



St James – A shining light in Petts Wood



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

8th January 2023

Baptism of the Lord



### Fr David says...

The film Gandhi is a three hour epic, depicting the life of Mahatma Gandhi in India. In order lead the oppressed people of India to freedom from British rule, Gandhi adopted non-violent means such

as fasting from food, vigils of prayer, peaceful marches, protests and civil disobedience. One of the reasons why Gandhi put on a loincloth and fasted from food, almost to the point of death, was to show solidarity with the Indian People, identifying with them in their physical sufferings. This finally brought independence to India. Rev Martin Luther King too, identified with this enslaved and maltreated people and became the voice of the voiceless in the name of God. Consequently he was maligned, beaten, jailed and assassinated while he preached peace, justice and non-violence on behalf of the downtrodden Afro-Americans in the US. His heroic example definitely demonstrates Christian living for tens of millions of the poor and alienated Afro-Americans in the US and the oppressed millions worldwide. Jesus's baptism as described in today's gospel was his identification with God's chosen people who became aware of their sinful lives and need for God's forgiveness.

Neither John nor Jesus invented baptism it had been practiced for centuries among the Jews as a ritual equivalent to confession. Until the fall of the temple in 70AD, it was common for Jewish people to use a special pool called a Mikveh – literally meaning a collection of water – as a means of spiritual cleansing, to remove spiritual impurity and sin. Men took this bath weekly on the eve of the Sabbath, women monthly. Converts were also expected to take this bath before entering Judaism. The orthodox Jews still retain the rite. John preached that such a bath was necessary preparation for the cataclysm that would be wrought by the coming Messiah. Jesus transformed this continuing ritual into the one single, definitive act by which we begin our life of faith. In effect He fused Divine Essence with the water and the ceremony.

Jesus's baptism by John was the acceptance and the beginning of his mission as God's suffering servant. He allowed himself to be numbered among sinners. Jesus submitted himself entirely to his Father's will. Out of love, he consented to his baptism of death for the remission of our sins. Many Fathers of the Church explain that Jesus received John's baptism to identify himself with his people, who as a result of John's preaching, for the first time in Jewish History became aware of their sins and of their need for repentance.

The Jews had the traditional belief they only Gentiles who embraced Jewish religion needed the baptism of repentance. For as God's chosen people the Jewish race was holy. Jesus must have been waiting for this most opportune moment to begin his public ministry. The Fathers of the Church point out that the words which the Voice of the Heavenly Father speaks reveal Jesus's identity "This is my beloved Son".

Jesus's baptism by John was a mystical experience that Jesus felt deep within his soul at the crucial turning point of his life. The opening of the Heavens with holy Spirit descending as a dove upon Jesus and the voice declaring of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son with whom I am well pleased", are God's revelation to all humankind of the Mystery that he is Triune. The presence of the Triune God at this baptism, reveals Jesus's true identity and mission. First it was a moment of decision. It marked the end of Jesus's private life which had prepared him for his public ministry. Second it was a moment of identification with his people in their search for God initiated by John the Baptist. Third it was a moment of approval. Jesus might have been waiting for approval from his Heavenly Father and during his baptism Jesus got his approval of himself as the Father's beloved son.

Jesus's baptism reminds us of our identity and mission. Through our baptism – we have experienced in our soul God calling us as his beloved sons and daughters. This reminds us that makes use of our parents, siblings, teachers and friends to affirm this reality. The messages that we get as we are growing up of approval stays with us forever and builds us up as human beings. If the messages we have been given are the opposite – one's of shame and negativity – this would definitely affect our self-esteem and also our self-confidence. In baptism God affirms us as his beloved and that we are all brothers and sisters of the same father. It also affirms our mission within the church. We are called to appreciate the Divine presence in others by honouring them, loving them and serving them in all humility.

Today through this feast, we are called to remember the graces we have received in Baptism and to renew our Baptismal promises. It is a time to be thankful to God for being part of this Church and also maybe reflect on how to be able to share our gifts and talents with others in our Parish of St James.

Have a good week – thank you for reading my reflection once again. God bless you.



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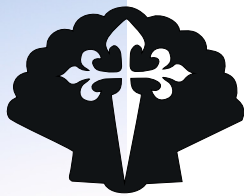
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Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm, or by appointment.

