



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

7th January 2024

The Epiphany Of The Lord



When the magi come to Jerusalem, they head for the palace, they came, after all, looking for a King. Their searching leads them ultimately to a much more ordinary abode. They trust that this is what they were seeking, and they respond with joy and praise. What extraordinary trust - the humble life of Mary and Joseph does not look like the king they were expecting. The magi and their extraordinary trust stand in sharp contrast with King Herod. They are open to the workings of God in places and people foreign to them. He, on the other hand, clings so tightly to his power and title that he cannot represent. The magi ask questions earnestly, driven by curiosity and passion.

Herod makes inquiries maliciously, intending to maintain his hold on what was never really his. The magi give us an example of the wonders that can happen when we drop our defenses and receive God's presence in each other even when it does not appear as we would have expected.



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Office Phone Number: 01689 827100
 Office Email Address: parish.office@stjamespettswood.org
 davidcamilleri@rcaos.org.uk
 Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,
 or by appointment.

<p>The Epiphany Of The Lord Saturday 6th January</p> <p>Sunday 7th January</p>	<p>06:00pm Dr Margaret Evelyn Ledger (Foundation Mass)</p> <p>09:15am People Of The Parish</p> <p>11:00am Geraldine Mulroy RIP (A Mulroy) Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)</p>
<p>The Baptism Of The Lord Monday 8th January</p>	<p>10:00am Requiem Mass for Antonio Garcia RIP</p>
<p>Feria Tuesday 9th January</p>	<p>10:00am Jimmy Robb Rip, Mary & family, Entire Robb Family (Kerry Murphy)</p>
<p>Feria Wednesday 10th January</p>	<p>10:00am Sheryl Goldsmith RIP (C Cardoza) Russell Mills RIP (L Henderson)</p> <p>10.45am - 11.15am Eucharistic Adoration - In Church</p>
<p>Feria Thursday 11th January</p>	<p>10:00am Veronica (Doogie)Reading RIP (S Weekly) Alexandra Henderson RIP (L Henderson)</p>
<p>Feria Friday 12th January</p>	<p>No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</p>
<p>Second Sunday Saturday 13th January</p> <p>Sunday 14th January</p>	<p>06.00pm Michael Rafferty RIP (Gloria Rafferty & Family)</p> <p>09:15am People Of The Parish</p> <p>11:00am John O'Sullivan & family (L O'Sullivan) Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)</p>

Second Collections

The Second Collection this week is for SPUC



The current needs for this week are for:

- Desserts/Puddings/Jelly/
- Angel Delight
- Razors
- Cooking Sauces
- Washing Up Liquid
- Women's & Mens Deodorant
- Fruit Juice

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

14th January 2024

Second Sunday



Fr David Says.....

One of the life giving ministries within our parish has always been for me the Journey in Faith programme. This a programme specific for those who are enquiring about the

Catholic faith and also for those Catholics who wish to deepen their own understanding of their faith. As a parish with an excellent team of catechists, provide a place where the seekers feel safe enough to explore and question. Our programme which has been tuned up organically for the needs of the individuals is a mixture of creating a community between us and also to be informed and experience God's love for each one of us through the person of Jesus. When we ask the initial question about what made them want to explore the faith, many would say that someone had inspired them to start their search. Others would say that they feel the need to belong to a community. Others would say that their children and wife/husband were Catholics and so they would like to understand and find out more about the faith. Others on the other hand would say we got interested in the faith when we have heard a podcast on different aspects of the Catholic faith. The answers to the question to the Why are you attracted to the faith are diverse. Our invitation as a parish is always the same – "Come and See".

It is so exciting as a team to be able to be a part of the process of people beginning a deeper relationship with God. And yet today's readings are not just pointing to those who are beginning their more intense faith walk with Jesus. The readings speak to all of us who have heard Jesus's call our names, possibly all of our lives. All of us constantly listen for God's calling and respond. "Speak Lord for your servant is listening".

Here we are at the beginning of a new year with high hopes that this year will be better than 2023. We have our hopes even though we know that there is much in our world that is wrong. The situation in the Middle East is still escalating and the war in Ukraine does not seem to end. We face much that is sinful, evil and criminal in our world. All of these things we know quite well are exceptions to the way things ought to be; they are out of the general order of what would present in our relations with others. How do we know that? What gives us this perspective and recognition of what is good, what is just, what is fair and what ought to be? Today's gospel gives us the point of reference. It takes us back to the very beginning of the Christian movement, the movement of God into our humanity in Jesus Christ. The story is so familiar, so simple, that we easily lose sight of its overwhelming importance. God has entered into our humanity and thereby blessed it with His holy presence in all that it means to be human. In Jesus Christ God brings His light to what it means to be human and how we should live with each other. John the Baptist initiates this coming of God to us

by introducing two of his disciples to Jesus, Andrew being the key player. John point Jesus out to them by exclaiming "look there is the Lamb of God!" it is a sort of like being at a social function when a very significant person enters the room and a friend says to you: "well look who is here". A conversation then develops between Andrew and Jesus, a conversation sprinkled with seeking words like, "What do you want?" "where do you live" "Come and see" and "Come with me. All of them filled with the relational words of friendship. Let me emphasises here that these are the inviting words of friendship, not commanding words of submission and obedience. These are words that invite us to live closely with Jesus and with Him come to know how we should live with others.

My understanding is that our faith in its most distilled form is a friendship between ourselves and God in Jesus. Whenever we feel lost in a life that seems too complicated, or lost in a world that seems to be unmanageable and out of control and whenever we are tempted to give up on ourselves, remember that our faith in its purest form is the personal friendship we can have with Jesus. That is how it began with Andrew and his brother Peter. And that is the solid rock upon which our relations with Jesus is grounded. For no matter what happens in the world, or in our spiritual lives, or in our relationships with others, we can always find our way once again with those seeking and questing words we heard in the Gospel message today. "What do you want?" "Come and See".

Listening to God's voice is of the essence of our faith. It is the nourishment of our lives. When we come to celebrate the Mass, the first thing the Church does is to offer us God's word. Then having received His word for our hearts and minds we receive His word made flesh for our human nature in Holy Communion.

There are those who defend themselves from intimacy; there are those who are afraid to love. Because of their fear of losing their own independent autonomy they either flee from their faith or turn it into something ridiculous. Some seek to turn their faith into a series of laws, rules and regulations that must be followed. That approach however requires only mindless obedience and thus misses the whole point about our relationship with Jesus.

The truth is that God has a word for you and me personally. He has something He wants to say to us.

I am not sure how you do pray – how you feel closest to God. However the first reading today gives us a good way of opening ourselves up to pray – "Speak Lord, for our servant is listening". This prayer leaves us open to be receptive to what God wants to say to us. God has a word for you! He wants to say to you in words of friendship and love.

Thank you for taking the time to read once more my reflection for this week. God bless you.



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 or by appointment.

Second Sunday Saturday 13th January	06:00pm Michael Rafferty RIP (Gloria Rafferty & Family)
Sunday 14th January	09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am John O'Sullivan & family (L O'Sullivan) Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)
Feria Monday 15th January	10:00am Adam Shea RIP (S Weekly) Marie France Chartier RIP
Feria Tuesday 16th January	10:00am Paddy McElroy RIP -4th Anniversary (J McElroy) Edna Chavannes - Birthday
Saint Anthony Wednesday 17th January	10:00am Requiem mass for Geraldine Mulroy RIP
Feria Thursday 18th January	10:00am Frank Mayers RIP (Mayers family)
Feria Friday 19th January	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Third Sunday Saturday 20th January	06.00pm Private Intention
Sunday 21st January	09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Jane Pike RIP (E McCarthy) Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)

Second Collections

The Second Collection this week is for The Parish Maintenance/Building Fund



The current needs for this week are for:

- Fruit Juice
- Razors
- Cooking Sauces
- Washing Up Liquid
- Shampoo and Conditioners

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

21st January 2024

Third Sunday



Fr David Says.....

We can all become rather set in our ways. We get into certain ways of doing things and it can be easy to stay with those ways even if they start becoming unhealthy for us. We

love the familiar. It gives us security and a sense of structure. We develop routines and those routines keep us going. It often takes someone else or an unexpected experience in our lives to broaden our horizons a little, to open us to areas of life that we would never otherwise have ventured into. We each might be able to identify such people and experiences in our lives, those who and which introduce us to something that proved to be very enriching and that helped us to grow as human beings as we push our comfort zones further.

In order to really understand what this story of Jonah is about, we need to know who the Ninevites were. Nineveh was the capital of the ancient empire of Assyria, and the Assyrians were the most violent and feared people in the ancient world. They were always seeking to extend their empire and they did so by whatever means available. They were violent and ruthless. The Assyrians destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel and almost captured Jerusalem. Therefore, all the people of the ancient world, but particularly the Jews hated the Assyrians. So did Jonah. So when God asked Jonah to go and preach in Nineveh, Jonah did not want to go. Jonah was afraid that his preaching might be the very excuse that God needed to forgive and show mercy to the Assyrians. Jonah did not want this to happen. He did not want his enemies to receive God's mercy. Therefore, when God asks Jonah to go to Nineveh, he runs away on a ship. This is recounted in the first part of the Book of Jonah. Jonah books passage on ship to Tarsish, trying to run away from God's command. This is where the fish comes in. God sends a storm Jonah ends up in the water and the fish comes and swallows him. God does not intend to hurt Jonah. God wants to stop Jonah, stop him from running away. So in the section that we have just heard, Jonah goes, under duress and preaches to the Assyrians. His worst fears are realised. His enemies repent and God shows mercy to them. God forgives them despite their wicked ways. It is clear that the Book of Jonah is a fable written by a Jew to tell us that we should never believe that God hates our enemies as we do. This inspired book from the Hebrew Bible reveals once and for all whose God is on. It insists that God is on all sides. God does not take sides in the numerous divisions and conflicts that so often divide humanity. God is pushing the comfort zones of Jonah in order to break down his prejudices and his understanding of the same God. God simply sees all people as God's children.

Jesus also was a person who enters the life of these two sets of brothers in today's gospel and totally changes their world and future. Peter, Andrew, James and John lived in a world that was very much defined by the Sea of Galilee. Those who have

been can vouch that it seems like living in Paradise. They were fisher men, the tools of their trade was the fish that they caught and the money they received for selling on the fish. They had every reason to believe that this would always be their way of life like their ancestors. Their lives had a very particular rhythm and they probably intended go on living to that rhythm until they were too old or sick to work. Then one day, out of the blue, Jesus entered their lives and the impact he had on them was such that they left their boats and their nets and even their families to follow this man and to share in his mission. "Follow me and I will make you fishers of people", he said to them. Instead of gathering fish in their nets, they would now share in Jesus's work of gathering people to God. It is hard to imagine a greater change of rhythm than the one which today's gospel puts before us. The encounter with Jesus gave them the courage to leave behind their familiar life of peaceful and secure Galilee and made them embrace a life enriched by more possibilities as well as uncertainties. A life that led most of them to martyrdom.

In our own lives, the call that Jesus addressed to those two set of brothers, "Follow me", is addressed to each one of us. In our case that call will not mean leaving our jobs, or much less leaving our families. Yet the call of Jesus to follow him will always involve the opening up of some new horizon or other. In calling on us to follow him, Jesus is always opening us up to the horizon of God, to God's perspective of life. This will often mean looking afresh at the way we do things, the routines that we have built up and seem to keep us going, the rhythms that we have become used to and have learnt to live by. The people we are used to hang around and now seem to have become unhealthy and dysfunctional. The Lord's call to follow him is addressed to us every day of our lives. It will mean something different every day but it is always a call to keep making a new beginning in some way or another, to keeping setting out on a new journey, God's journey which is the journey towards other people in self less, the journey towards a wider horizon.

