



# ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

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Registered Charity 234436



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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)

## 18th March 2018 – 5th Sunday of Lent

### FROM LITTLE SEEDS .....

There is so much going on this week-end that it's very hard to know where to start. Today, Saturday, for instance, is St. Patrick's Day. I heard them saying on the BBC news this morning that this is the most widely celebrated festival on the entire planet. (Or maybe I misheard, and what they really said 'wildly'!) Which is extraordinary when you consider how small a country Ireland is, the how few in number is its population. It is still a matter of pride that the Irish influence throughout the world came about principally through the work of its many devoted missionaries all around the world in previous centuries, and more latterly with the enforced emigration of so many of its people, who similarly brought their faith to wherever they settled.

And, of course, Monday should also be for us a cause for major celebration, as it is the feast of our parish Patronal Saint, Saint Joseph. I always think of St. Joseph as being a hugely intriguing, and very much under-rated, figure. His relationship with Jesus always raises the question of what we mean by true parenthood – do we see it simply as a biological relationship, or do the bonds formed in being closely united in one family more accurately reflect what we understand as a father/son relationship? And, like St. Patrick, his relationship with Jesus meant that he had to move from the comfort of home and country, and emigrate – in his case to Egypt to protect the child Jesus from a murderous Herod. St. Patrick, as we know, having escaped from a life of childhood slavery in Ireland, was subsequently asked by God to leave his home and return to Ireland to bring them the faith.

There is a beautiful little parable in the midst of our gospel reading this Sunday, that in a sense sums up the response of both St. Joseph and St. Patrick to God's call to them. It is that single sentence parable – “unless a grain of wheat falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest.” In both cases they were prepared to let go of their own reasonable expectations for their future lives, and thus allow their energies and talents to be used in helping the life of Christ to develop and be strong in Nazareth (St. Joseph) and in Ireland (St. Patrick.) There's not much doubt that if Christ is to develop and grow strong in our modern world it is going to demand people sacrificing personal ambition, and using their energies and talents to spread the message of Christ – be it in our own homes or in the broader world.

That's, hopefully, what we're all doing this Lent – allowing Christ to flourish in our homes, our Parish, our places of work, our places of recreation. As we enter the last two weeks of this special season, let us also look forward to Easter as the time of new life, bursting from all those seeds of potential that sometimes we don't recognise and appreciate even in ourselves.

Speaking of this 'special season', you might be aware that there's another one that has just come to an end! I know that one must always be very humble at a time like this, so I'll say very sincere congratulations to the other five teams on finishing second to sixth in the Six Nations Championship!

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**We pray for those who have died recently** - Michael Gerard Kennedy (Requiem 7.30pm Monday 19<sup>th</sup> March), Amata Hedge (funeral 10.30am Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> March), Elizabeth Rodgers (funeral 11.00am Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> March), Bernadette McNulty, Mary Duffy, Kellie Dunne, Robert Robson; **and we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Margaret McGrath, Fr. Declan O'Toole, Patrick Hogan, James Waldron.

### **Clocks Forward:**

British Summer Time starts next weekend. Don't forget to put your clocks forward one hour next Saturday.

### **Afternoon Tea Social, Wednesday, 21<sup>st</sup> March:**

You may remember that I mentioned some weeks back that our Parish Council felt that we could be doing a bit more for those people who maybe felt a bit isolated in their lives, or were elderly maybe or housebound a lot, or who would at least like to have more time to get to know and spend some relaxed time with their fellow-parishioners. As an initial experiment we'll be having an afternoon tea and chat on Wednesday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, at 2.00pm. 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-uppers, etc. etc. It may not work perfectly first time 'round, but we have to start somewhere!

### **Service of Reconciliation – Tuesday Evening, 6.30 pm:**

In preparation for Easter we will be having a Service of Reconciliation (Penitential service) this Tuesday, 20th March. It will be incorporated into the evening mass at 6.30pm. The service should be over by 7.30 pm.

### **Church Cleaning Fest:**

We haven't had one since before Christmas, so it's time for another big church clean-up, in preparation for the celebration of Holy Week and Easter. It will take place this Friday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, from 10am – we would hope to be finished before 1.00 pm, with, of course, the usual break for refreshments! (A little birdie told me that there might be some Victoria sponge, and coffee and walnut cake.) If you are free for a while around 10 or 11, and would like to help the parish in a practical way, please sign up on the volunteering list in the porch or email [roxane.stirling@btpopenworld.com](mailto:roxane.stirling@btpopenworld.com)

### **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.

### **Lenten Project:**

During previous Lents you have been very generous in your support of the wonderful work being done by Fr. Rick in Haiti. Huge progress has been made, but unfortunately many people, and children in particular, are still living in sub-human conditions. For the Sundays of Lent there will be an exit collection after all Masses in support of this truly Christian work. I know you will be as generous as usual in your support.

### **Planned Giving Boxes:**

We will shortly be into a new tax year, when the planned-giving boxes for 2018-2019 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 couple of 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.

### **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 £1,520. In addition to that we receive an average of over £900 per week in standing orders. We very much appreciate your outstanding generosity in supporting your parish.

### **Cardinal's Mass of Thanksgiving for the Sacrament of Matrimony: (A Reminder)**

This annual event will be taking place this year in Westminster Cathedral, on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 3pm. The Cardinal will be inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese who are celebrating their 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup> and 60<sup>th</sup> (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).