<p><b>The Baptism Of The Lord</b>  <b>Saturday 7th January</b> (Saturday Vigil)</p> <p><b>Sunday 8th January</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Nanette Gowers RIP (C Lewis)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Edel &amp; Kevin McAvennie (L O'Sullivan)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Monday 9th January</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Ruth Wheelwright RIP (S Weekly)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Tuesday 10th January</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Rev Stephen Potter (I Webb)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Wednesday 11th January</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Bill Morley RIP &amp; Violet Myersw RIP (M Morley)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Thursday 12th January</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Josie Flynn RIP (G&amp;B Ford)</p> <p>Alexandra Henderson RIP (L&amp;B Henderson)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Friday 13th January</b></p>	<p><b>No Mass from St James'</b>        Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.        Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:  <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></p>
<p><b>Second Sunday</b>  <b>Saturday 14th January</b> (Saturday Vigil)</p> <p><b>Sunday 15th January</b></p>	<p><b>04:00pm</b> First Holy Communion Welcome Mass</p> <p><b>06:00pm</b> Koon Yee RIP (Sands Family)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan (L O'Sullivan)</p>



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

# Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

15th January 2023

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*



### Fr David says...

Have you ever glimpsed pure goodness in another person? Sometimes we see it as we gaze on a baby – goodness, innocence and seemingly limitless potential. On rarer occasions, we get caught

up in a similar perception of a young person or an adult. If we are lucky enough, God provides us with friends who have these qualities. I have been blessed by encountering my mother's best friend Mrs Micallef whose self-less life and her presence just manifested these attributes. It is like she had no "ego" just love without wanting anything in return. Our family were blessed to have her in our lives from childhood till adulthood. I have also been blessed by my dearest friend Sue again whose self-less love especially towards the vulnerable and the mentally challenged gave her a special presence. Sue's personal spirituality and love of God until the end embellished all she did and said. I have been truly blessed by having her in my adult life. I am so grateful in my grief of losing her. Have you been blessed to have encountered such people in your life? They are a blessing to be around. That must be what John the Baptist perceived in Jesus – a person whose very being illustrated holiness and purity and fullness in humanity.

Who was John that he could recognise Jesus who he was? All the Gospels depict John as a conscious forerunner to the Christ. Never claiming to be a messiah, he preached to prepare the way, probably never guessing how Jesus's preaching would be so different from his own. Surprisingly the Baptist's essential characteristic, as he appears in the Gospel of John is his humility. He also comes across as being free from his own ego. Historically, John was probably as well-known as Jesus and his following rivalled that of Jesus. But with all that John accomplished, his greatest Gospel witness came through his saying that he was not the one. The picture we get of John is that he not only had enough faith to believe in his own unique and crucial vocation, but enough to see beyond his own call, talents and insights. John breathed an attitude of what Muslims cry "Allahu Akbar" God is greater. That is the attitude which enabled John to recognise Jesus. With a profound grasp of his own prophetic vocation, John recognised something greater in Jesus, something that reflected more of God and more of God's promised future.

What did John mean by calling Jesus, Lamb of God? John is telling his disciples that this is the sacrificial lamb, offered at the time when the people were under the slavery of Egypt. And the

Lamb was offered that terrible night and his blood was placed upon the doorposts of all the children of Israel and the lamb became the sacrifice by which all of them were freed. This is the lamb who is the sacrificial lamb. This is the Messiah who does not come with great armies. This is the Messiah who comes to us as a sacrificial lamb and as John says who offers his whole life that sins might be forgiven.

The word sin is very much used. We think of sin as somebody who offends the Ten Commandments. It is not that. We think of Sin as something terrible that other people fall into and very seldom do we ourselves sin because we think sin is a series of activities against laws. And it is true. If you break a law, you break a commandment. And if you break a commandment, the commandment is the law of God and therefore you have sinned. But that's not what sin means. Sin is a very interesting word and what it does mean is you have failed to love. God has given us His Love and we turn our back on Him. For Jesus enters the waters of the Jordan, becomes one with us, walks with us through life, feeling the things we feel, hoping the things we hope every bit a human being, when he does this, he is coming so that he might take away all sin. For if sin is a sin against the love of God, Jesus redeems us by his great love, not only for God his Father, but for all of us. Sinning is not breaking a rule, a regulation, a law, it is the breaking of another's heart. And then we will realise that Jesus came only to love. He himself said, "I have not come to judge. But only to teach you how to love".

The gospel refers to sin also to the collective brokenness and sinfulness of the world, not to individual sins and to the collective, social and structural evil that will be arrayed against Jesus by his enemies. As human beings we have solidarity in this sin.