God's horizon is always so much wider than ours. The call of Jesus to follow him always involves a call to allow our own limited horizons to be stretched to embrace God's vision for our lives. This will keep us alive. However we need to be prepared to let go of those things or people who keep us feeling an illusion of safety because they are familiar.

I pray that at the beginning of this New Year, we would be able to look at our lives honestly and sincerely and see which aspects of our lives are we being called to let go and being brave enough to embrace maybe the unfamiliar. This demands courage and determination from us.

Thank you for the taking the time to read my reflection of the week. God bless us.



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Third Sunday Saturday 20th January	06:00pm Private Intention
Sunday 21st January	09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Jane Pike RIP (E McCarthy) Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)
Feria Monday 22nd January	10:00am Mary Muriel O'Connor Orange Pastor Chirinos Armas RIP (R Spencer)
Feria Tuesday 23rd January	10:00am Wellbeing - Linda (T Willard) Orange Pastor Chirinos Armas RIP (R Spencer)
Saint Francis de Sales Wednesday 24th January	10:00am Peggie Mai Linehan Orange Pastor Chirinos Armas RIP (R Spencer) Italo Ferretti RIP (M Ferretti)
The Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle Thursday 25th January	10:00am Orange Pastor Chirinos Armas RIP (R Spencer)
Saints Timothy and Titus Friday 26th January	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Fourth Sunday Saturday 27th January	06.00pm Gladys Edmonds RIP - Aged 103 (Jones Family) Deceased Members of Furtado Family (S&N Miranda)
Sunday 28th January	09:15am Eileen, Patrick & William Keane RIP (P Farrant) 11:00am Harry McAleer RIP - 31st Birthday (S &D McAleer)

Second Collections

Next weeks second collection will be the 4 in 1 collection for Racial Justice, Communication, Day for Life, Peter's Pence.



The current needs for this week are for:

- Fruit Juice
- Razors
- Cooking Sauces
- Squash
- Shampoo and Conditioners

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ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

28th January 2024

Fourth Sunday



Fr David Says.....

What makes a Charismatic personality? A charismatic personality is someone who displays both social and leadership skills. They have warmth and competence that engages and persuades others. These behaviours can be learned, such as self-awareness, open body language, active listening, and treating each person you encounter with equal respect. Despite the stereotype, charisma is not merely a trait of celebrities or the bubbly extrovert cracking jokes as they charm people at parties. It doesn't matter how conventionally attractive you are or aren't, how introverted or extroverted you are. A charismatic personality can persuade others because they come across as trustworthy, friendly and fully present. A variety of factors can make a person charismatic. They include but are not limited to – confidence, exuberance, optimism, expressive body language, and a passionate voice. People with charisma are often enthusiastic and speak with assertiveness. Charismatic people can help rouse followers or team members to bond together in pursuit of goals. Not every leader is highly charismatic, and some research has even suggested that business leaders with the highest ratings on charisma are not necessarily the most effective. In a variety of leadership contexts, however, charisma can be valuable and may help instil confidence in and a sense of connection with the leader.

In August 1963, Martin Luther King jr climbed the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington and gave his famous, "I have a dream" speech to 250,000 people. Today, there are few people on the planet who have not at least heard of that speech, if not read it or listened to it themselves. Sixty years after the event, it is still impossible to hear his words without again being caught up in the passion, conviction and fervour with which he spoke. That is a charismatic person.

Today's Gospel speaks of another Charismatic man. Jesus of Nazareth. He must have been charismatic enough in order to invite the two sets of brothers which we have read about last week and immediately leave everything behind them to follow him. They must have trusted him from the start. They must have known his goodness and authenticity. As we know we have heard of horrendous stories of people who followed charismatic people in different parts of the world and instead of helping them to grow spiritually in their own right, they found themselves being trapped in their Guru's narcissistic agendas. Some of these charismatic leaders led their followers to their own death. People as we know can make use of their charismatic personality to feed their own egos.

Jesus was definitely not that kind of Man. We see him today teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Mark report that the people respond to Jesus's teaching with astonishment, noting Jesus's authority and contrasting it with the scribes. The authority that they must have felt was coming out of him

was the authority of someone who was selfless. He was not preaching for his own glory. But God was speaking through him. Jesus had no ego which was hindering God to speak to them. God and him were one. This must have been what astonished them. He was not like the others or most of us. Early in Mark's gospel we already find evidence of the tension that will manifest itself fully in Jerusalem between Jesus and the scribes and the Pharisees.

Like In the Old Testament, the prophets never sought to be prophets. It was not about them. One does not choose to be a prophet. Instead prophets are called by God. There is a difference between passionately speaking about something important to me, versus receiving a prophetic message from God. Sometimes for religious people, these can get confused. We are passionate about many issues, perhaps something rooted in Catholic social teaching, so we speak out strongly and with great confidence and that can be good. However sometimes we are tempted to say we are using a prophetic voice. That is where we need to be careful. We need to stop and ponder not only our own motivations but how I say what I am saying. If it is not rooted in the scriptures, I need to pray and ponder more before speaking out. Today's readings are about discerning the voice of God. I cannot think anything more important nor anything more worthy of patience, prayer and communal reflection before acting or speaking.

The scribes are the scholars and lawyers of the day. And they are among the elite of society, but under the authority of the rabbis. They would teach by citing the teachings of other great teachers who had gone before them. One might think of a teacher who quotes many highly respected sources in the course of a lecture. Rather than describe in some detail one of Jesus's teachings moments, Mark describes Jesus's encounter with an unclean spirit. People of the day believed in the presence of many spirits. Some were kind, others were menacing, but all were believed to be more powerful than humans were. The people believed that only God was more powerful. In Mark the spirit knows who Jesus was and identifies him immutably as "the Holy One of God" a title for God that is used in the Hebrew Scriptures especially by Isaiah. In the Gospel the spirit tries to get the upper hand by claiming to know Jesus's name calling him Jesus of Nazareth and the Holy one of God. But Jesus is the more powerful despite the fact that the spirit can call out his name. Jesus tells all the evil spirits to be quiet and come out of the man. They are obedient to him, the carpenter's son, who taught "with a new kind of authority" and his fame spreads.

Let us reflect today - Who are the people who have taught you with authority? What is it about them that gave them their authority?

Thank you for taking the time to read my reflection once again. Have a blessed week.



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<p>Feria Monday 29th January</p>	<p>10:00am Relatives & Friends of Marie Porter (Foundation Mass) Christian Unity (CWL)</p>
<p>Feria Tuesday 30th January</p>	<p>10:00am Fr Bernard O'Brien RIP (L Henderson)</p>
<p>Saint John Bosco Wednesday 31st January</p>	<p>10:00am Stuart MacLeod RIP (L Henderson) Luigi Assirati RIP (A Assirati)</p>
<p>Feria Thursday 1st February</p>	<p>10:00am Joe & Nula O'Connor & family</p>
<p>The Presentation of The Lord Friday 2nd February</p>	<p>No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</p>
<p>Fifth Sunday Saturday 3rd February</p> <p>Sunday 4th February</p>	<p>06.00pm Agnelo, Alodia & Arimdo RIP (Soares & Lobo Family)</p> <p>09:15am Blanche & Leslie Medina (M Medina) Alice Furtado RIP (S&N Miranda)</p> <p>11:00am Tom & John Conways - recovery in hospital (A Whiffen) John O'Sullivan & Family (L O'Sullivan)</p>

Second Collections

This weeks second collection is the 4 in 1 collection for Racial Justice, Communication, Day for Life and Peter's Pence.



The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned cold meat
- Cooking Sauces
- Squash & Fruit Juice
- Shampoo and Conditioners
- Washing up Liquid
- Desserts, sponge puddings, jelly

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St James – A shining light in Petts Wood



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

11th February 2024

Sixth Sunday



Fr David Says.....

In the mid-80s, HIV/Aids terrified the world because of a lack of understanding as well as misinformation. In April 1987, Princess Diana at the height of the AIDS pandemic opened the UK's first specialist HIV/AIDS unit at London's

Middlesex Hospital, a space that would exclusively care for patients with the virus. Whilst visiting the unit, she famously noted, "HIV does not make people dangerous to know. You can shake their hands and give them a hug. Heaven knows that they need it. What's more you can share their homes, their workplaces and their playgrounds and toys." In front of the world's media, Princess Diana shook the hand of man suffering with the illness. She did so without gloves, publically challenging the notion that HIV/AIDS was passed from person to person by touch. She showed in a single gesture that this was a condition needing compassion and understanding, not fear and ignorance. For people living with HIV, her comments marked the start of her monumental efforts to see them treated with dignity, respect and compassion. And through her actions, she showed everyone else that HIV cannot be passed through day to day contact. Of course, it didn't change everything overnight and abhorrent stigma and discrimination remain even today, but the Princess's impact was felt everywhere. HIV/AIDS was the new leprosy.

I think we have all heard of leprosy. For most of us though, I think it wasn't until Covid that any of us really appreciated what this "leprosy" business was all about. For example Covid damages ones taste and smell, vital organs and such. Leprosy damages ones central nervous system and the largest organ of the body, the skin. Covid demanded social isolation, quarantine. Leprosy too forced one out of the community into quarantine. Covid forced one to cover up, wear a mask. Leprosy forced one to cover themselves too. If one got Covid he or she had to tell close contacts he or she contacted it. Leprosy forced one to go around shouting to anyone in close contact – unclean! Unclean! When one finally recovered from Covid, one had to prove it by going symptomless for a certain time. With leprosy one cured had to have this verified by the priests – that is why Jesus tells the man in today's gospel to go and show himself to the priest. Both Covid and leprosy are spread through airborne water droplets. Only during Covid did we realise how mentally harmful isolation can be with all its mental health repercussions that we had to go through. As social beings it is very unnatural to live in isolation.

In today's gospel, we continue to hear Mark report the miraculous healings that Jesus performed in Galilee. The Gospel begins with Jesus healing a man with leprosy. Leprosy is a disfiguring, infectious skin disease that has been surrounded by many social and religious taboos throughout history. In Jesus's time, religious and social taboos dictated the behaviour of those with leprosy and other skin diseases. The Law of Moses provided for the examination of skin diseases by the priests and if leprosy was identified, the person was declared unclean. People with leprosy lived in isolation from the community. They were instructed to rip their clothes and to announce their presence with loud cries when moving in the community. If the sores of leprosy healed, the Law of Moses

provided a purification rite that permitted the person to return to the community.

It is lonely living by yourself, especially when you think the time alone is because no one wants to go near you. When the leper comes before Jesus and says, "if you wish, you can make me clean," it almost sounds like a pleas: "if you wish, you can love me, if you wish, invite me in". What does it mean to bring our messes to God? Maybe our disfigurement is not external. Maybe it is more internal and we need to live with it in concealment. We too need healing and acceptance. We too fear rejection and needs compassion and understanding.

In today's gospel, the man with leprosy took the initiative, approaching Jesus and asked for healing. In doing so, the leper violated the religious customs of the day by approaching a person who was clean. His request to Jesus can be interpreted as a courageous and daring act. The confidence of the leper in Jesus's ability to heal him is evident in the words of his request. But his words can also be read a challenge to Jesus, asking just how far Jesus was willing to extend himself in order to heal someone like him. While healing the man, Jesus touched him, which also violates established social norms. This is an important sign of the depth of Jesus's compassion for the man and an important statement about Jesus's interpretation of the Law of Moses.

