



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)

11th March 2018 – 4th Sunday of Lent 'REJOICE' SUNDAY

While Latin was actually one of my favourite subjects in secondary school, I don't number myself among those who mourn its passing from being the language of our normal worship on Sundays. I'm very much in favour of being part of a congregation who, when they gather to worship and pray, at least know what they are talking to God about. (In fact, if I might do a little detour, that's not a bad idea in general – knowing what we're talking about – I'm afraid I don't have a lot of time for those many 'experts' I hear who don't seem to have a clue what they're talking about. That'll do me for my little rant this week!)

But, of course, we haven't entirely lost the Latin language from our worship. For instance, we still celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi – which, as you know, is Latin for "The Body of Christ". And this Sunday is also an example of a Latin tag that has remained with us – this being Laetare Sunday. The Latin word 'laetare' means 'rejoice' and the Sunday takes its name from the very first word of the Sunday mass celebration – you'll find it as the Entrance Antiphon, which in reality we don't usually say as it's meant to be sung, and it's frequently replaced by a suitable hymn.

It might seem strange to have a 'Rejoice' Sunday in the middle of Lent – and no, it's not because Ireland won the rugby match today, or that Man United beat Liverpool! It's not even because we have now passed the half-way stage, only another three weeks of Lenten sacrifice to go! But, oddly enough, for a very different reason that is quite close to the truth. Our Gospel reading today gives us the real reason. Lent was never meant to be seen as a negative season – it is a time of preparation for the greatest event that has ever occurred in the world. Jesus, the Son of God – God Himself – has come into our world so that, weak and all as we are, we can be saved. That is something about which we should all be rejoicing – and we will do so at Easter time. Our gospel today is reminding us that Easter is getting ever closer, so in a sense we should be starting to anticipate the joy.

While we rejoice that Jesus has saved us, our Gospel today is reminding us that our participation in that salvation is something that we ourselves have to own – and Jesus puts it in the most positive terms for us. "Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life." "No one who believes in him will be condemned." In simple terms – we need to believe in him; and the easiest way to do that is to get to know him better and appreciated what being a follower of his really entails. As Jesus summed it up on a number of occasions – the greatest commandment is love, of God and of one another.

And today we also rejoice in another manifestation of that love – as expressed by mothers all over the world. We have a song in Ireland which maybe sums it up as well as any –

A mother's love's a blessing, No matter where you roam

Keep her while she's living, You'll miss her when she's gone

Love her as in childhood, Though feeble old and grey

For you'll never miss your mother's love, Till she's buried beneath the clay.

(Come on – you didn't think there'd be happy Irish song without some mention of death!)

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We pray for those who have died recently - Fr. Peter McGrath CP, Amata Hedge (funeral 10.30am Tuesday 20th March), Bernadette McNulty, Maureen Waldron, Francis Gerald (Gerry) Burke, Eileen Hughes; **and we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – John Anthony Murphy, Alice Foye, Rosita Estadilla, Jack Grace.

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.

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.

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, will be on Friday, 23rd 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@bopenworld.com

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.

Afternoon Tea Social, Wednesday, 21st 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 21st, 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!

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £1,390. 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.

Mothering Sunday:

This Sunday is Mothering Sunday, and we would like to celebrate it as a Parish – not of course interfering in whatever way you might be celebrating it as a family! You are welcome to attend either of two sessions – after the 10, and after the 12 masses in the Red Room. It is open to all – you don't have to be a mother yourself – as long as you've had a mother figure in your life!

Scaffolding Again!:

Those of you who look hopefully to the heavens will have had your view interrupted by new scaffolding that is still in the process of being erected in the dome area of the church. Unfortunately, we have had some storm damage to the copper roof, and, as usual in this kind of situation, when they got a closer look it was seen that the damage was more extensive than originally realised. We don't as yet know the full extent of the work that will be required, but now that the scaffolding is there it only makes sense to ensure that all problems in that area are dealt with. But relax – as I don't anticipate having to launch an emergency appeal for more funds, since your continuing generosity to Growing in Faith should cover the costs. On the other hand..... !

Prayer Group Holiday:

St Joseph's Charismatic Prayer Group will not be meeting this week. Their meetings will resume after Easter, at 7.30pm Tuesday 10th April.

Fr. Peter McGrath, C.P. R.I.P.:

We are saddened to have to bring you news of the recent death of Fr Peter McGrath, C.P. an Australian Passionist who was known to some of you through his work with Family Groups. May he rest in peace.