But this weekend, let us reflect on those people in our lives who have enriched us by their presence, by their selfless love towards us. They are God's gift to us. They are our John the Baptists who through their example of self less love point us towards the Lamb of God who takes away our sins.

Have a great weekend and blessed week. God bless you.



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<b>Second Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 14th January</b> (Saturday Vigil)  <b>Sunday 15th January</b>	<b>04:00pm</b> First Holy Communion Mass  <b>06:00pm</b> Koon Yee RIP (Sands Family) <b>09:15am</b> People Off The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan (L O'Sullivan)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 16th January</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Stuart MacLeud RIP (L&B Henderson)
<b>Saint Anthony</b> <b>Tuesday 17th January</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Alexander Toomey RIP (I Webb)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 18th January</b>	<b>10:00am</b> 90th Birthday of Frank Mayers RIP (Mayers Family)  Cyril Riches RIP (M Riches)  <b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 19th January</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Emily Colgan RIP (The Wharton Family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 20th January</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Third Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 21st January</b> (Saturday Vigil)  <b>Sunday 22nd January</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Leish O'Sullivan





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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

22nd January 2023

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time



### Fr David says...

From time to time, I can get into heated arguments on social media with fellow Catholics. It is quite a familiar story in 2023. There are various unpleasant conversations on social media amongst Catholics who belong to different

factions within the Church. What starts sometimes as a comment on a post rolls into a discussion over private messaging and it becomes clear that we would never agree. I usually now am cautious of not getting hooked into such conversations and I end up saying to them – we need to agree to disagree and stop there. While both of us love Jesus and his Church and are trying our best to live our faith in the world, we come to two very different conclusions about how to do it. I some-times judge the other in thinking that they are not really Catholic otherwise they would definitely think the way I feel and think. How arrogant is that!

However an irritating question is inserted in my conscience. Was I focused on loving the other person or on being right? Was I seeing another brother or sister in Christ who loves God with the same passion as I do? If St Paul wrote to me in the 21st century, he might ask me why I label myself as a certain kind of catholic. He would remind me who it is that was crucified for my freedom and to whose name I bear witness in the world. He would say that if, in fact I claim to love Jesus, I cannot create division and so discord. I should see that the person making the comments on posts is infinitely more valuable than any argument I had against their conclusions, though truth to be told, Paul did love a good argument.

Jesus issues that same call to conversion in the gospel reading. This new reality is one which relieves burdens, dispels gloom and enlivens the heart. Christ's call promises liberation from what shackles us through the unbridled freedom of the Holy Spirit who is breaking into the world. It is a new and revolutionary reality in which we can live, if we repent and respond with a complete reorientation of our lives. And that reorientation is one which sees each individual person as the object of God's saving work in the world. When Jesus calls Peter and Andrew he does not call them to an ideology or a political party, he calls them to fish for human beings. To love Jesus, to follow him, to join in the work of the kingdom, is to seek after people, to love people and to put people above everything else.

With today's gospel, we begin our contemplation of Jesus's mission from the perspective of Matthew and his community. Matthew wrote for Jewish Christians who were coming to grips with the implications of the destruction of the Temple. They realised that sacrifice could no longer be the centre piece of their worship or their sacrament of union with God. They had to discern how Jesus and his message fit with the way God had led them through history. As they were moving through

a terrible, painful, yet potential filled time of transition, Matthew tried to help them understand how Jesus embodied their past and God's plan for their future.

According to Matthew, after Jesus's time of discernment in the desert, he learnt that John the Baptist had been arrested. With that, he left Nazareth to reside in Capernaum, a fishing village by the Sea of Galilee, a detail that Matthew recorded to connect Jesus to Isaiah's prophecies. Matthew described Jesus as a prophet on the move, the one foretold and whose life would be in danger from the begin-ning of his ministry. Matthew depicts Jesus as preaching an exceedingly simple message: "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. While underlining how Jesus fulfilled ancient scriptural promises. As we hear this story today, we can note two things of great importance. First, after his time of tempting in the desert, Jesus showed no intention of carrying out his mission alone. A second key element of this story is the response of the four disciples – the models for all who would follow in their stead. We are told that upon hearing the invitation, they took him up on it with all the enthusiasm of people who are falling in love. Long before they understood the implications of joining his crowd, they experienced a metanoia. We can be sure that some of their family and friends tried to talk sense into them, citing the fact that Jesus was a dreamer with no powerful backing and that his reputation and message were too close to John the Baptist for anyone's comfort or safety. Such arguments failed to sway them like eve-ryone who moves beyond infatuation and commits to lifelong loving, Jesus's followers had much to learn as they fleshed out their vocation to be bearers of good news. While metanoia may begin in a moment of crashing insight, it must be integrated into all the dimensions of one's life.

