



ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

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Registered Charity 234436



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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)

26th February 2017 – 8th Sunday in Ordinary Time A Mother's Love

I came across a story recently of a poor woman in a Dublin parish who had a son who was turning out to be a bit of a wastrel. He wouldn't work. He spent his time drinking and hanging around with troublemakers. He stole everything of value she had in the house. Again and again she pleaded with him to change his life, but he gave her the deaf ear. Her heart was broken as he made her life a misery.

Eventually he ended up in prison. Her neighbours, who all along felt so sorry for her, but felt there wasn't much they could do to help, now hoped that at last she would have peace, and be able to get on with living a normal life. But instead she visited him without fail every week, carrying cigarettes and other things to him in a little carrier bag. One day one her neighbours met her as she was on her way to the prison. "That son of yours has ruined your life", she said. "He'll never change. Why don't you just forget about him and get on with your life?"

"How can I?" she replied. "I don't like what he's done, but he's still my son."

You could say that that mother was foolish. Yet she was only doing what any mother worthy of the name can't help doing, that is, loving her child through thick and thin. Can a mother forget her child? Occasionally it can happen. But thankfully it is something so rare that when it does happen, it shocks us. For most of us, the love of a mother is the most reliable kind of human love we will experience. It's no wonder, then, that the Bible uses a mother's love as an image of God's love us.

We read in our first reading today – "Does a woman forget her baby at the breast, or fail to cherish the son of her womb? Yet even if these forget, I will never forget you." These assuring words were spoken to God's people at a time when things were going very bad. The temple had been destroyed, Jerusalem sacked, and thousands taken into exile in Babylon. The people felt that God had abandoned them. But the prophet assured them that God had not abandoned them, no more than a mother could abandon her child.

If a mother, who is after all a mere human being, is capable of such steadfast love, then how much greater is God's love for us who are his children. Even when we are in sin, God doesn't stop loving us. We all long for security. People collect money and possessions because they give the illusion of security. People of faith do not rely on those things but on God, who is everlasting love. God, and his undying love for us is our security, and our chief concern should be to do his will. Such deep trust enables us to live the present moment free from attachments and worries.

When, in our gospel today, Jesus says "Do not worry about tomorrow" He is not knocking common sense. We have to plan for tomorrow. What he is warning against is that fretting and worrying that keeps us from looking beyond the material values and cares of this world.

In the season of Lent, which begins this week, we are being invited to step back a little, as it were, from our lives, and look at the things that concern us and seem to occupy so much of our lives. Have we got the balance right? 'Giving up' is good; 'giving' is maybe better; but loving is best of all!

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We pray for those who have died recently – Kevin McQuire (funeral 12.30pm Monday 27th February), John Teatum (funeral 10.30am Friday 3rd March), Joao Teles (funeral 10.45am Wednesday 8th March), Sally Heggarty (funeral 10.30am Tuesday 14th March), Mary Eyre, Sister Angela LSU, Margaret (Peg) Leyden; **we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Herbert Trent, Margaret Murphy, Elizabeth O'Gorman, Vera Hogkin, Daniel McGrory, Liam Boland, Liam Beirne, Edward John Hynes.

Ash Wednesday:

This Wednesday, 1st March, is Ash Wednesday. Ashes will be blessed and distributed at the usual weekday Masses at 9.30am and 6.30pm.

Confirmation Group Cake Sale:

This year's Confirmation class have been making cakes and will be selling them at 10, 12 and 7 pm Masses this Sunday, as well as running a coffee morning after 10am Mass in aid of Haiti and the Cardinal Hume Centre.

Parish Stewardship Campaign:

As you will be aware from elsewhere in the bulletin, Lent begins this coming Wednesday. In the past there was a tendency to consider Lent a time for giving up things – “during Lent I won't” This Lent we would like you to do something very positive, something that will benefit not just yourself, but our entire Parish Community. Over the next three weeks we will be having a “Stewardship” campaign, in which we invite you to consider your role in the parish, and how you may help to make our Parish an even more vibrant community. Yes, there will be a financial aspect to it, as we need to get our day-to-day finances on a more sound footing, but it is also very much about enrolling the talents that abound within our parish to be exercised in a fulfilling and community-building way.

On each of the next three week-ends there will be some speaking during the masses, and you will be given a specially produced leaflet, filling you in on what is happening in the parish, on the kinds of services we would like to provide/improve, and how you can help. Members of the Parish Council and/or Finance Committee will also be available after the masses to answer your questions.

Coffee Morning Next Sunday:

Our next Parish Coffee Morning will be next Sunday, 5th March, in the Red Room, immediately after the 10.00am. Mass. A good opportunity, especially for new Parishioners, to meet fellow members of our Parish.

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. Of course, if the set time is not suitable for you, you can also do this particular form of prayer at any time on your own or with some friends.

Lent Groups:

Details of the ecumenical Lent Groups meeting this year are available in the porch. There is a range of courses with daytime or evening meetings to choose from. Courses begin in the week of 6th March so please pick up a leaflet and sign up on the list in the porch as soon as possible. St. Joseph's Group will be studying the new York Course *Receiving Christ, in five different ways*, meeting in the Red Room, 10.45 for 11.00am start on Tuesdays beginning March 7th.

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £1,386. In addition we also receive approximately £1,900 in standing orders each month.

100 Club Results:

The February Draw for the 100 Club was held in the Monastery during the week. The number of entries was 109 and the winners were: £400 Evonla Abbi (3), £100 Jack Balseiro (24), £50 G. Stern (172). 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 19th March. Thank you once again to all who support the parish in this way.

Women's World Day of Prayer:

The theme of this year's Women's World Day of Prayer will be prayer for the Philippines. It will be held at 10.30 am on Friday, 3rd March at St. Peter le Poer, Muswell Hill. The church is at the corner of Albion Avenue and Colney Hatch Lane and can be reached by the 43 and 134 buses.

Dance for Cancer:

Supporting the Marie Curie Hospice Hampstead Friday 7th April 8.30pm at St. Josephs Parish Centre. Music by Tony Kearney Band, variety of Dances, Waltzes, Quick Steps, Céilí and Sets. Only £5, Please Support, Tickets from Antón or Mary Coyle on 7272 5815

Mass for Bereaved Parents:

The Mass for bereaved parents will take place at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday, 11th March at 2.30pm. It's a time to remember, to pray, to give thanks, and to entrust deceased children to the Lord. All are welcome to attend.