Mark tells us that after the healing, it became difficult for Jesus to travel freely. So by the end of the story, Jesus and the former leper have basically traded palaces. The former leper is telling everyone he meets that Jesus has healed him, whilst Jesus has become isolated and alone. It is as though the leper and Jesus have had a role reversal

We are desired in love and given opportunities in the messiness of our humanity to love. We might find the process of being made clean akin to healing, but in order to do that we have to be vulnerable.

During our lonely nights, we are invited to seek comfort in the vulnerability of the leper and the echoes of Jesus's response to him. Our God's love is a liberating love. Regardless of the ailments we might experience. God is there to say "I do will it, I love you. I want you to be clean. Our messes never go away. We all carry anxiety, trauma, discomfort, pain and sorrow in every action of our lives. Since thinking through the readings today, I have found new comfort in the commonly printed phrase, bless this mess.

As we approach the season of Lent, how will you ask God to bless your mess? How will you allow yourself to feel the love of Jesus as he prepared to suffer? How will you allow the spirit of God to move you to love others in the midst of their messes? How will you bring yourself before God to be made clean?

A gentle reminder that we have a Healing Mass on Monday the 12th February at 7.00pm and Ash Wednesday is this coming Wednesday and we have a Mass at 10.00am and another one at 7.00pm with the distribution of ashes.

Thank you once again for taking the time to read my reflection. God bless you all.



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 or by appointment.

Sixth Sunday Saturday 10th February Sunday 11th February	06:00pm Thanksgiving for the intention of Sreekumar (Soares & Lobo family) 09:15am Ed Silmon -Monerri (M Medina) 11:00am Geraldine Mulroy RIP (L O'Sullivan) Hannah Cott & Family (L O'Sullivan) Sarah & Jemma Hyde - 18th Birthday & Exams (M Riches)
Feria Monday 12th February	10:00am Josephine & Seamus McMorrow 07:00pm Healing Mass - For the well-being of the Flower family
Feria Tuesday 13th February	10:00am Jean Rawling RIP (Foundation Mass)
Ash Wednesday Wednesday 14th February	10:00am Rachel Naughton (Simon & Gray Families) 07:00pm Edward Blake (J Blake)
Feria Thursday 15th February	10:00am Rev Fr Brian Maxwell
Feria Friday 16th February	No Mass from St James' <u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</u> <u>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</u> <u>https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</u>
First Sunday of Lent Saturday 17th February Sunday 18th February	06.00pm Deceased members of Miranda Family (S&N Miranda) 09:15am Pamela Gann (P&T Troy) 11:00am Janet Winn RIP (Simon & Gray Family)

Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for the Maintenance/Building Fund.
 Next weeks second collection will be for the Clergy Support Fund.



The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned cold meat
- Cooking Sauces
- Squash & Fruit Juice
- Shampoo and Conditioners
- Washing up Liquid
- Desserts, sponge puddings,jelly

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

18th February 2024

First Sunday of Lent



Fr David Says.....

Lent comes from an old English word, "lecten" which means "springtime" or "lengthening" of the day. Spring time is when the deadness of winter begins to blossom with new life. It happens each year. We see signs that which seemed gone is

brought back. After they have the dead branches clipped, trees begin to sprout leaves. Bulbs that have shown no life are buried in the ground so that flowers can bloom. Lent is a time of spiritual re-birth. God has promised to give new growth to plants, has also promised spiritual growth to us, if we take the time and lengthen our time with God. That which is dead and non-productive must be removed and buried so that new life which comes from the death and resurrection of Jesus can take effect in our lives. If we make good use of the next forty days, we will be able to celebrate the paschal mystery of our salvation during the Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Vigil.

The two great symbols and signs that the liturgy on the first Sunday of Lent invites us to meditate upon are the Rainbow and the Desert. Why? What is the significance of both symbols for us in Lent?

Do you remember the first time you saw a rainbow? I remember being awed and absorbed as a child at its beauty. Rainbows are iconic, universal, showing up in legends and stories throughout history. Despite years of pollution and our increasingly busy lives, rainbows still make us stop and look up. The first recorded rainbow appears in Genesis 9, just after the flood recedes. This portent is fulfilled in a reading that stuns us with the scope of this covenant of promise. Not only does the Creator promise never again to destroy the earth by flood, but God also provides a natural sign as a reminder – the rainbow. No longer an instrument of war, this bow points to God's victory over both the temptation to retributive justice and the chaos brought by humankind. The divine relationship with creation is now based on nothing less than an unqualified grace brought about by a revolution in the heart of God. The scope of this grace travels with such wild energy that it includes every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth reminding us of our co-participation with creation in the gifts of God and the opportunity not only for us to care for the non-human but also to learn from our encounters. The focus of our readings not only for this Sunday, but for all the Sundays of Lent this year, is the relationship God establishes with the people through covenants. Covenants are the binding agreement between God and those whom God has chosen.

In our gospel, on the other hand we are introduced to another big biblical symbol – the desert. Today we see Jesus being led into the desert. The gospel puts it rather more seriously than Jesus being led into the desert. It opens with the words, "The Spirit drove Jesus into the wilderness and remained with him for forty days". The desert in Jewish history is very important. When God freed and saved the People of Israel from slavery in Egypt, they spent forty years in the desert. They wandered and sometimes got lost as they tried to find their way to the Promised Land. This was not an easy journey for them. At times they lost faith in each other and God. They forgot the promise that God made with them "I will be your God and your

will be my people". As they made their way through the desert, many would have stopped travelling and settled near the closest oasis or watering hole. Some other would have joined others tribes and religions that they met on along the way. Famously when they were at their lowest, they made a statue of a golden calf and began to worship it. They had forgotten where they had come from, what God had done for them and lost sight of where God was leading them.

It is no surprise then that we begin Lent with Jesus in the desert. Like his ancestors, he too is tried, tested and tempted. However, Jesus refused to give up or give in so quickly or so easily. Although our gospel for this Sunday is written by Mark, the gospel of Matthew gives us more information about what might have happened to Jesus. He is tempted with the false gifts of power, prestige and wealth. His power and identity come from God. Jesus knows who he is, where comes from and where he is going on his own journey. He leaves the desert with these powerful words which he offers us today:

"The time has come, the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the Good News". Not only do we hear echoes of the forty years of wilderness wandering by the people of God, we sense this wilderness offers a new frontier, new possibilities In it's very barrenness. It seems to be that luminal place or threshold where new doors are open and new hope is born.

The hopeful irony is that in Mark, sometimes called a "desert Gospel" all is turned upside down. What was seen as a place of death and waste becomes a locus of nourishment and hope. The forty days is central to Jesus's ministry. Throughout the gospel, "lonely places" provide opportunities for teaching, healing and feeding thousands as a new community is formed. Jesus continually seeks wild places as a refuge for prayer. For himself and his disciples. And the ultimate action in this Gospel takes place in the desperate and lonely forsakenness of the cross. We are reminded that these lonely, desert places where new life sprouts are a contrast to the aridity of the seemingly civilised religious establishment operating in the service of Imperial Rome in Jerusalem. It is on the edges of things, new life and community grow.

As we begin our own Lenten journey today, we need to recall and remember that we are not setting out on this journey on our own. God is with us walking by our side every step of the way. When we are tempted we need to follow the example of Jesus. He did not rely on his own strength. He turned to God and asked for help which he received. We would not be able to walk the Lenten journey on our own. We need to realise that like Jesus, we too need God's help, support, guidance and protection. Whenever we feel tired or ready to give up or give in, we need to run to God for encouragement. We know that God will be with us during Lent as God was with Jesus when he was in the desert. God will never leave us alone.

Thank you for taking the time to read my reflection for this week once more. May God give us all a blessed Lent.



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First Sunday of Lent Saturday 17th February Sunday 18th February	06:00pm Deceased members of Miranda Family (S&N Miranda) 09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Janet Winn RIP (Simon & Gray Family) Pamela Gann (P&T Troy)
Feria Monday 19th February	10:00am Anne & Peter Ruggiero & Family
Feria Tuesday 20th February	10:00am Private Intention (L&B Henderson)
Feria Wednesday 21st February	10:00am Edna Chavannes 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
The Chair of Saint Peter the Apostle Thursday 22nd February	10:00am God's Healing from Cancer (Charles, Sarah, Sven & Lloyd)
Feria Friday 23rd February	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Second Sunday of Lent Saturday 24th February Sunday 25th February	06.00pm Josie Kelly RIP (R&V Farago) Christopher Nil-Barnor Nathan RIP (V Nathan-Rogers) 09:15am Deceased members of the Furtado Family (S&N Miranda) 11:00am Geraldine Mulroy RIP (L O'Sullivan)

Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for the Clergy Support Fund
 Next weeks second collection will be for Cafod (Lent)



The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned cold meat
- Cooking Sauces
- Squash & Fruit Juice
- Shampoo and Conditioners
- Washing up Liquid
- Desserts, sponge puddings, jelly

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>



St James – A shining light in Petts Wood



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

25th February 2024

Second Sunday of Lent



Fr David Says.....

Every institution, including every religious institution, is always in need of reform and renewal. A parish which is a local church community, a community of faith that exists to meet the spiritual and temporal needs of its members, needs to re-evaluate its mission if it wants to remain relevant to the needs of a particular culture and local. Part of the renewal that it needs to adhere to is the financial aspect of it.

This year the Parish of St James is celebrating its 85 anniversary and the actual Church that we worship in, is celebrating its 60th anniversary. And so the Parish Pastoral Council and myself have felt the need to mark these amazing anniversaries with different activities throughout the year including a special Ball and a parish weekend retreat at Worth Abbey.

Since I have been here these last 9 years, we have not had an opportunity to have a planned giving drive. This year has been a big year for the parish on financial side of things. We had to grieve the death of Austin Barradell who had been my right hand on the financial pillar for all these years and many before. To consolidate the work of the finance committee, Nigel Longhurst and Margaret O'Connell have spent a huge amount of hours to upgrade our financial system, making it clearer for them, for us and for those who will come after us. I wish to thank them both publically for the hours they have put in order to achieve this aim.

To help us conduct this exercise, we have engaged with the Diocesan Fund Raising Team. And they have been very helpful. However I wish that this drive would not only be an exercise where we would be asking for more donations. I wish that this exercise be much more than that. I wish it would be a time where we would be reminding each other that the parish is not just Fr David's. Fr David will be here today but he will be gone at some point. You are the parish. if you wish that the parish will still be around for the long haul, for your pastoral and sacramental needs and for your children's future needs, we need to realise that we are all in this together. We, especially you, are the stewards of this beautiful parish. You need to remember how much we need not only your donations but also your skills and talents to keep us going. And we have already been blessed with many volunteers already. However the needs are there for more. It is not just a question of maintaining what we have always done as a Parish but to also to enhance it. Let us dream big. Let us truly become a shining light in Petts Wood through our witness of a joyful, Christ filled community and

also as a place where people can feel a sense of belonging too especially in their dire needs.

As a parish it is important that we regularly evaluate and also take care of our income. The Finance committee and I steward our parish income and expenditure and an important part of this is reviewing our main source of income: the ordinary offertory collections. Because we do not receive funding from the state, the Vatican or the diocese, actually we do support the diocese, we are reliant on our offertory collections to cover the running costs of the parish and to plan confidently for the future.

We are here today thanks to the generosity and dedication of those who went before us. What legacy are we handing on to those who will follow us? How will they look back at this time: it isn't about the building fabric and running costs. It is the financing of the different programmes which we run in the parish – the sacramental programmes, the events that we organise for different age groups etc. We need the funds to continue our work of formation, catechises to keep on building the Kingdom of God here in Petts Wood.

