sup>rd</sup> (half term week). 4 nights in Rome = £450, plus flight (individual booking through Parish Office) = £150, total cost £600. Forms are available from St. Gabriel's Parish Office, St.John's Villas N19, 020 7272 8195. Booking closes this week, Friday 4<sup>th</sup> March.

### **Permanent Deacon Come and See:**

Men wanting to know more about the permanent diaconate are invited to come to a two hour meeting at St Edward the Confessor, 700 Finchley Rd, Golders Green, NW11 7NE on Saturday 12th March from 10am to 12. No booking needed. Wives welcome. Contact details Deacon Adrian Cullen 07961 594725 or Deacon Anthony Clark 07545 373548.

### **Novena Prayer for the Canonisation of Blessed Dominic Barberi, C.P.**

As mentioned last week, we invite you to join this Novena of Prayer (25th February to 5th March) for the Canonisation of Blessed Dominic, without whom this parish would not have been founded. Please take a copy of this bulletin home and offer the following prayer (with your household) each day.

*O God, who so lovingly raised Blessed Dominic to the heights of holiness, learning and apostolic zeal and made him a powerful minister of your mercy, listen to our humble request.*

*We pray that you will in your goodness, grant a miracle through the intercession of Blessed Dominic, so that the Church may further honour him on earth*

*and that many more people will come to know and invoke the help of this faithful servant of the Church.*

*We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen*

*Mary, Mother of Mercy: pray for us*

*Blessed Dominic Barberi: pray for us*

*Blessed John Henry Newman: pray for us*