Jesus meets people while they were doing their ordinary daily work of fishing and mending their nets on the sea shore. They were not on their knees praying in the temple or the synagogue. Jesus called these men by their own names, so he must have seen them before and known them today in the same way, Jesus continues to call us by our name. Jesus calls us wherever we are, regardless of who we are. Each of us is called by Jesus. He breaks into our world through our ordinary daily lives and activities. Jesus has not stopped calling people to follow him.

After Jesus called these men and women to follow him, he sent them out in his name to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom of God. He sent them out in his name, not their own. Today we are the ones who are not only called we are also sent out to proclaim the gospel through how we live, through what we say and what we do.

This very day Jesus is calling you by your name, what is your response?.

Have a great week and God bless you.



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<b>Third Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 21st January</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 22nd January</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Rev Sue Bull RIP <b>11:00am</b> Leish O'Sullivan
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 23rd January</b>	<b>10:00am</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Saint Francis de Sales</b> <b>Tuesday 24th January</b>	Please note change of time for Mass <b>11:00am</b> Requiem Mass for Jill Lehane RIP
<b>The Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle</b> <b>Wednesday 25th January</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Rev Sue Bull RIP  <b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration
<b>Saints Timothy and Titus</b> <b>Thursday 26th January</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Nanette Gowers RIP
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 27th January</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Fourth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 28th January</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Tracey Morrison RIP
<b>Sunday 29th January</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Relatives & Friends of Marie Porter (Foundation Mass) <b>11:00am</b> Michael McKinney RIP & Margaret Wilson RIP (S Theodore)



# St James the Great

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

5th February 2023



Fr David says...

The light of the World (1851-1854) is an allegorical painting by the English Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt (1827 -1910) representing the figure of Jesus preparing to knock on an overgrown and long unopened door, illustrating Revelation: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any one hears my voice, and open the door, I will come in to them, and will sup with them and them with Me". The door in the painting has no handle and can therefore be opened only from the inside, representing, "the obstinately shut mind and heart." This painting was considered by many to be the most important and culturally influential rendering of Christ of its time. There are three versions of this painting however the life sized painting is at St Paul's Cathedral London. The Light of the world painting marked William Holman Hunt's conversion to Christianity, making it a highly significant work within his evolution as both artist and also as a human being. He lived predominantly as an atheist in his early years, but recorded in his diaries about a change around the same time that he produced this painting. Many of Holman Hunt's friends were keen followers of the Church albeit in different guises, and over time he would join them. Whilst his religiously themed artworks were deep and emotional, it is unclear as how seriously he took some Christian beliefs, even after his apparent conversion. Whilst his diaries indicate a change of heart, he would never have quite the same commitment as some of his friends. However around the same time as **The Light of the World**, a number of other works from his career like **Christ and the two Marys** and **The Shadow of Death** also features references to biblical content or more general moral guidance. Through his gift of painting, amidst his grappling with his own faith, William was an instrument I believe in God's hands to be light himself in the world by making thousands of people reflect and think of their own life and faith. His life shows me that we do not need to be perfect in order to be light in the world. We only need to be who we authentically are and give permission to others to be too.

Today we take light for granted. Hard as it is to believe, there was time when there was no electricity and immediate light at the touch of a switch was unheard of. This made dispelling the darkness difficult, if not impossible. The poor could not afford candles or oil lamps or even wood for the fire. They went to bed with sundown and darkness. Even for those who

could afford candles or an oil lamp, the light they age off was poor and limited. This was the world in which Jesus lived. In the gospel this Sunday Jesus uses light, a very common thing to describe the quality needed to be his follower and disciple. The words he uses are as equally challenging as they are encouraging. In the Gospel of John there is a constant battle between light and darkness. Nicodemus the Pharisee visits Jesus at night, Jesus heals a man born into a world of darkness because he is blind, and when Judas leaves the table during the last supper, we are told it was night yet is into this darkness that Jesus comes with the good news. Also in John's gospel, Jesus proclaims these words of hope and encouragement, "I am the light of the world, anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life"