And so as a Parish Council, we have a lot of dreams to pursue projects in our parish in order to accommodate the different ministries in the parish. As you know we are creating a Peace Garden as we speak. We have in mind to decorate the entrance and the back corridor of the Church in order to make it more welcoming. Apart from these, we have other projects like installing screens in the Church in order to stop making use of hymn books and Mass sheets any more. Doing our little bit in the healing of our planet.

Most importantly, a planned giving drive is an invitation to all you parishioners to reflect and renew your commitment of your time, talents and treasure to the parish. Having heard today about stewardship, over the coming three weekends, I encourage all parishioners to prayerfully consider the following questions:

How is God calling me to use the blessings and gifts He has entrusted me?

Am I using my gifts of time, talent and my financial blessings responsibly, and how can I use them to support my parish?

Does my current contribution reflect the importance of the parish in my life?

You have always been generous and I would like to thank you so much for that.

May God bless your generosity to a hundredfold as promised by Jesus.



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<p>Second Sunday of Lent Saturday 24th February</p> <p>Sunday 25th February</p>	<p>06:00pm Josie Kelly RIP (R&V Farago) Christopher Nil-Barnor Nathan RIP (V Nathan-Rogers)</p> <p>09:15am Deceased members of the Furtado Family (S&N Miranda)</p> <p>11:00am Geraldine Mulroy RIP (L O'Sullivan)</p>
<p>Feria Monday 26th February</p>	<p>10:00am Peace In The World (CWL)</p>
<p>Feria Tuesday 27th February</p>	<p>10:00am Luise Furnell</p>
<p>Feria Wednesday 28th February</p>	<p>10:00am Fr David Camilleri (M Ferretti) 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration</p>
<p>Feria Thursday 29th February</p>	<p>10:00am Patricia Melliush - Birthday (M & S Horner)</p>
<p>Saint David Friday 1st March</p>	<p>No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</p> <p>5pm to 7pm Eucharistic Adoration</p>
<p>Third Sunday of Lent Saturday 2nd March</p> <p>Sunday 3rd March</p>	<p>06.00pm People Of The Parish</p> <p>09:15am Phillip McLaughin RIP (M Scott)</p> <p>11:00am Deceased family members of Miranda Family (S&N Miranda)</p>

Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for Cafod (Lent)



The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned cold meat
- Cooking Sauces
- Squash & Fruit Juice
- Shampoo and Conditioners
- Washing up Liquid
- Desserts, sponge puddings, jelly

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ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

3rd March 2024

Third Sunday of Lent



Fr David Says.....

This week I had the pleasure to be invited out to watch the new production of the Musical Jesus Christ Superstar by the great composer Andrew Lloyd Weber and the Lyricist Tim Rice.

This has been one of my favourite Musicals of all times. As a young boy of 14, my father bought us the LP of the stage production and basically I knew all the lyrics of all the songs by heart. I wouldn't be lying if I said that it had also something to do with the discerning of my vocation even though there were controversies over it at the time. The production this week was definitely a 2024 production which I was impressed by. The scene when Jesus goes to the temple and saw all the money changers, I was intrigued to see the money changers holding up big lit crosses. And I wondered what was the symbolism of this. I immediately realised that they were selling Crosses emphasising the commercialism of Christianity. Jesus as we know was beyond furious.

Righteous anger, good anger, healthy anger. Martin Luther King jr was angry about racial discrimination, Mahatma Gandhi was angry about the racial discrimination against the "untouchables" by the "high castes in India. Nelson Mandela was angry about the apartheid in South Africa. All that was and is considered righteous anger. When we see a bully beating a young child, when we see a thief stealing an old woman's purse, when we see a group of girls being chatty and mean to another girl during the break, when a husband beats up his wife – that list goes on and on. God has wired us in such a way that most healthy human beings are angry inside when we see evil and injustice being done to some. Aristotle says "Anyone can be angry. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, with the right purpose..... that is not easy". Today's gospel pictures the righteous healthy anger of Jesus. Seeing the desecration of a holy place.

Usually Jesus, the Man and God is presented as tender, gentle, humble and preaching love of neighbour to forgiveness to the point of urging that "if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also". Jesus the son of God's merciful and slow to anger like his Father. So where does this anger of Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem come from?

The synoptic gospels place the cleansing of the Temple immediately after Jesus's triumphant arrival in Jerusalem on the back of a colt on Palm Sunday, while John places it at the beginning of his Gospel. Jesus cleansed the Temple which King Herod began to renovate in 20BC. The abuses which kindled the prophetic indignation of Jesus were the conversion of God's temple into a "noisy marketplace" by the animal merchants and into a "hideout of thieves" by the moneychangers with their grossly unjust business practices – sacrilege in God's Holy Place. Jesus's reaction to this commercialised Faith was fierce. Since no weapons were allowed inside the Temple, Jesus constructed his own, a whip of cords, and used it drive out the merchants and moneychangers from the Court of the Gentiles.

While the God of Israel could appear anywhere, the temple

functioned as a focal point for prayer and other expressions of the peoples' relationship with God. It was a holy place. This place of worship, the religious centre for all God's people, looked like a bazaar – one in which distinctions between male and female, clergy and laity, wealthy and poor were on display and reinforced. Rather than being conducive to prayer, sacrifice had become a business, supporting the money changers and merchants who made fortunes by selling supposed access to God. Operating as the opposite of what It was intended to be, the temple could impede people's experience of a merciful, loving God. In Jesus's eyes, the temple had become a blasphemy, the anti- reign of God.

After evicting the religious retailers, Jesus made the famous statement, "Destroy this temple and in three days, I will raise it up again." John explains that this temple referred to Jesus himself, not an architectural wonder. As in his conversation with the Woman at the well, that phrase taught that God's presence cannot be captured in structures – be they buildings, tabernacles or even particular practices. We discover God's presence like Moses did. He experienced a mystery that called him to an impossible vocation, a vocation that came to fruition through the help of the Holy Spirit. Jesus claimed that he definitely replaced the temple and sacrifice. He sacramentalised the presence of God through his loving relationships and all that flowed from them.

When we say that God is love, we assert that God's presence is mediated in relationships. Institutions may facilitate our awareness of God's presence, but we encounter God in prayer and in the love among us that makes God's own love palpable in our world. When we say that we are Christians, we claim with Paul that we believe that God's greatest self- revelation came to us in Christ whose cross revealed that the foolish vulnerability of divine love expresses the greatest power in creation. The power of divine love is neither controlling nor coercive. God's love attracts and woos us.

On the other hand, Our Church is the place where we come together as a community to love and praise God. It is the holy place where we gather strength to support one another in the task of living the Gospel. It is the place where we come privately to enter into intimate conversation with God. In this building, many prodigal sons and daughters have met the merciful Lord in the Sacrament of reconciliation and have been welcomed back to our community. In this building, tears have been shed by those in pain and grief. Let's look around our Church now and treasure it. Let us make our Church even more of a holy place by engaging with its ministries and offer our time, energy and talents for it.

Let us continue this series of Stewardship weekends by hearing about your generosity for the up keep of our actual Church buildings and see how we can enhance its holiness by engaging more in the parish for the wellbeing of all and keep bringing God's kingdom in the world.

Thank you for reading once again my reflection and God bless you.



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 or by appointment.

Third Sunday of Lent Saturday 2nd March	06:00pm People of the parish
Sunday 3rd March	09:15am Phillip McLaughin RIP (M Scott) 11:00am Deceased members of the Miranda family (S&N Miranda)
Feria Monday 4th March	10:00am Dolores & John Ash & Family
Feria Tuesday 5th March	10:00am Gratitude for Jude - 1 years old (L&B Henderson) Private Intention (L&B Henderson)
Feria Wednesday 6th March	10:00am Fr David Camilleri 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Feria Thursday 7th March	10:00am Austin Barradell RIP
Feria Friday 8th March	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Fourth Sunday of Lent Saturday 9th March	06.00pm Deceased members of the Fenner family (Foundation)
Sunday 10th March	09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Eleanor Finn (L O'Sullivan)

Second Collections

The next second collection will be on 17th March for Poor Parishes



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- Shampoo and Conditioners
- Washing up Liquid
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St James – A shining light in Petts Wood



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

10th March 2024

Fourth Sunday of Lent



Fr David Says.....

“The Hound of Heaven” written by Francis Thompson, is one of the best known religious poems in the English language. It describes the pursuit of the human soul by God. The

poem tells the story of a human soul who tries to flee from God, as it thinks it will lose its freedom in the company of God. This is the story of Thompson's own life. As a boy, he intended to become a priest. But the laziness of his brilliant son prompted his father to enrol young Francis in medical school. There he became addicted to opium that almost wrecked his body and mind. He fled to a slum and started earning a living by shinning shoes, selling matches, and holding horses. In 1887 Francis sent some poems and an essay to Mr Wilfred Meynell, the editor of a Catholic literary magazine called Merry England. The editor recognised the genius behind these works and published them in April 1888. Then Meynell went in search of the poet. He arranged accommodation for Francis, introduced him to other poets and helped him to realise God's love for him. How Francis tried to run away from God, how God hunted him, how Divine love caught up with him – these are the themes of his stirring poem, “The Hound of Heaven”. Once we realise, as did the poet Francis, that God in Infinite love for us, will pursue our souls to the ends of the earth and beyond, then we will be able to trust Him enough to try to return to that Love, allowing the Hound of Heaven to catch us. Today's gospel tells us about the breadth and depth and height of the Divine love of the Hound of Heaven for each one of us.

The Hebrew Priestly author of Second Chronicles proceeds to relate the history of God's interaction with the Chosen People. In today's passage, he describes the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the Exile in Babylon, the captivity through King Cyrus of Persia and Cyrus's edict to rebuild the Temple of Jerusalem. These verses encompass a span of seventy or so years. To the Priestly historian this passage, once again demonstrates God's love for the People of God. Again and again God graces his people with another chance another covenant. The people are reminded it is not their doing that restores them to their homeland, it is God's actions. This time through a non-Jewish ruler. The presumption is that after God has graced his people with sign of divine love, the people will in turn freely respond to God's gifts and be faithful to the renewed relationship covenant. The people lament their plight. They cannot sing the joyful songs of the Lord when they are not in the presence of God as was manifested in the Temple in Jerusalem. Yet as they remember the specialness of Jerusalem and the blessing they once had, they pray that their remembering will lead to their eventual return not just to Jerusalem but also to the covenant relationship that the Temple had signified.

In the Gospel, Jesus summarizes His purpose for becoming

human living, teaching, suffering, dying and resurrecting because God so loved the world. Once again it is God's action of love that begins the process of salvation. Jesus has come not to condemn the world, but to save it. We are reminded that we do not deserve to be saved, we deserve condemnation for our sins. God however loves us so much that we are given yet other chances to accept the grace of God's very life. Jesus wants us to be “bound once again” with an all loving God. That is grace. That is gift. That is God's doing. That what the Covenant relationship is. God chooses to love us in spite of our own sinfulness.

It is very interesting to me that the word “grace” has many meanings in English. The word itself comes from the Latin gratia, which means gift, favour, loving kindness. It has also taken on the added meaning of thankfulness in such phrases as a “grace before meals”. In all meanings, it implies benevolence on the part of the giver and the proper response of the one to whom something is given. God has graced us not only with human life but also with a share in divine life. God sanctifies us – God makes us holy.

