



ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

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Registered Charity 234436



Fr. Pat (pfc44@yahoo.com) Fr. George (gaskoloth@hotmail.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)

8th April 2018 – 2nd Sunday of Easter

“I Have My Doubts”

I was going to begin the article this week with the sentence “No doubt you have been watching the Masters”, but thought that might be pushing it – you know, bringing ‘doubt’ and ‘Master’ into the same sentence, with no real relevance to today’s Gospel – that’s very close to having two puns in the one sentence. So I decided not to, but now I’m having second thoughts! When you come to think of it, that very often is a challenge for us – being able to master our doubts.

I don’t know about you, but I was brought up with the concept that ‘blind faith’ was a good thing. No pun intended this time, but I began to have my doubts early on. If ‘blind faith’ meant trusting God and his goodness, well and good. But if it meant trusting everything I was told by my ‘elders and betters’ I began to wonder if it really was a ploy to simply stop us asking relevant questions when being asked to do something that didn’t appeal. And I wasn’t very old before I was convinced that a healthy dose of doubt is very often a wise precaution. To go back to the golf for moment – oh, sorry, I didn’t explain to those who might not be followers of this healthy outdoor sport, (where despite the amount of time we spend in the sand we would never think of altering the ball with sandpaper, ouch!) that the Masters is one of the four major golf tournaments of the year – if only Sergio had a little more doubt about the wisdom of trying to play the same shot five times with disastrously wet consequences each time, he might still be in the competition!

At first reading, the disciple Thomas doesn’t look very good in our Gospel passage today. After all, he was one of those that was with Jesus throughout His ministry, and had heard the predictions about His death not being the end. And now the disciples who had been gathered in the locked room because they weren’t so sure of their own personal safety are telling him that Jesus not only was risen, but had actually appeared to them. I can’t surmise what must have been going on in Thomas’s mind – did he think they were having him on – surely not very likely; or did he think that they had ALL been having a dream – equally unlikely; or was he just so confused that he didn’t know what to think, and decided to suspend judgement, until he saw clearer evidence? (Not going to make reference to any present particular political doubts, or such things as WMD’s!)

As I said Thomas doesn’t look good in this situation – but lo, Jesus takes them all by surprise the following week. He appears again, and instead of giving Thomas a telling-off, He re-assures him that He understands why he would doubt – after all, there had been no recorded instance of anybody appearing in a glorified body – one that could go through walls, for instance. And so we have what to my mind is one of the most beautiful images in the Gospels – “Give me your hand” and let me put it close to my heart; “put it into my side”. How filled with joy he must have been! No doubt this season of Easter has brought you a similar joy!

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We pray for those who have died recently – Michael Tyrrell (funeral 12 noon Monday 16th April), Brenda Sullivan, Aidan Byrne, Barbara Sullivan, Mr. Hargadon, Susie Hamlin; **we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Fr. Charles Owen CP, Fr. Hubert Condron CP, Catherine (Kitty) Press, Cyril & Ellen Emery, Leo Kenny, Thomas Cardiff.

Memorial Mass for Sr. Adriana:

You may remember that in early January we had to bring you the sad news of the death in Tanzania of Sr. Adriana van den Berg. We will be having a special memorial mass for her on Saturday, April 14, at 11.30 am. (I think we've got it right this time!)

Planned Giving Boxes:

Our financial year ended at a most inopportune time this year – in the middle of Easter Week. It has made for added difficulties in distributing the planned giving boxes of envelopes for this coming year. Many have already done so, but if you haven't, then they will be available at the back of the church after masses this week-end, and subsequently will continue to be available through the Parish Office, or by contacting one of the priests of the Parish. If you haven't had a box before but would like to start now, then please let the people at the back of the church - or the Parish office - know, and they will assign you a box number.

100 Club Results:

The March Draw for the 100 Club was held in the Monastery during Holy Week. The number of entries was 101 and the winners were: £400 Chiara Mayer-Riekh (142), £100 Geoff Taylor Meade (11), £50 William Haskell (4). 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 22nd April. Thank you once again to all who support the parish in this way.

Prayer Group Holidays:

The Charismatic Prayer Group and the Christian Meditation group will not be meeting over Easter. The Charismatic Prayer Group will resume at 7.30pm Tuesday 10th April, and the Meditation group will resume on Friday 13th April at 7.00pm.

Do You Gift-Aid?

The value of your donation can be increased by 25% at no extra cost to yourself, simply by Gift-Aiding it – if you are a tax-payer. The Parish learns nothing about your private financial affairs. The average weekly collection, between plate and standing orders, is approximately £2400 a week. If only half of that was Gift-Aided, it would mean an extra £300 a week, or £15,600 a year, to Parish funds. We are genuinely grateful to those who have been Gift-Aiding. If you haven't been doing so already, and are in a position to Gift-Aid, perhaps you might think of doing so now. Forms will be available at the back of the church while the planned giving boxes are being distributed, and at any other time from the office, or contact Fr. Pat by email.

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £3,249. In addition to that we receive an average of over £900 per week in standing orders. The special collection for the upkeep of the Holy Places on Good Friday amounted to £610. We very much appreciate your outstanding generosity in supporting your parish.

Confirmations:

Next week-end, at the 7 o'clock mass on Saturday, 14th April, 22 of our young parishioners will be receiving the sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Nicholas Hudson. We thank our young people who have taken this important step in proclaiming and strengthening their faith, and pray for their continued growth in the Spirit. And a very special word of thanks to Cheryl who has prepared them for this wonderful day.

A reminder to the candidates that the final session of their Confirmation program is this Sunday, April 8th, at 5.00pm, followed by 7.00pm Mass, and this is compulsory for those candidates who are due to be Confirmed on April 14th. Any final letters need to be given in at this session and the names of sponsors need to be finalised. The rehearsal will take place at 7.00pm this Wednesday April 11th.

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).

Thank You:

Now that the dust has settled, as it were, it's an opportune time to thank all those involved in our celebration of Holy Week and Easter. It was heartening to see such good turn-outs for all the services, so thank you very much for such a great exhibition of faith. It would make for a very long bulletin if I were to individually thank all the people who have been working so hard to make sure that everything was in order – people who've been cleaning the church at all hours, people preparing the altar and sanctuary, people responsible for the beautiful flower arrangements, people involved in the actual ceremonies – readers, ministers, servers, music and singing – the list goes on and on. On behalf of all of us, thank you very much, and may the good Lord richly reward you for your generosity with your time and talents.