



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)

29th April 2018 – 5th Sunday of Easter

Branching Out

More than once over the years you will have heard me admit that gardening has never been one of my special skills – quite the contrary – you're much safer keeping me a long way away from your garden! Mowing the lawn is about the limit, and even then somehow I manage to take a major sceilp out of the ground every now and then. (For those not familiar with the word, a 'sceilp' where I came from was to hit something – generally accidentally – and knock a lump out of it that didn't particularly enhance it.) And even though my parents – who were the opposite of me in this regard – in their latter years might in desperation ask me to prune the rose bushes in the garden – (I don't know, but possibly they thought it was one of the special graces I might have got at ordination!) – my normal desire to be an obedient son had to be put to one side as I reminded them of previous disasters. Alas, when they died, we were left with a very rusty secateurs, and some very dishevelled rose bushes!

So today's gospel is not one that readily strikes a harmonious chord with me! My instinct would be that when you're pruning you would cut away the bits and pieces that are not flourishing, and leave well enough alone for the parts that seem to be doing well! But then, what do I know? Although, in fairness, Jesus seems to be with me in the first part of that. But He's not happy with simply cutting away the stuff that is not producing properly, but even the stuff that's doing well He prunes so that it can be even more fruitful.

And it's that word 'fruitful' that is key to what all this pruning is about. Jesus never expressed much interest in people simply being good plants, stuck in the ground, as it were, and going no-where. He had a much more dynamic understanding of what it was to be a follower of His. The two key concepts He mentions in today's extract from His address to His disciples at the Last Supper, it that we must be connected to the vine, and we must bear much fruit. And both concepts are of course intimately linked. He is the vine to which all the branches must be linked, and it only through being linked to the vine that any branch can bear fruit.

It would be very easy to be tempted to think of this gospel as not particularly relevant to our own modern-day situations – probably most of the population of London have never actually touched a vine, let alone pruned it – happy just to avail of its fruits! But it should be a little disconcerting when we hear Jesus say "cut off from me you can do nothing." It challenges us to ask ourselves – well, how do I make sure that I'm not cut off from Jesus? Certainly – and I hope I'm not misunderstood when I say this – it's not simply by coming to church regularly. In itself that's not necessarily a fruit-bearing exercise. No, like the branches in the vine, we must let the life-force, the sap, of the vine be our own source of life and strength to bear fruit. His Body and Blood and His Word must be our life-force, uniting us with Him and with one another. Many people may not be able to attend church regularly, but that doesn't necessarily cut them off from Christ. If we wish we can still have a close relationship with Him, through our prayers, through being aware of Him never being far from us – always being there for us. It's a choice we can all make.

Did I ever tell you about my experiences of deadheading?

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We pray for the sick of our parish – Anthony Boyle; **we pray for those who have died recently** – Anthony Miles (funeral 2.00pm Tuesday 1st May), John Bromfield, Aliemar Eccles, Kathleen Whyte; **we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Billy Ryan, Tom Doherty, Elish Burke, Jack Killeen.

Mission Appeal:

There will be an appeal at all Masses this weekend on behalf of the Franciscan Missionaries of St. Joseph.

Coffee Morning Next Sunday:

Our next Parish Coffee Morning will be next Sunday, 6th May, in the Red Room, immediately after the 10.00 am. Mass. Why not avail of this good opportunity, especially for new Parishioners, to meet fellow members of our Parish? All are welcome to relax for a while and enjoy a cuppa and a chat.

Fr. Christopher:

Just to keep you up-to-date with his present condition - Fr. Christopher has been discharged from the Whittington hospital and has transferred to the Marie Curie Hospice in Hampstead. He is in good spirits but continues to be weak and is having significant difficulties in eating. The hope is that with the high level of care which the hospice can provide he will improve in strength and be able to return to Nazareth House. Please keep him in your prayers. Thank you.

Shared International Lunch:

To celebrate Pentecost, the Catholic Church's birthday, our Parish is organising a Shared International Lunch on Sunday 20th May, at 1pm in the Red Room – and, hopefully, (summer will be here by then!) spilling out to the lawn at the back of the monastery. This is our second year to celebrate Pentecost in this way. Our celebration is designed to encourage people to get to know, and mix with, particularly the many new people who are constantly joining our parish. If you were one of the lucky ones who managed to be here for the celebration last year you will remember what a wonderful success it was. All parishioners, longstanding or newly arrived, young or old, are invited to come along and, if possible, contribute a traditional dish from your country and/or some drinks (but not in large quantities). Please note that, on the day, you will only be able to warm up, not cook the food.

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £1,552. 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.

Organ Recital:

The next in our season of organ recitals will be given by Paul Dean this Thursday evening, 3rd May at 7.30pm. Admission is free and donations to our organ fund will be welcome.

100 Club Results:

The April Draw for the 100 Club was held in the Monastery during the week. The number of entries was 103 and the winners were: £400 M.C. McDonnell (184), £100 Elizabeth Millar (118), £50 Tom Kelly (170). 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 20th May. Thank you once again to all who support the parish in this way.

Eucharistic Congress:

The bishops of England and Wales are holding a National Eucharistic Pilgrimage and Congress in Liverpool in 7-9 September 2018. The Echo Arena in Liverpool will be the home to a six-hour stage programme on the 8th September including a Congress Mass, speakers Bishop Robert Barron and Cardinal Vincent Nichols, and a drama highlighting the beauty of reverence and devotion. The day will conclude with Adoration. For more information and to enquire about tickets, please contact adoremus@rcdow.org.uk or call 07738183829.

Monthly Ceili Mix:

The next Céilí Mix is on Friday May 4th at 8pm in the Parish Centre (and regularly on 1st Fridays of the month). A very sociable event, open to all ages and nationals, with Sets, Waltzes, Quick Step and Ceili Dance, something for all to join in. William the MC will show the way if needed. Only a Fiver for adults.

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 Fr. Pat the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and email (or telephone number, if no email).

Bright Stars Stay and Play:

The St Joseph's Parish Bright Stars Stay and Play for 0-5 year olds is now back during the school term. It will run on Tuesday mornings from 9:00-11:00am in the parish centre. Lots of fun activities for 0-5 year olds. If you would like more information then please contact: stjosephsbrightstars@gmail.com