In a world that is not conducive to live the spiritual life, we find ourselves grappling with our hectic busy lives and feeling the importance to nourish our souls. Our world can easily devour our mental and heart capacity. Pushing away God. Somehow in doing so we lose our meaning to live. And yet as in the poem “The Hound of Heaven” we try our best to flee from God as God has the connotation of taking away our liberty and so we spend so much of our days trying to fill that void with things – cluttering our soul with pleasure, things and idols. Life can become boring so fast. Unfortunately it's always when we are struck with some bad news of one way or another, that we tend to wake up and experience our limitations and vulnerability. Life is fragile. These are the moments in which we allow ourselves to be found by the Hound of Heaven. That is when we embrace the cross and helping us to make meaning to our sufferings and grief. There is no other way – despair knocks on our door if we do not allow ourselves to re-engage with God's faithfulness and love towards us.

May this Sunday which we call Laetere Sunday – Rejoice Sunday because we are in the middle of Lent and we are approaching the big feast of Easter, be a time of grace. Thanking God for his faithfulness and love towards each one of us.

Thank you for once again taking your time to read my reflection for the week. Have a blessed Week.



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Fourth Sunday of Lent Saturday 9th March Sunday 10th March	06:00pm Deceased members of the Fenner family (Foundation) 09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Eleanor Finn (L O'Sullivan)
Feria Monday 11th March	10:00am Bridget & Paul Wiggins
Feria Tuesday 12th March	10:00am Mark DeCesaris RIP (P McCarthy)
Feria Wednesday 13th March	10:00am Edna Chavannes (G Whitley) 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Feria Thursday 14th March	10:00am Frank Simon Derek Levoir RIP (L Levoir)
Feria Friday 15th March	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Fifth Sunday of Lent Saturday 16th March Sunday 17th March	06.00pm Raymond Jackson RIP (A Giles, Borela, Metcalf, Toms & Jones Families) 09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Geraldine Mulroy RIP (Bunnage Family)

Second Collections

The next second collection will be on 17th March for Poor Parishes



The current needs for this week are for:

- UHT Milk
- Tinned cold meat
- Tinned Fruit
- Cooking Sauces
- Desserts, sponge puddings, jelly
- Bleach

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

17th March 2024

Fifth Sunday of Lent



Fr David Says.....

Martin Luther King once wrote about a time when he knelt in prayer in the kitchen of his home in Alabama. Stones had been thrown through the window because of his call for civil rights for black people. His wife and children were in danger. He was already a respected academic and a promising career lay ahead. In prayer he found himself asking if it was right to put himself and them in danger. It was in that moment he decided to put the will of God and the welfare of his people before his own security and that of his family. He chose to serve God by working for those who were most oppressed. In a sense, he chose to die so that others could more fully live. It was a striking echo of what Jesus says in the gospel today, that the grain of wheat must fall into the ground in order to yield a rich harvest.

Today's gospel follows the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Although the raising of Lazarus was an opportunity to give glory to God, Jesus realises that His ultimate hour of glory is close at hand. God will transform His own death into new life, not only for himself but for others. Jesus is willing to die so that others might live a rich and fruitful life. That is why he uses the analogy of the seed falling to the earth and dying so a more abundant harvest might be produced.

Jesus himself was the supreme expression of this principle. He is the grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies, and in dying yields a harvest of life. He describes that harvest in prophetic words: "when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself". It was when some Greeks (foreigners) came to speak to him that Jesus made the declaration and then he asked: "What shall I say? Save me from this hour. No it was for this reason I have come to this hour." The phenomenon of Nature around us at this moment at the beginning of Spring, can speak to of our own experience as much as it did to the experience of Jesus. Each of us in different ways has to accept some significant loss if we are to remain true to our own deepest and best self, true to what God is asking of us. Then there are the losses in life that we do not choose, but that are forced on us. These losses we have no choice but to accept. We may have to accept the loss of people we love and care about because of choices they make themselves. For example parents may not wish to see a son or daughter go far away and work or study but they accept their necessary loss out of love for the one they love. In accepting the losses that life imposes, in letting go of those we love, we often find something fuller and richer, just as Jesus's disciples received him again in a new and fuller way through the resurrection from the dead and the sending of the Spirit. At the end for each of us, there is the final unavoidable struggle to let go of our very life with all the loss that is entailed in that. We trust and believe that at the end of the day, after we have struggled through all our struggles, God

will draw us to himself and when that happens we will lack nothing.

The most godly thing about Jesus's vulnerability was that, unlike our own weakness and limitations, it was freely chosen. The most amazing thing about it was that it revealed the true character of God as a divine lover who constantly tries to woo us beyond our broken covenants and our attempts to fashion the divine in our own image.

Today we hear also from the Letter to the Hebrews, a work that seemed to have been a long sermon slightly revised to function like a letter. Who wrote the letter is a mystery but some scholars suggest that it was Priscilla, the woman who along with her husband Aquila, collaborated with Paul and continued his ministry. In that case it may be the only New Testament work written by a woman. The letter to the Hebrews aims to strengthen a community under persecution and in danger of denying their faith. Today's selection emphasises Christ's complete solidarity with us in all things and it highlights his example for those undergoing temptation. The author carefully explains that Christ himself suffered and cried out to "the one who was able to save him from death".

From Jesus, we learn that divine power is the most subversive force in all of creation. Rather than crush opponents, God's power undermines evil and the violence it perpetuates. As Mahatma Gandhi explained "Love is the strongest force the world possesses, yet it is the humblest imaginable".

Ultimately, the greatest leap of faith Christians are invited to take is to believe in this entirely counterintuitive and counter-cultural idea that the forces of humility, generous love, and tender non-violent creativity are the instruments of world change. This is Jesus's message. He taught that falling into the ground and dying lead to ousting the ruler of this world.

In the Documentary we saw together this week, Pope Francis Travels, it was obvious how much Christ-like he is. He is the messenger of Peace amidst a world that says otherwise. Love is what changes the world and not war. In this documentary it was obvious for all of us how much Pope Francis is spending himself/ his own life to help understand what is the true message of Christianity is all about amidst the dangerous situations he finds himself in.

Let us believe that our love, mostly when it is hidden and pregnant of sacrifice, is transformative than any other.

Thank you for taking the time to read once more my reflection for this week. God bless you as we start preparing ourselves for Holy Week and the Triduum.



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 or by appointment.

Fifth Sunday of Lent Saturday 16th March	06:00pm Raymond Jackson RIP (A Giles, Borela, Metcalf, Toms & Jones Families)
Sunday 17th March	09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Geraldine Mulroy RIP (Bunnage Family) 03:00pm Stations Of The Cross
Feria Monday 18th March	10:00am The Berger Family
Saint Joseph Tuesday 19th March	10:00am Elizabeth Gillin RIP (O'Mahony Family)
Feria Wednesday 20th March	10:00am Jimmy O'Connor RIP 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Feria Thursday 21st March	10:00am Carmel Turton RIP (R Turton)
Feria Friday 22nd March	No Mass from St James' <u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</u> <u>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</u> <u>https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</u>
Palm Sunday Of The Passion Of The Lord Saturday 23rd March	06.00pm People Of The Parish
Sunday 24th March	09:15am Doreen Hairs - 80th Birthday 11:00am Good Health & Welfare for Mrs Annette Coutinho Mr Arcanjo Furtado RIP (S Miranda)

Second Collections

This weeks second collection will be for Poor Parishes
 A reminder that the 200 Club subscriptions renewals are now due.



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ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

24th March 2024

Palm Sunday Of The Passion Of The Lord



Fr David Says.....

During this time of the year, especially on Good Friday as I see you, parishioners coming up in the aisle to venerate the Cross, I am deeply moved. I am moved because I have had the privilege to be invited by you to enter into your own tragic dramas of your lives. Seeing you coming up to venerate the Cross so focussed and with intent, you are identifying yourselves with the cross. Two human dramas are intertwined with each other. The Holy Week starting from Palm Sunday is a week of myriad of emotions. You cannot but be touched by the narrative of betrayal, suffering, pain, isolation, abandonment and crucifixion. Every human being can identify with some aspects of the narrative. The heart breaking tears do express the emotions of seeing an innocent gentle man being treated like a criminal. This year it is reminding us of the many sufferings of innocent people adults and children, men and women who are being treated unjustly both in the Middle East and Ukraine. We feel helpless in front of the enormity of pain and suffering which we witness on our TVs and social media. We are watching the crucifixion being re-enacted once again in the same land as that of Christ himself.

The story which begins on Palm Sunday is basically a human drama. It is our drama. As Jesus enters into his final week, he takes humanity with him and continues to do so every Easter. We are not just remembering an historical event that happened over two thousand years ago. We are celebrating and taking part in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as it happens today to us and for us.

His entry in to the city begins on a huge wave of optimism, joy and hope. The people line the streets, they wave palms, they put their cloaks and garments on the ground and they shout out his name. This was an ancient Roman Tradition used to welcome soldiers and armies home after their success in battle. The crowd welcome Jesus in a similar way as they shout out, Hosanna, Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Yes how quickly the crowd changed and turned on Jesus. The same people who were happy to welcome him with shouts of joy, will soon begin to shout "Crucify him, Crucify him. Jesus is even betrayed and denied by his closest friends. The rest of them run and desert him. He is left alone.

Each of the four Evangelists give an account of the Passion, but each tells the story with his own particular style and emphasis. The account read this year is written by Mark, Peter's helper and companion in Rome and it shows the stark human abandonment of Jesus. The behaviour of the disciples is portrayed negatively. In the garden they fall asleep three times while Jesus prayed. Judas betrayed him while Peter with a curse denied any knowledge of him. All flee, Jesus's only words from the cross were "My God, my God why have you forsaken me." Even those plaintive words were met with derision. Yet as Jesus breathes his last, God acts to confirm his Son. The veil of the temple was rent in two, and the Roman Centurion confesses "Truly this was God's son". There are moments in our lives when we need desperately to cry out with Jesus: "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" only to find as

Jesus did, that God is listening.

Where am I in the unfolding drama that begins on Palm Sunday and plays out over Holy Week and which climaxes on Easter? Where am I as Jesus passes by on the donkey? Am I one of the crowd shouting out his name? Am I like Judas in any way? When have I betrayed others or Jesus? When like Peter have I denied knowing Jesus? Am I like Pilate when I judge and condemn others? Or am I like Simon or Veronica who help Jesus in his time of need? Having stood with the crowd shouting out his name and welcoming Jesus, will I stand with the same people spitting out insults as I shout "Crucify him! Crucify him"

There is great hostility in the story that we are hearing today – all of it directed against Jesus. There is the hostility of the chief priests, of the Roman soldiers, of those who passed by and jeered as he hung from the cross. Alongside the hostility of these who rejected Jesus, there is the failure of those who had been closest to him. His disciples deserted him and fled. Judas betrayed him and Peter denied him publicly. Yet, there were a few people who responded to Jesus in that dark hour faithfully and nobly. There was the anonymous woman who in an extravagant gesture of love and respect anointed the head of Jesus. Then there was the Roman Centurion, who looked on as Jesus died and exclaimed "This man was son of God", Joseph Arimathea took the bold step of going to Pilate to ensure Jesus had a dignified burial. The women disciples who looked on from a distance noted where Jesus was buried and went away to prepare spices to anoint his body at the earliest opportunity. All of these people men and women saw Jesus with eyes of faith and love.

The story we are going to listen to today, invites us to identify with those who saw Jesus with the eyes of faith and love, who recognised the light of God in the darkness of Jesus's passion and death.

