



ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

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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)

17th January 2016 – 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Not a Drop to Drink?

Throughout my life as a priest I have obviously participated in many baptisms, marriages and funerals – or ‘hatching, matching and dispatching’ as they are occasionally irreverently referred to! And on many of these occasions the priest involved is invited to the celebrations afterwards. In my younger days I would generally accept such invitations, on the grounds that they were a good way of informally meeting one’s parishioners and getting to know them better and thus adjust one’s ministry on the basis of ‘where they were at’.

To be honest, I relatively quickly realised that for me such events were not a particularly fruitful use of my time. For starters, most of the people present would not be members of the parish – being friends and relatives of the families involved – and I was highly unlikely to ever meet them again, other than at their next baptism, marriage, or funeral. But more decisively I was influenced by the fact – I don’t know whether you have the same problem – that these events tended to be accompanied by a considerable amount of background noise, with the result that I found myself constantly having to say “sorry, could you repeat that, I didn’t quite catch it,” and the following day I would be hoarse from having to shout at people. Maybe it’s something to do with my hearing, which is normally very good, but background noise tends to have a very negative effect on me – even in church! (Ahem)

I don’t know what motivated Jesus to attend the wedding feast at Cana – the gospels don’t give us any hint, just that He was there. And we can be sure that He didn’t have to worry about piped music, not to mention a disco, in the background. So He would have had no difficulty hearing His mother drawing His attention to a potentially embarrassing situation for His hosts! And ‘though He seems to shrug off her intervention, we know that in reality He responds with an astonishing degree of generosity. When you think of it – each of the water jars, we’re told, could hold 20 to 30 gallons – and there were 6 of them! By any standards that’s a lot of wine – like a thousand bottles at least! Clearly Jesus didn’t have any problem with people having a good time at a party! And I don’t mean that in any disrespectful way. Remember, Jesus was at the party – presumably to celebrate with His friends, and His mother. It’s no harm reminding ourselves that being a follower of Jesus does not require us to be miserable kill-joys. And, in accordance with the rules of hospitality at the time, there would have been a very generous supply of wine their to begin with – the steward says as much when he indicates to the bridegroom that it’s unusual to keep the good wine until after the guests have had ‘plenty to drink’!

There are lots of different levels of meaning in today’s gospel – not least the presence of Jesus at the celebration of the love between a man and wife, and His desire to be present in all loving relationships. But we shouldn’t underestimate the significance of His stupendous generosity. It is reminiscent of the story of the multiplication of the loaves and fish, with all the basketfuls left over. Jesus always provides us with much more than we need. While He certainly doesn’t encourage it, He is never put off by our wastefulness, especially all the missed opportunities we let slip every day to spread His love and peace in our world, particularly in our circle of friends, at work, in our parish, and most especially in our homes. Let’s appreciate what a loving and generous God we worship.

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We pray for those who have died recently – Emanuel Xuaerb (funeral 12.00 noon Friday 22nd January), James Flanagan, Paddy Cunningham; **and we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Br. Matthew Grace CP, Sr. Siobhan Shelley CP, Kathleen O’Sullivan, Dudley Fox, John Collins, Hannah Kyne, Siobhan Bailey, Josephine Bromfield.

Peace Sunday:

I don't know about you, but I'm finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with all the 'special' days, weeks and even years. Recent tradition has been that the first of January is the World Day of Peace. While making passing reference to that, may I draw to your attention the message issued by Pope Francis to mark that day. It is called "Overcome Indifference and Win Peace", and for those who are internet-literate, it can be seen at <http://www.catholicculture.org/culture/library/view.cfm?recnum=11112> (For anyone who doesn't use the internet and who would like a copy, I will be very happy to provide one for them - just let me know.) Like all our present Pope's writings, it's very readable and full of common sense and thought-provoking insights. For instance – "Sadly, it must be said that today's information explosion does not of itself lead to an increased concern for other people's problems, which demands openness and a sense of solidarity. Indeed, the information glut can numb people's sensibilities and to some degree downplay the gravity of the problems." But back to the heading above, which is to draw our attention to the fact that today is Peace Sunday. We're also coming to the end of the Year of Consecrated Life – which ends on February 2nd. And at the same time we're already into the Year of Mercy! Confusing? May be, but it shouldn't stop us from being aware that each of these are important and worthy of our prayerful support. And to crown all that, this coming Monday, 18th January, is the beginning of the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity! We had a service locally in All Saints Church last Sunday to pray for Christian Unity, and on Thursday of this week, 21st January, there will be a special service as part of the Islington Deanery's marking of the event in Wesley's Chapel on City Road – see poster in porch for details.

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £1,682. In addition we also receive over £1900 in standing orders each month. We really do appreciate your continuing generosity.

Pre Marriage Course:

Our next Marriage preparation course will be taking place on Saturday, 6th February. Those who wish to participate should contact Fr. Pat, at pfc44@yahoo.com. For those wishing to get married in the Catholic Church nowadays it is a requirement that they do a pre-marriage course – though not necessarily in their own parish. Calling it "a requirement" – can make it sound like a burden, but it genuinely isn't so. It is focussed on thinking past the wedding day and its preparations, and helping couples to appreciate that they still have a lot to learn, about themselves as well as their partners. Our course here is conducted by a counsellor, a married couple and a priest – so many different perspectives on married life are presented.

New Year's Resolution - Volunteer for CAFOD:

Do you have good public speaking skills and want to help tackle poverty and injustice? CAFOD needs volunteers to speak in parishes and/or schools about its work in the developing world. To find out more and book a place on our next "Understanding CAFOD" training day on Saturday, 23rd January 2016 call CAFOD on 0208 449 6970 or email westminster@cafod.org.uk.

"Vinnie Packs":

The SVP are distributing 12,000 Vinnie Packs containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter. They would be very grateful if you could sponsor packs at a suggested donation of £3.25 per pack. Donations can be sent to **Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ** with cheques made out to SVP or go to virginmoneygiving.com and type "SVP" into the charity section. Vinnie Packs is in the **Campaign** drop down box. Thank you so much for your support.

SVP Shop Volunteers:

Volunteers are needed for the SVP charity shop at 484 Kingsland Road, Dalston, Hackney. Work will include sorting donations, pricing, steaming, operating the till and customer service. Full training will be given. You will be part of a happy, friendly team doing very rewarding community work. Please pop in for a chat or call Louise on 020 7249 3511.

World Youth Day – Krakow 2016:

Westminster Youth Ministry are leading a pilgrimage for youth 16 years and over to World Youth Day in 2016, visiting both Lodz for Days in the Diocese and Krakow for World Youth Day. The pilgrimage runs from 18th July until 31st July and is priced at £750 - inclusive of all accommodation, travel, WYD fees and food. There is an option for those over 18 to join the pilgrimage for the WYD week only. For more information youth@rcdow.org.uk, <http://dowym.c4om/events/wyd/> or 0207-387-1971.

St. Dominic Barberi?:-

The Archbishop of Birmingham, Bernard Longley, (previously Auxiliary Bishop in Westminster and frequent visitor to St. Joseph's) has organised a Novena (26 February to 5 March 2016) for a miracle for the Canonisation of Blessed Dominic Barberi C.P. who received John Henry Newman into the Church in 1845. As a Passionist Parish, I suggest this is something we could support with our prayers.