



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)

3rd April 2016 – 2nd Sunday of Easter Too Good to be True?

I know many people are of a genuinely charitable frame of mind. There is no way they would deliberately hurt another person, physically or emotionally. If they have a realistic opportunity to help another they will do so. Their own resources may be limited, but very often they will even be sacrificial in their donations to worthy causes – doing without something they might have liked to have themselves in order to be able to help someone in much more basic need. I know that for many parents, for instance, that can be a very difficult decision – do I spend this money on something my children would love to have, but don't really need, or do I think of the many children throughout the world – and even in our own city – who may not have a decent meal today? I'm not going to be so arrogant as to suggest that parents should make this or that decision in any particular case, as I am aware that there's also need for balance on the one hand, and realism on the other.

And it's not as if I'm not faced with similar decisions myself – obviously not in relation to children, but in the disposal of money that is offered for my discretionary use. It would be very easy for me to accept sufficient money to guarantee that every single defect in the structure or decoration of our church would be put right. But I do have to think of the needs of all the starving, homeless, desperate people in our world who would benefit from \$30 million dollars being donated to them instead. At least that's what I tell myself when I refuse the, at least, 6 offers a week that I get to accept a gift of \$5 million plus for my discretionary use! Mind you, my decision is also influenced by the fact that the gift will only come through if I forward all the bank details of the parish to the generous donor! Am I right to doubt the genuineness of these offers, I wonder?

Don't panic! I've not totally lost the plot. The parish funds are safe. I only draw attention to the above because sometimes it does make a lot of sense to question – not to accept everything on face value. Sometimes it's good to doubt. Probably St. Thomas, one of the central characters in our Gospel this morning, had the same thought. I wonder if he ever heard of the saying – “If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably is”? And what could be better for a very dispirited group of disciples than to hear that Jesus had risen from the dead? Was it too good to be true?

I've always had a kind of soft spot for Thomas - he's had a rather poor press over the years – to be called a “doubting Thomas” is not seen as a compliment! And yet we owe Thomas for highlighting for us one of the most destructive misconceptions of all; one which brings a lot of deep pain and heart-ache to so many genuinely good people. I'm referring to the misconception that doubting something shows a great lack of faith, of trust in people or in God. How often has that been worked on us – “don't question my authority, my integrity, my honesty, my competence in fact just don't question me, you're being a nuisance” – when our every instinct is telling us that not to question is simply the lazy or maybe cowardly way out! Thomas didn't believe, so why should he say otherwise? His doubt didn't upset Christ. Why should it upset us? In fact, it sometimes takes a lot more faith to question – there's an implied trust you will get the true answer!

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We pray for those who have died recently – Michael John Barrett (funeral 11.30am Monday, 11th April), Paddy Langan; **we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Patrick Kiely, Clifford Lewis, Leo Kenny, Liam O'Beirne. *(The Family of Sr. Helen McChesney are very grateful to all those who sent Mass cards and messages of sympathy on the occasion of her death. A Mass has been offered for their intentions.)*

Coffee Morning:

The next of our monthly Coffee Mornings will be taking place this Sunday, April 3rd, immediately after the 10 o'clock Mass. Please come along and take the time to meet with your fellow-parishioners.

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £3,097. In addition we also receive over £1900 in standing orders each month. The Good Friday collection for the Holy Places amounted to £537.

Planned Giving Boxes:

Quite a few people have not yet picked up their planned giving boxes for the new tax year, beginning in just over a week's time. They can be picked up today or during this coming week after any of the masses. If you haven't had a box before but would like to start now, then please fill in the appropriate form and you will be assigned a box number.

Churches Together United Worship:

The next in the series of shared worship events taking place in the various churches in the Highgate area will be **here at St. Joseph's**, next Sunday 10th April at 5.30pm. We will be welcoming Revd. Bryce Wandrey from St. Michael's as preacher, on the theme of Discipleship.

Organ Recital:

The first of our 2016 season of organ recitals takes place on Thursday, April 14th, at 7.30 pm. The organist on this occasion will be our own Alberto Brigandi, so do come along and show your appreciation of his musical talent. Admission is free, but all donations towards the repair and maintenance of the organ will be appreciated.

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 £2000 a week. If only half of that was Gift-Aided, it would mean an extra £250 a week, or £13,000 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 are available from the office, or contact Fr. Pat by email. PS – thanks to all the new people who have signed up over the last few weeks.

Prayer Groups:

The **Charismatic Prayer Group** will resume this week at 7.30 pm. on Tuesday 5th April. All welcome.

The **Christian Meditation Group** will resume meeting on Friday 8th April at 8.00pm.

100 Club Results:

The March Draw for the 100 Club was held in the Monastery during the week. The number of entries was 118 and the winners were: £400 R. Giumba (20), £100 B. Traynor-Jones (141), £50 George Farrelly (145). A copy of the results may be obtained from the Parish office on request. The April draw will be held as usual in the last week of the month, and monthly subscriptions should be paid by Sunday 24th April. Thank you once again to all who support the parish in this way.

Thanks:

We have just completed the special celebrations of Holy Week and Easter, the key celebrations of our liturgical year. It was lovely to see so many people obviously making the special effort to enter as fully as possible into the spirit of the season. But the celebrations that take place in the church would never happen without the dedicated involvement of so many people, and it would be very remiss of me not to acknowledge our debt of gratitude to them. Unfortunately I don't know the names of all involved – there are so many! – but I think particularly of those people who clean the church, and keep it in a fitting and welcoming condition for our celebrations; I think of Carmel and her team who decorate the church with the most beautiful floral displays; I think of Roxane who put so much energy into making sure everything required was in place at the appropriate time; I think of Andrew, Josh and all the servers who faithfully turn up week after week; I think of the large number of people who are involved as Readers, and Ministers of the Eucharist; I think of those who organise and take up the collections each week, and those who give of their time to count them; I think of Alberto and our choirs, without whom our celebrations would be much less beautiful; I think of all those who care for and train our young people – in the junior liturgies, as well as preparation for First Communion and Confirmation; I think of those who voluntarily staff our reception, answering door and phone so patiently; I think of the team of people who staff the repository; I think of those who have so generously given of the time to serve on the Parish Council and Finance Committee; I think of those who run the pre-marriage courses; - the list goes on and on. Thanks so much to you all, and to all those people not yet involved, but who will be doing so very soon! Right?