This holy week the church invites us to travel that journey in a much slower pace, day by day as it were. We are invited to enter into the journey with the eyes of the anointing woman, the Centurion, Joseph Arimathea and the group of the faithful women. We look beneath the surface of what is happening, we listen deeply to all that is taking place, so as to recognize the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for us all, so that we might have life and have it to the full.

May this Holy Week 2024 find us renewed in zeal for the things of God, for love of God and neighbour, eager to celebrate next Sunday the Passover of the Lord, the central mystery of our Christian faith, the Resurrection of Christ.

Thank you for once again taking the time to read my reflection. May you have a great Holy Week. God bless you all.



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Palm Sunday Of The Passion Of The Lord Saturday 23rd March	06:00pm People Of The parish
Sunday 24th March	09:15am Doreen Hairs - 80th Birthday 11:00am Good Health & Welfare for Mrs Annette Coutinho Mr Arcanjo Furtado RIP (S Miranda)
Monday of Holy Week Monday 25th March	10:00am The Welfare of members of the CWL and their families (CWL)
Tuesday of Holy Week Tuesday 26th March	10:00am Fr David Camilleri & his Siblings (Hilary Marvell)
Wednesday of Holy Week Wednesday 27th March	10:00am Mary Casartelli 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Maundy Thursday Thursday 28th March	07.30pm Well Being of Charlotte Renolds (Helen Morgan)
Friday Of The Passion Of The Lord Friday 29th March	10:00am Stations of the Cross (Children) 11:00am Walk of Witness 3:00pm People Of The Parish 8:00pm Prayer around the Cross
The Easter Vigil In The Holy Night Saturday 30th March Easter Sunday Of The Resurrection Of The Lord Sunday 31st March	11:30am Swieconka - Blessing of the Easter Baskets 8:00pm Maureen Dillane RIP (J Dillane) 09:15am David Anthony Finn (Irwin Family) 11:00am Monica Gallagher - Birthday (A Bunnage) David, Michelle, Fiander & Family (Rowland Family)

Second Collections

This weeks second collection will be for the Parish Building Fund.
 The collection at the Masses over the Easter weekend are your personal offerings for your Parish Priest.
 A reminder that the 200 Club subscriptions renewals are now due.



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ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

31st March 2024

Easter Sunday Of The Resurrection Of The Lord



Fr David Says.....

As a beautiful butterfly soared overhead, one caterpillar said to the other, "You will never get me up in one of those things!"

Yet for every caterpillar the time comes

when the urge to eat and grow subsides and he instinctively begins to form a chrysalis around himself. The Chrysalis hardens and you would think for all the world that the caterpillar was dead. But one spring morning the life inside the chrysalis will begin to writhe, the top will crack open, and a beautifully formed butterfly will emerge. For hours it will stand stretching and drying its wings, moving them slowly up and down and up and down. And then, before you know it, the butterfly will glide aloft, effortlessly riding the currents of the air, alighting on flower after gorgeous flower, as if to show off its vivid colours to the bright blossoms. Somehow the miracle of the butterfly never loses its fascination for us. Perhaps that is because the butterfly is a living parable of the promise of Resurrection. On Easter Morning, the disciples saw Jesus's shroud on the cold slab, empty, but still lying in the wrapped folds that had gone around and around the corpse. Only the corpse was gone, the grave clothes left behind, much like an empty chrysalis deserted by a butterfly which has left it to soar free.

When we look at the news on our televisions or read it on social media and newsletters, we are all well aware of all the hardship and pain that exists in our world today. There is no day that goes by were we don't read the story of a random act of terrorism or a shooting or a knifing of one kind or another. There are painful and heart breaking scenes of war especially at the moment in the atrocities that we are seeing in Gaza and the Ukraine. Even in our own country and communities, there are senseless acts of violence that leave families grieving for the death of a loved one. How are we meant to celebrate Easter in such difficult circumstances?

Even in the time of Jesus, there was inequality, injustice and poverty. He would have seen it, experienced it and been very familiar with it. It is into that particular world that he came with the good news of the Kingdom of God. It is into our world today that Jesus comes with same good news. It is in and through our world today that we experience and share in his resurrection. However a lot of us are questioning – Where are you God in the atrocities of innocent people who are experiencing at the moment. Where are you? And there are no answers to these questions to these feelings.

The trial and the crucifixion must have been such a painful and even disappointing experience for his followers, friends and family. They had placed such hope in Jesus. In his

preaching, his teaching and in his miracles. Then they had to stand and watch as he was betrayed, condemned, beaten and then crucified. They stood and watched him die. It is in and through our ordinary daily lives and our world today that Jesus comes risen from the tomb. The Resurrected Jesus comes to us as we are. But he also comes as he is. He comes to us in his new and everlasting life. Death has not have had the final say. Where there was despair, God brings us hope. Where there was darkness, God has bright light. Where there was death, God bring us not only just life, but new and everlasting life. These are the gifts that God offers each of us through the resurrection of Jesus.

In a world where there is often the reality of suffering, violence and injustice, we are called to be people of hope. Even when hope is difficult to hang on to. However this is not ordinary human hope. This is the hope that comes to us through the resurrection of Jesus. In the face of sadness, difficulty and pain, we are called to look to and rely on the resurrected Jesus and not on our own strength and resources.

The call, invitation, and even challenge of Easter is that I experience it personally deep within myself. through my faith I am called to be an Easter Person – a person of the resurrection. I am called and asked to be a person who is filled with the new life and hope of the resurrected Jesus.

We may be tempted to give in and give up on the world as it is. However because we now share in the powerful resurrection of Jesus, we are to live our daily lives as much as possible as with hope beyond understanding. As a community we pray everyday for a resolution for these war torn countries and some people have asked me why should we keep on praying – nothing is happening. Within myself I believe in the chrysalis. Although we do not see anything for a long time, it does not mean that nothing is happening. I believe that our prayers make a difference to the world and ultimately and in God's time, we will experience the beautiful butterfly we pray for.

As Pope Francis says to us: as Christians "we must never look like people who have just come back from a funeral". And in his first Easter Message Pope Francis offered us this: It is always possible to begin anew, because there is always a new life that God can awaken in us and the world in spite of all our failures".

I would like to offer each and everyone of you – a Happy and blessed Easter – an Easter based on Hope beyond understanding. Thank you for once again took your time to read my reflection. God bless you all.



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The Easter Vigil In The Holy Night Saturday 30th March	11:30am Swieconka - Blessing of the Easter Baskets 8:00pm Maureen Dillane RIP (J Dillane)
Easter Sunday Of The Resurrection Of The Lord Sunday 31st March	09:15am Tony Finn (Irwin Family) 11:00am Monica Gallagher - Birthday (A Bunnage) Nicki, Michelle, Fiander & Family (Rowland Family)
Monday within the Octave of Easter Monday 1st April	10:00am Francesca Margaux Sio RIP (J Sio)
Tuesday within the Octave of Easter Tuesday 2nd April	10:00am Healing & Welfare of Daniel Parker (Parker Family)
Wednesday within the Octave of Easter Wednesday 3rd April	10:00am In loving Memory of Trevor Lyons RIP (G Whitley) 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Thursday within the Octave of Easter Thursday 4th April	10:00am John Branch RIP (J McElroy)
Friday within the Octave of Easter Friday 5th April	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Second Sunday Of Easter Saturday 6th April Sunday 7th April	06:00pm Phil Mordy RIP (O'Mahony Family) 09:15am John Coyne RIP 11:00am People Of The Parish

Second Collections

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 A reminder that the 200 Club subscriptions renewals are now due.



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ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

7th April 2024

Second Sunday Of Easter



At a gathering, there's always someone who's willing to speak up when everybody else may be wondering the same thing but is afraid to ask. In today's gospel it's Thomas who voices the doubts and fears with which others are also struggling. The Fourth Evangelist frequently uses one character as a representative figure. In today's gospel, Thomas stands for everyone who is a follower of Jesus yet harbors doubts.

In the first scene, the disciples are together, locked in their fear, when Jesus stands in their midst. His double declaration, "Peace be with you," recalls his promise of peace that casts out fear (14:27). Jesus then shows the disciples his hands and side, the unerasable evidence of the brutality inflicted on him. Oddly enough, instead of increasing their terror, this gesture causes them to rejoice. The explanation is found in the Last Supper scene, where Jesus spoke to his disciples about his impending death, likening his pain and theirs to the labor pangs of a woman giving birth, whose agony turns to joy after the new life is brought forth. Jesus had assured them that when they would see him again, their hearts would rejoice with a joy no one could take from them (16:20-22).

Jesus then sends the disciples to continue the mission for which the Father sent him. In John's Gospel there is no calling or sending of the Twelve; the mission is entrusted to all disciples here, as they are empowered with the Spirit. As Jesus breathes on them, the new life brought forth through his death and resurrection vivifies them. The image is reminiscent of the creation of the first human being, into whose nostrils the Creator breathes the breath of life (Gen 2:7). It also calls to mind Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, over which he prophesies, "I will make breath enter you so you may come to life" (Ezek 37:5). Just as God restored hope to the

disheartened Babylonian exiles, so the risen Christ breathes peace and joy into the fearful disciples.

The power that the disciples receive with this infusion of the Spirit is the ability to heal and forgive. When Jesus shows his wounds, we see that forgiveness does not erase them, nor does it dismiss them as unimportant. Telling the truth about them is essential for forgiveness and healing.

In the second scene, Thomas stands for all who were not present in the initial experience with the resurrected Christ. Just as Mary Magdalene did, so the disciples declare, "We have seen the Lord" (20:17, 25). But belief on the basis of another's word is not sufficient (see 4:42); one must have first hand experience of Christ in order to participate in the mission. Jesus once again stands in their midst, bringing peace. He directs Thomas to probe the meaning of his wounds so that he too can become an agent of forgiveness and healing. When Thomas makes his acclamation of faith, Jesus affirms that there are two ways of blessedness: believing by having seen, and believing without having seen. The crucial thing is to believe, so as to have life.



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 or by appointment.

Second Sunday of Easter Saturday 6th April Sunday 7th April	6:00pm Phil Mordy RIP (O'Mahony Family) 09:15am John Coyne RIP 11:00am People Of The Parish
The Annunciation Of The Lord Monday 8th April	10:00am Sydney Fowler Gerrard RIP (M Jackson)
Feria Tuesday 9th April	10:00am Ken & Margaret Jackson (M Jackson)
Feria Wednesday 10th April	10:00am Private Intention (Foundation) 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Saint Stanislaus Thursday 11th April	10:00am People Of The Parish
Feria Friday 12th April	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Third Sunday Of Easter Saturday 13th April Sunday 14th April	06:00pm People Of The Parish 09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Albert Holyomes RIP (E&G Rebello)

Second Collections

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ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

14th April 2024

Third Sunday Of Easter



Fr David says...

Much less nowadays, after the death of my parents, I used to be walking along especially when I was home in Valletta, I would be certain that I had seen them in the crowd.

I remember running behind a person to see whether she or he was my father or mother. Obviously they never were. However there was always a moment of hope that it might be them. It speaks to me about how our psyche is effected by the death of a loved one. I remember being intrigued looking at programmes of mediums on TV. And those gave me comfort. Somehow they allowed you to believe that your loved one is around you still. And that is an amazing realisation for some who is in the process of grief. Knowing that your loved one is still around you. Close to you.

Huge events in our lives cause changes in the ways we see events, and they change the ways we see each other. Husbands see their wives quite differently after their first child is born, and wives likewise see their husbands in new ways.

