



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)

25th March 2018 – Palm Sunday

A VERY SPECIAL CELEBRATION

I hope you won't mind if you find the bulletin this week a little on the 'tired' side. I've had a pretty tough morning of it! I came down to the church mid-morning to find that there were lines of sinners waiting for forgiveness in the church – in fact, there were so many of them that I had to enlist the help of a crack team of confessors to dispense absolution all 'round. I'm happy to say that it all ended with big smiles and manifest relief all round. (Translation of the above, in case you haven't worked it out already – a group of children from our parish celebrated their first reconciliation this morning!) As far as I'm concerned this is always a very special celebration, and I think that a large part of that feeling is because it's absolutely clear that even though we're supposed to be focussing on sinfulness and forgiveness, we're really dealing with typically innocent, trusting and wonder-filled children.

I find it very difficult in situations like that not to find myself being tempted to reminisce on how different it was 'in my day'. The marching two by two from school to church. Into a dark box, hearing the voices in the distance (the person in the other side of the box). Waiting for the slide to go over, and hoping one didn't forget anything on the list of sins I'd learnt by heart. And the relief afterwards to have got out without the priest giving out to me. Give me the present approach any day! And it's tempting to think – "if only one could go back to those days of innocence and wonder" – but it's not going to happen, so forget it. We need to get real, as they say.

And, as we enter into the celebration of Holy Week, we're being invited to 'get real' in another, and far more significant sense. We're being invited to reflect on some of the key realities in our modern world. And I'm not referring to that awful abuse of the word that we find in the expression 'reality shows'. No, the reality we are invited to accept is that we are all sinners, who, thanks to the wonderful love of the Lord, have been redeemed by His Passion, Death and Resurrection. It's very easy to let that sentence trip off the tongue, as it were. But at this time of the year in particular, we are invited to pause a little and relate this reality to how we get through our lives from day to day. Do we see anything of ourselves in the characters of the original Holy Week? The fickle crowd of Palm Sunday, baying for His death on Good Friday? The overconfident disciples at the Last Supper, scattered very quickly in the Garden of Gethsemane? The weak Pilate, cornered into condemning an innocent man? And the many more.

But this is not a time for sitting in judgement of others, or even of ourselves. It's above all a time of celebration – yes, I meant 'celebration'. Celebrating that we have a God who sees past all our petty weaknesses, and is willing to still think of us as His sisters and brothers – members of His Family. And so He's willing to go to any lengths to re-assure us of that Love. I invite you all to join with us this week in celebrating this coming week, so that next Sunday we can celebrate in a renewed spirit and special new life and love that is offered to us.

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We pray for the sick and housebound of our parish – Ann McCoo; we pray for those who have died recently - Elizabeth Rodgers (funeral 11.00am Tuesday 27th March), John Edwardes, Michael Gerard Kennedy, Amata Hedge, Patsy Collins, Eileen Haughey, Patrick Friel; and we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time – Elizabeth Rodgers (funeral 11.00am Tuesday 27th March), John Edwardes, Michael Gerard Kennedy, Amata Hedge, Patsy Collins, Eileen Haughey, Patrick Friel.

Holy Week and Easter Schedule:

There are leaflets available at the back of the church with details of services over the next couple of weeks. We just give you here a brief summary of the main events

Holy Thursday – Mass of Lord's Supper at 8 pm, followed by Exposition at the Altar of Repose.

Good Friday 10.30 am. - Service for children.
 12.00 noon - Stations of the Cross.
 3.00 pm. – Liturgy of the Passion.
 7.30 pm – The Seven Last Words.

Holy Saturday – no services during the day
 9.00 pm Solemn Easter Vigil.

Easter Sunday – Masses at the usual times, including evening mass at 7.00 pm.

Thank You's:

A most sincere 'thank you' to the many volunteers who have been involved in a very busy week in the Parish. On Wednesday we had the first of what we hope will become a regular feature of Parish life – our afternoon tea and chat. There was a very encouraging turn-out for a first time, and I want to thank Roni and her helpers and contributors of 'yummies'! On Friday we had a very thorough cleaning of the church, so again I thank Roxane and the many volunteers who did such an excellent job. And on Saturday we had First Reconciliation for our young members of the Parish. I want to thank all our voluntary catechists and helpers who had prepared them for this day, and continue to prepare them for their First Communions later in the year.

Good Friday Procession of Witness:

As well as our own Holy Week liturgies there will be the usual **Good Friday Procession of Witness** with Churches Together in Highgate, beginning at 9.30am from All Saints Church, Talbot Rd./Church Rd. and proceeding via St. Augustine's Church on Archway Road and St. Joseph's, to Pond Square URC Chapel for a service at 10.30am followed by tea/coffee and hot cross buns.

100 Club:

The March draw for the 100 Club will take place during the week. Would any members who have not yet handed in their subscriptions please do so as soon as possible.

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 13, at 11.30 am.

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.

Lenten Project:

This Sunday will be the final exit collection in aid of this year's Lenten Project in support of the work of Fr. Rick in Haiti.

Planned Giving Boxes:

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 £1,329. 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 the Vivaldi Ensemble on Easter Sunday evening, 1st April at 8.00pm. Admission is free and donations to our organ fund will be welcome.