



# ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

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Registered Charity 234436



Fr. Pat (pfc44@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)

## 26th March 2017 – 4th Sunday of Lent

### There Are None So Blind...

After the shocking events of this week our hearts very much go out to those killed, to the many injured, to those traumatised by being so close to such tragedy, and to all their families and friends who have been affected. While the media, and indeed ourselves, will move on with our lives, for many of the people affected life will never be the same again. They very much need our prayers.

And for me, part of getting on with life was celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation for the first time with this year's candidates for First Communion. It's an occasion I always enjoy, and not just because of the manifest innocence of the young boys and girls, but also because it once again encourages me to look at myself and ask – "was I really like that once? And if I was, what went wrong in the meantime?"

I have to believe that the answer to the first question is 'yes', although I have little memory of my first confession. It took place during school hours, and I remember the whole class being marched from the school, hand in hand, to the nearby church and ushered into the seats outside the confession box. And the children went in one by one, while those outside listened as closely as they could – not to try to hear the confession but to determine if there was any violence involved from the shocked priest – he had probably never thought, we imagined, that children might take biscuits when they shouldn't or had fought in the school yard!

But it's the second question that's maybe the more interesting – 'what went wrong in the meantime?' Where does our innocence go, and why? Of course nothing went 'wrong' – it's all part of growing up and learning about the realities of life - that in the midst of so much goodness and love and all the positive things, there is also a lot of badness and hate and negative things. And part of the task of those who help us grow up is to equip us to deal with both sides of the coin, as it were - to be able to distinguish between right and wrong, and to be able to make the right choices.

Our gospel story today should have been a nice short little account of a man who was born blind being cured by Jesus, and he returning to his family and everybody rejoicing in the fact that now he could see and be able to lead a 'normal' life. But what we have instead is a long story of a group of people who are prepared to go to all sorts of lengths to deny that anything wonderful has happened. They can't accept the evidence of their own eyes. Which is meant to pose the question for us – who are the really blind people in the story? And the answer, of course, is 'those who refuse to see', and, you might add, refuse to be cured.

And before we get too comfortable with judging the characters in the story we might want to ask ourselves what are the things that we're inclined to turn a 'blind eye' towards? And generally it's not the faults of others! Maybe my own? Which brings me back around to those first confessions, and the innocence of children, and their having no difficulty in acknowledging the love and forgiveness of God, and indeed the love and forgiveness of family and friends.

Have you ever actually refused to forgive a person who came to you and personally, in a way that they clearly meant, asked for that forgiveness?

Has God?

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**We pray for the sick of the Parish** - Fr. Charles Owen CP, Nancy Lennon; **and we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Beryl Macauley, Joan Saunders, Angela Borzoni, Conor Finnegan, Ruby Lobo, Mary Feeley, Ralph Bates.

### **Parish Stewardship Drive:**

A most sincere thank you to you all who participated in our Parish Stewardship Drive over the past number of weeks. It is not something we would want to do very often – I mean disturbing the normal flow of our celebration of Mass – and I hope you did not find it too disruptive. It is too early yet to realistically assess its effectiveness, but the early indications are very positive. It's the nature of parish life nowadays that people live very mobile life-styles, and may miss out in attending their own parish some week-ends, so if for that, or any other reason, you weren't able to complete the forms, be assured that they are still available in the porch of the church. I or any member of the Parish Council will only be too happy to give any assistance needed. Again, thank you most sincerely.

### **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.

### **Coffee Morning Next Sunday:**

Our next Parish Coffee Morning will be next Sunday, 2nd April, in the Red Room, immediately after the 10.00am. Mass. A good opportunity, especially for new Parishioners, to meet fellow members of our Parish.

### **Lenten Projects:**

Thanks to all of you who have been so generous in your support of our Lenten Projects this year. Remember, the two charities we are supporting are (1) the Passionist priests who are working with the disaster-stricken people, and especially children, of Haiti, and (2) the Cardinal Hume Centre here in London which provides emergency and longer-term help to those struggling to survive in our capital. For regular updates on the kind of help your money is providing in Haiti please visit - <http://www.stlukehaiti.org/blog/> and more detailed information on the wonderful work of the Cardinal Hume Centre can be found on their web-site - <https://www.cardinalhumecentre.org.uk/>

Remember that as well as the exit collections each Sunday, there are donation boxes in the walls at the back of the church.

### **Church Cleaning Fest:**

Even if you haven't put down "church cleaning" as one of the areas that you would like to volunteer for in our recent stewardship drive, don't let that inhibit you from being part of our church cleaning fest on Friday, 7th April, from 2 to 5 pm. If you are free for any part of that time and would like to help the parish in a practical way (and would like to partake of the wonderful refreshments provided), please sign up on the volunteering list that is in the porch or email [roxane.stirling@btopenworld.com](mailto:roxane.stirling@btopenworld.com)

### **Christian Stewardship:**

Last week's collection amounted to £1,755. In addition we also receive approximately £1,900 in standing orders each month.

### **Planned Giving Boxes:**

We will shortly be into a new tax year, when the planned-giving boxes for 2017-2018 come into operation. We invite you to collect your new boxes of envelopes at the back of the church after any of the masses over the next few week-ends. If you haven't had a box before but would like to start now, then please let the people distributing the boxes know, and they will assign you a box number.

### **Dance for Cancer:**

Supporting the Marie Curie Hospice Hampstead Friday 7<sup>th</sup> April 8.30pm at St. Josephs Parish Centre. Music by Tony Kearney Band, variety of Dances, Waltzes, Quick Steps, Céilí and Sets. Only £5, Please Support, Tickets from Antón or Mary Coyle on 7272 5815

### **Laetare Sunday Adoration:**

There will be a service of Adoration at St. Gabriel's, Holloway Road, on this Laetare Sunday, 26<sup>th</sup> March from 2.00pm till midnight, with evening Mass at 6.30pm, as usual.

### **Fair in the Square Volunteers Needed:**

Highgate's Fair in the Square (<http://www.fairinthesquare.co.uk/>) will, this year, take place on Saturday, June 17th. The Fair needs volunteers to make this year's Fair the best ever. We need more volunteers to serve on the organizing committee and to help on the day. If you are interested in sharing your skills, giving some of your time, making new friends and having fun! please email Betty Pires at [bettypires1503@gmail.com](mailto:bettypires1503@gmail.com).