Today's gospel account is about two disciples dejectedly walking from Jerusalem to a nearby hamlet called Emmaus and Jesus's appearance among them. The important thing in the story revolves around recognition of Jesus or lack of it. Here we find these two disciples at first failing to recognise Jesus and in the end, they recognise him. What happened? Why did they at first think he was a stranger and later come to realise who He really was? What seems to be controlling deals with the question of how we see one another. Obviously we are not talking here about simply seeing with our eyes, we are talking, rather about seeing with our hearts. We are dealing with seeing at a deeper levels of knowing and understanding.

The disciples walking on the road to Emmaus were talking about all the stupendous events that had occurred surrounding the crucifixion and death of Jesus. They were terribly upset because they had thought Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah that God had sent, and look what had happened. They were dazed and bewildered by it all, they were trying to make sense out of it all. They were so self engrossed because of their grief, that they could not see who the stranger was walking beside them. It is very easy during our times of grief to enter into our cocoon to make sense of what had happened to us and our loved one, and would not be able to see for some time what is under our own nose. We lose sight. We are in a surreal world. Jesus listened to them, listened to their dejected hearts. He then opened the scriptures to them to help them find some meaning and context of what had happened. Still they could not see him.

The Gospel account then takes us to the one thing that opened their eyes, the event that allowed them to make all the connections, the central piece in the puzzle that opened

their eyes. It was the breaking of the bread. The critical thing that occurred was when the stranger who was among them took bread, said the blessing, broke it and gave it to them to eat. Suddenly their eyes were opened and they recognised Him. They no longer saw Him with just their eyes, but they recognised Him with their hearts. They saw Him with their newly awakened faith. They recognized Him because they encountered Him in a totally different light. They saw Him now in that event wherein He promised to be with them always.

Knowledge is not based simply in the acquisition of facts, information and data. True knowledge is seeing things based on wisdom and understanding. Jesus comes to us in ways least expect. Why is it that a lot of us Christians when we take our journey faithfully, we speak that God comes to us in moments of surprise? We know of our moments of surprise, our own moments of wonder when suddenly we are aware of God's presence to us when out of the blue we hear what He is saying to us some times through circumstances and strangers. It is like being awakened after a long sleep.

When we find time to be mindful through Christian meditation or any other prayer regime we have, we tend to be more aware of God's presence in our lives. In our busyness of our lives and living in the noise that is hurled at us in our contemporary world through constant social media and our iPhones, it is very difficult to see the stranger as Christ. We need times to turn off the noise, quiet reflection even for some quarter of an hour a day, in need to tune to the heart of God. Then we would help ourselves to see Jesus and come into a deeper awareness of His presence to us.

May you and me have some time to make our own Emmaus Journey. And may we come to recognize Him not only in the breaking of the bread but in all those other moments where God tries to break in on our time and walk with us as we face all the stupendous events life hurls at us.

Knowing that Jesus walks with us in these moments gives us most certainly a feeling of we are not alone carrying this burden. Hopefully we will feel less overwhelmed.

God bless you all. Thank you for once again taking your time to read my reflection of this week.



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davidcamilleri@rcaos.org.uk

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 or by appointment.

Third Sunday of Easter Saturday 13th April	6:00pm Rev. Potter & Family (J Webb)
Sunday 14th April	09:15am Annie Kathleen Farrell RIP (E Froud) 11:00am Albert Holyomes RIP (E&G Rebellio)
Feria Monday 15th April	10:00am Sheila O'Mahony RIP (O'Mahony Family)
Feria Tuesday 16th April	10:00am Thanksgiving - Christian Antao (Antao Family)
Feria Wednesday 17th April	10:00am Marjorie Phyllis Ingledew RIP (M Ingledew) 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Feria Thursday 18th April	10:00am Giuseppe Correnti RIP (M Ferretti & Family)
Feria Friday 19th April	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Fourth Sunday Of Easter Saturday 20th April	06:00pm Anthony Olivelle RIP (Foundation Mass)
Sunday 21st April	09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Bianca Giese RIP (A Mulroy)

Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for the Parish Building Fund.
 Next weeks second collection is for The Priests Training Fund



The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Fruit
- Tinned cold meats
- Tinned hot meats
- Cooking Sauces
- Bleach

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ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

21st April 2024

Fourth Sunday Of Easter



Fr David says...

Some people can be highly trusting of others, which is often a matter of personality. However for others, particularly those who have been victimised or betrayed in the past, building trust can be a slow, laborious process; for some, it may feel downright impossible. Many people who are consistently distrusting have good reason for being so. Trust or the belief that someone or something can be relied on to do what they say they will is a key element of social relationships and a foundation for cooperation. It is critical in romantic relationships, friendships, interactions between strangers, and social and religious groups. A lack of trust in such scenarios can come with serious consequences. Indeed, society as a whole would likely fail to function in the absence of trust. As a person, I am usually an observant of character and in the main, I do get the essence of the person as I observe and listen. I tend to get to know the people I would entrust their special gifts for the different roles I feel they are good at. Once I trust someone with a role, I tend to allow them to fly and flourish. However as everyone else, I have trusted the wrong people for the wrong role. When this happens it not only disappoints me but it lets down the whole community.

Today's gospel and theme is The Good Shepherd. It gives us the opportunity to reflect on Christian leadership. Jesus's words suggest to us that those who will lead the Christian community will be known by their faithfulness to Jesus. It puts a responsibility on me to build a creative interior life. A life of prayer – a life of intimate relationship with God through Jesus. The leaders will recognise that Jesus is the gate for all of the sheep and that having a good relationship with Jesus is the primary characteristic of a Christian Leader. Jesus's allegory also suggests that faithful Christian Leadership requires a good relationship with the community. The Shepherd knows his sheep and they know him. Christian leadership follow the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, by being faithful to him and by being a good Shepherd.

The relationship between the sheep and their shepherd is based on familiarity. Sheep recognise their shepherd and will not follow a stranger. At the end of the day, shepherds lead their sheep from pastures to a common gated area called a sheepfold. There one shepherd protects all of the sheep until the next day when each shepherd returns to lead his own sheep to pasture. As shepherds move among the sheep, the sheep follow on their shepherd.

Jesus likens himself to a Shepherd. This is a metaphor ripe with meaning, especially considering God's history with Israel. It is not the first time this image has been invoked. So why does Jesus go further in saying that he is The Good Shepherd, instead of just saying he is a shepherd? Why are we given the adjective of Good? Firstly this sets up a distinction that must be

considered when identifying the true Shepherd of Israel, from other competing or counterfeit shepherds. The adjective good which also can mean right, proper, honourable and beautiful, alerts us to the fact that there can be bad or wrong, improper, dishonourable and downright ugly shepherds that parade around as angels of the light. We must discern the difference. And Jesus goes further to help us discern that difference with the actions that will accompany a good shepherd. And that action is described a one who lays down his life for the sheep.

Second by including the adjective good, Jesus is building our trust in him and in the Father who sent him we do not want to put our trust in any other Shepherd. We need to know that he is trustworthy, that he is indeed good. And we don't want to follow a shepherd who is good in name only. Jesus uses the contrast twice that designates a true shepherd from a fake by comparing a hired hand to a shepherd that the sheep actually belong to. That comparison brings to mind that hired hands are only in it for their livelihood. As soon their lively hood is in jeopardy, not to mention their own lives, they can be counted on to head for the hills. The contrast zeros in on the fact that a good shepherd cares more for the sheep than he does for himself. He is willing to lay down his life for the good of the sheep. We can also see a contrast between a shepherd and a hired hand who sees his relationship with the sheep as a contract that can be made null and void once the conditions change.

We must not end there. Jesus also mentions in this closing verse that he not only lays his life down, but that he also may take it up again. And with that statement we are reminded of what we are celebrating during this season of Easter. Our good Shepherd is a risen Shepherd. He is still shepherding us, even in this text to know him and his Father has for him so we too can come to rest in the assurance of knowing what love is. The Good shepherd is still warning us and guarding us against the hired hands who do not have our best interest in mind but would sell us out to the wolf a the first sight of cost for themselves.

As we continue in our celebration of the Risen Lord, may we grow to know him more and more, learning to trust him as our Good Shepherd who leads us to know the God in the same way as he does.

Today is also Vocations Sunday – May we hear the call of Jesus to follow him wherever He wishes to call us for the good of the vineyard. May we have the courage to respond positively.

Thank you for taking your time once again to read my reflection for this week. God bless you all.



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Fourth Sunday of Easter Saturday 20th April	6:00pm Anthony Olivelle RIP (Foundation Mass)
Sunday 21st April	09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Christina Martyn RIP (Sheila)
Feria Monday 22nd April	10:00am Barbara Camilleri
Saint George Tuesday 23rd April	10:00am Nanette Gowers RIP
Feria Wednesday 24th April	10:00am Austin Barradell RIP 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Saint Mark Thursday 25th April	10:00am Fr Barry Hughes
Feria Friday 26th April	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Fifth Sunday Of Easter Saturday 27th April	06:00pm Mary Agnes Lokko Nathan RIP (V Nathan Rogers)
Sunday 28th April	09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Eileen Carey RIP (L O'Sullivan)

Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for The Priests Training Fund
 Next weeks second collection is for Maintenance of St George's Cathedral



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- Tinned cold meats
- UHT Milk
- Cooking Sauces
- Jam
- Multi-surface wipes & sprays

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ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

28th April 2024

Fifth Sunday Of Easter



Fr David says...

People face all kinds of adversity in life. There are personal crisis, such as illness, loss of a loved one, abuse, job loss and financial instability. There is the shared reality

of tragic events in news, such as terrorist attacks, mass shootings, natural disasters, a global pandemic and wars. People have to learn to cope with and work through very challenging life experiences. We need resilience in order to be able to psychologically and physically cope in these challenging times. Developing resilience is a both complex and personal. It involves a combination of inner strengths and outer resources and there is not a universal formula for becoming resilient. Resilience is what gives people the emotional strength to cope with trauma, adversity, and hardships. Resilient people use their resources, strengths and skills to overcome challenges and work through setbacks. For the Christian, one of the resources we use for resilience especially in difficult times is prayer. Prayer and connection with God gives us a sense that we are not alone in this very challenging world. That God hears our prayers and that he loves us. This intimacy with God is built on pondering the scriptures, keep on developing our spirituality which keep us united to the one that gives us HOPE and reassurance especially in times of need.

Today's reading from the Gospel of John is part of Jesus's discourse at the last supper. Recall that John tells the story of Jesus's Last Supper differently from the other Evangelists. In John's gospel, the Last Supper begins with Jesus washing the feet of his disciples. Jesus then provides them with a series of instructions. Like sharing with them his last will. We call this section the Last Supper discourse or Jesus's farewell discourse. In these chapters of John's Gospel, Jesus instructs his disciples of following his example of love and service, about the gift they will receive when Jesus sends them the Holy Spirit, and about their relationship with Jesus and with the world. The Last Supper discourse concludes with Jesus's prayer for his disciples.

Today's gospel reading is taken from middle of the Last Supper discourse. Jesus speaks about his relationship to his disciples. In his metaphor of the vine and the branches, Jesus is referencing the Hebrew Scriptures. In the Hebrew Scriptures, Israel is the vineyard, and Yahweh himself tends the vineyard. One of the primary themes of John's Gospel is to show Jesus to be the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel.

In this passage, Jesus teaches his disciples that his relationship with them will not end after his death. He will

remain with them always. This unity between Jesus and his disciples is the basis for their ability to continue to do the work that he began. Similarly, Jesus's presence with us through the gift of the Holy Spirit enables us to continue the work of love and reconciliation that he began. Jesus also teaches them about the importance of the words he has taught to them just as Jesus will remain in the disciples, so too will his words. We come to know Jesus and be intimate with him through our meditating the Scriptures and through our life of Prayer and nourished by the Eucharist and the sacraments. Through the Eucharist, Jesus dwells in us, remains with us, and transforms us so that we might bear fruit in his name. The goal of prayer is to increase our awareness that Jesus lives with us always. Prayer is more than a dialogue with God. Prayer is a lifting of our minds and hearts to God so that God might dwell and act within us and through us.

Jesus tells us abide in me. I will make my home in you. Life is dynamic and creative in the trunk of the Vine. This creative life shoots into the branches. There is an intrinsic life between the vine and the branches. We cannot cope without our intimate connection with the Vine. It gives us the resilience we need in time of need in our life and also nudges us to bear fruit by living out like Jesus in the world today. Caring for one another especially those who are in need and underprivileged.

What can we do when we lose this connection with Jesus. Who would guide our footsteps and encourage us with hope in times of hopelessness? Spirituality is well known to be one of the greatest ways how people with illness for example cope in their times of vulnerability. People without any connection with God finds it much more difficult. Prayer gives us hope and also helps us not to feel totally alone going through challenging times.

Today's gospel helps us to ponder our prayer life as a source of resilience and also to see it as an energy to live our Christian life to the full. Do you see it the same way?

Next week I have been given the opportunity to travel to Rome to be part of the Synod for Parish Priests with Pope Francis. This is a special meeting of about 300 parish priests from all over the world to see what is working within our parishes and what is challenging. Please keep us in prayer during these five days. I will be able to send your greetings to Pope Francis at some stage.

Thank you for taking your time to read my reflection for this week. God bless you all.



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Fifth Sunday of Easter Saturday 27th April	6:00pm Mary Agnes Lokko Nathan RIP (V Nathan Rogers)
Sunday 28th April	09:15am People Of The Parish 11:00am Eileen Carey RIP (L O'Sullivan)
Saint Catherine of Siena Monday 29th April	10:00am Those in the parish who are ill (CWL)
Saint Plus V Pope Tuesday 30th April	10:00am Alan Rowe RIP (K Charlesworth)
Feria Wednesday 1st May	10:00am Austin Barradell RIP 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
Saint Athanasius Thursday 2nd May	10:00am Sister Ursula Hyland RIP
Saints Philip and James Friday 3rd May	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham 5pm to 7pm Eucharistic Adoration
Sixth Sunday Of Easter Saturday 4th May	06:00pm Anne Ryan RIP (P Sheary)
Sunday 5th May	09:15am Fr Barry Hughes RIP 11:00am People Of The Parish

Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for the Maintenance of St George's Cathedral



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- Tinned Fruit
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- Jam
- Multi-surface wipes & sprays

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St James - A shining light in Petts Wood



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

5th May 2024

Sixth Sunday Of Easter



Reflecting on the Gospel...

In a sense, it would be better to hear today's first reading, the opening verses of the Acts of the Apostles, proclaimed after rather than before today's gospel reading from Mark, since the former picks up the thread of the narrative where the latter leaves off. Luke, the author of Acts, addressed that book to Theophilus (Acts 1:1), whose name means "beloved of God" or "lover of God." The symbolic meaning allows every hearer of Luke's account to insert her- or himself into the role of the beloved to whom these words are addressed, and we can extend that dynamic today to our hearing of the gospel as well.

Mark concludes his account at the point where Jesus was "taken up into heaven" (16:19), before Acts picks it up from there. Like Elijah, who was taken up to heaven in a whirlwind by a fiery chariot (2 Kgs 2:11), and Moses, who was taken up in a cloud at the end of his earthly life (Osephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, 4.326), so Jesus's earthly sojourn is ended in the manner of these great figures. In Mark's Gospel, the ascension takes place on Easter Sunday, while Acts speaks of a forty-day period of appearances between the resurrection and ascension. The number forty is symbolic: Moses spent forty days on Mount Sinai, and the Israelites wandered forty years in the desert. Luke uses "forty days" to link the time Jesus spent in preparation for his public ministry after his baptism (Luke 4:1-12) with the preparation that the disciples undergo before they are "baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5) and begin their public witnessing to the resurrected Christ.

In the Gospel of John-the only other gospel to mention the ascension (20:17)-the passion, resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and giving of the Spirit are all one moment, not separated in time and space (see John 19:30; 20:17, 22); in God's time, all these transformations are instantaneous. Human reality is bound by time and space, and so Luke narrates these mysteries as separate episodes. These time gaps allow us to reflect on how the mystery unfolds gradually for us, allowing us to be transformed step by step.

Acts 1 voices the questions that the early community needed answers to in this in-between time. They wanted to know when the Parousia and the end time would be. They struggled to shift their expectations from a nationalistic messiah who would restore the sovereign reign of Israel to one who would empower them to be witnesses of the gospel not only to their own people but throughout the known world.

Even though the disciples do not receive all the answers they seek and even though their transformation is incomplete, the ascension marks the point at which they must take up the mission begun by Jesus. There can be no idle looking up at the sky. Rather, as the two angelic messengers affirm, the time has come for them to go forth as witnesses "to the ends of the earth."

Today is a good day to consider: How does my witness spread in ever widening circles "to the ends of the earth"? How is it possible to proclaim the good news without having all the answers we seek?



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Sixth Sunday of Easter Saturday 4th May Sunday 5th May	6:00pm Anne Ryan RIP (P Sheary) 09:15am Fr Barry Hughes RIP 11:00am Claire Drapier RIP (F Simon) Bill & Laraine Henderson - Wedding Anniversary
Feria Monday 6th May	10:00am People Of The Parish
Feria Tuesday 7th May	10:00am Thanksgiving Mass (Samuels Family)
Feria Wednesday 8th May	10:00am Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) 10.45am Eucharistic Adoration
The Ascension Of The Lord Thursday 9th May	Whole School Mass - Please note change of time 9:30am Fr Barry Hughes RIP 07:00pm People Of The Parish
Feria Friday 10th May	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Seventh Sunday Of Easter Saturday 11th May Sunday 12th May	06:00pm Rose & Martin Norris (D Marshall) 09:15am Dominic Braganza RIP - 1st Anniversary (Rebello) Lauren Antao (Antao Family) 11:00am Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Geraldine Mulroy RIP (S McAleer) Sharon Fernandes RIP (Fernandes Family)

The next second collection will be on 26th May for the Building Fund.



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- Tinned hot meats
- UHT Milk
- Cooking Sauces
- Jam
- Tea
- Tinned potatoes

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ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

12th May 2024

Seventh Sunday Of Easter



Fr David Says....

For many Catholics, synodality remains something of an abstract concept. It is often explained as meaning something like "Journeying together", after the two Greek words (syn meaning with, and hodos meaning journey) that the word Synod derives from. There is a definite paradigm shift in the model of the Church which Pope Francis is encouraging us to follow. He is seeing that synodality is the way we as church can express and manifest what the Vatican II had dreamt of in the 1960s. A Church which listens and discerns. A Church which is not hierarchical but includes all the people of God. A Church which does not dictate from top to bottom but a Church which listens to all the aspects of the people of God and discerns with them where the Holy Spirit is leading the Church. The word discernment and listening to the Signs of the Times were two of the buzz words which we discussed and heard about during the Synod for Parish Priests last week. It was a joy for me to be with 300 priests from all over the world and together sharing our diverse stories of parish priests. The ups and downs which we all experience. The diversity of pastoral situations in different parts of the world and yet as parish priests – the human element connected us together.

What exactly does discernment mean? The official definition of Christian discernment is a "decision making process in which an individual or a community makes a discovery that can lead to future action" For a Christian community, discernment is a process by which God helps us to reach the best decision.

We come to the last week of the Easter season, the holiest season of the year for us Christians. The focus of Easter has been the growth of the early Church and the need to be united with the Risen Lord Jesus and with each other so that the Good News can be proclaimed to the whole world. The first reading today takes place after the Ascension and before Pentecost. As the apostles seek to replace Judas. So after Jesus's Ascension as they await the coming of the Holy Spirit, the apostles decide to fill Judas's place in the Twelve. Twelve is a biblical number that implies fullness. For example the twelve sons of Jacob, Israel the twelve tribes. They want this position to come from those who have been part of the disciples since the beginning of Jesus's ministry - starting from the baptism by John the Baptist. They select two individuals – Barsabbas and Matthias and they pray that they would be led by the Holy Spirit in the spirit of discernment in their Choice. From the beginning of the Church, the process of discernment had been used to see as a community where God was leading them as church.

They cast lots so that from the Lord comes every decision. Ultimately they decided on Matthias to take the place of Judas.

The Gospel today is Jesus's prayer for his disciples. He prays for all His followers including us that we might be one, just as He and his Father are one. He is confident that his disciples will face trying times like we would, be rejected by people of the world who seek only earthly values. Jesus lifts up His followers and us so that they may be in the world but not of the world. Just as He came into the world but was not of this world. Pope Francis when he met us, the parish priests on Thursday Morning insisted that we as priests would not be taken over by spiritual worldliness. He was referring to those priests who find their identity in clericalism. Where their clerical dress distinguish them as being superior to the rest of the People of God.

Jesus seems to hammer on one point as he prepares his followers for the world they must live in and witness to after his departure. And that point is that he must go away in order for the disciples to do the work they are being sent to do. He is quite adamant about this – these things cannot be accomplished unless he goes away.

We hear Jesus making an urgent, passionate kind of invitation. Telling the world, and showing it in action, that God's love and care extend to every human being in every place not only builds up the body of Christ so that Jesus's embrace becomes all encompassing, at the same time it accomplishes the reign of God bringing everyone into that embrace.

Everyone of us is needed to make this happen. And truly I do not think its particularly important for us to go out and tell the world that God loves them, that God intends for them to be free and whole and held in the arms of Love. What matters is that we, the body of Christ we, who together incarnate the spirit of God, love and free and heal and embrace the world.

This is the essence of our faith in action. How all humankind know that God is generous if we are not generous?, how will humankind know that God is within them if we are not with them? How will humankind know that God love them if we do not love them? And if we are the generous, present and loving people who do bear witness to God and Jesus and the Holy Spirit by our actions, then we won't have to stare at the sky to try to see Jesus. All we will have to do is look around us.

Thank you for reading once again my reflection for this week. Have a great week! God bless you all.



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Sunday 12th May	09:15am Dominic Braganza RIP - 1st Anniversary (Rebello) Lauren Antao (Antao Family) 11:00am Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Geraldine Mulroy RIP (S McAleer) Sharon Fernandes RIP (Fernandes Family)
Feria Monday 13th May	10:00am Ken & Angela Evans (H Marvell) 12:00pm Requiem Mass for Fr Barry Hughes held at St Michaels, Locksbottom
Saint Matthias Tuesday 14th May	10:00am Francesca margaux Sio RIP (J Sio) Canon John McNamara RIP (H Marvell)
Saint John Stone Wednesday 15th May	10:00am Frank St Clair RIP (P Rowland) Italo Ferretti RIP (Ferretti Family)
Saint Simon Thursday 16th May	10:00am Cyril Webster RIP - 2nd Anniversary (H Wood)
Feria Friday 17th May	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Pentecost Sunday Saturday 18th May Sunday 19th May	06:00pm Achamma Devassy RIP - Anniversary (S Moonjely) 09:15am Mary Scott RIP (M Scott) 11:00am Gay Baker RIP (J Baker)

The next second collection will be on 26th May for the Building Fund.



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