Yet strangely, in our Gospel this Sunday, Jesus also says "**You are the light of the World,**" what can he mean by these words? Through our baptism we all share in the mission and ministry of Jesus. Today we are his disciples. Today in our families, our schools and our communities, we are the ones who are called to stand up to speak out and shine as followers of Jesus. We are called and invited not to hide our light, to hide in the shadows or be embarrassed that we are followers of Jesus. When we see the news on our televisions or read about it in our newspapers, we may feel powerless or even hopeless. But we are called to be people of the light. We live in a time when there seems to be an atmosphere of fear and doubt spreading our world. Listening to the news every day, makes us believe that we are living in a very dark world. War in different parts of the world, terrorism, economic recession, natural disasters. It is easy to think that the world is coming to an end. That there is no hope in the world. However we never hear of the many people in the world who are trying to make a difference in their small circles. Being the light does not mean – forcing our light on people to make ourselves feel better. It means however that our natural light – just being ourselves imbued by our own spiritual light, we can share it with others and make the world a better place to be in. We are asked by Jesus to let the light of our faith and hope shine even more brightly than ever. It is said that for evil to triumph all that is needed is that good people do and say nothing. My one light may not make a huge difference but when it shines brightly with others, the light is immense and powerful. When we let our light shine darkness is dispelled and defeated.

This week do not hide your light; let it shine brightly for all to see. Thank you for taking the time to read the reflection for this week.



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<b>Fifth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 4th February</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Miriam Boulia RIP (S Baldanzi)
<b>Sunday 5th February</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Luigi Assirati RIP (Assirati Family) <b>11:00am</b> Wellbeing of Bernie Walsh (G Mulroy)
<b>Saint Paul Miki and Companions</b> <b>Monday 6th February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Fr David Camilleri, Mons J O'Toole, Canon T McHugh & Fr Jim Hurley (H Marvell)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 7th February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> People of the Parish
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 8th February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> People of the Parish <b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 9th February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> People of the Parish
<b>Saint Scholastica</b> <b>Friday 10th February</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Sixth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 11th February</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Betty & Wilbur Wright RIP (R & E Wright)
<b>Sunday 12th February</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Luigi Assirati RIP (Assirati Family) <b>11:00am</b> Helen Davies RIP (S&E Theodore)





# St James the Great

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

12th February 2023



### Fr David says...

Just lately I had the pleasure to be invited to a family in another parish for Sunday lunch. I knew the parents, however I only met their five children fleetingly once. When I entered their house, there was a sense of life and

normality in their house. The youngest was on his computer and the others came down one by one to welcome me and obviously to await the Sunday roast. At the table once again I rejoiced to experience a normal family who were comfortable enough with one another that after some moments of awkwardness of having a priest at their table, they very quickly resumed their normal conversations over the dining table. The girls had a lot to say to one another and the boys especially the youngest of them entertained me with his liveliness and tactics to attract my attention. At one point I asked them whether they ate together daily to which they immediately confessed that during the week it is impossible due to the different after school activities. However on Sunday they still try to be together at the table. I was also curious how the family works in supporting the mother and father run the chores of the house. They told me that they all have different roles and chores and although most of the time it does work there were times that it fails. But that ok as they cover each other. Beyond the rules and obligations that lead their household, there was a palpable feeling of unity and love amongst them. I left feeling a sense of gratitude and elated that I had the opportunity to experience such a unique family built on individual responsibilities and yet truly built on love.

From a very early age, we are encouraged to do what we were told and asked. When we are young we listen to and learn from our parents, we follow their example and do what they asked us to do. Most of the time. This continues when we go to school; the teacher asks to behave in a certain way and expects to follow the rules of the class and the school. Although this is often very difficult to achieve nowadays. There are rules of the road to help us drive safely with care and concern for other drivers, pedestrians and cyclists. Religion has rules too and this was as true at the time of Jesus as it is today for us. However there is always the danger that the letter of the law becomes more important than the spirit of the law. There is always the danger that the law becomes more important than the spirit of the law. There is always a danger that the law become more important that the religion seeks to guide and uphold. That the law becomes almost an end to itself rather a guide to help us become more free to love and be compassionate towards ourselves and others.

Matthew continues the Sermon on the Mount this week with a three part instruction by Jesus on the way of life in the kingdom of God. Today's reading is part one and deals with the Law. Part two deals with worship and religious practice and contains the Lord's prayer and part three deals with trusting God and deeds of loving service to our neighbour. When Matthew speaks of the law and

prophets, he means the whole Scripture. Matthew's Jesus does not overturn the Law of Moses nor does he set his followers free from the law. He requires his disciples to go beyond the Law by doing more than the Law requires. The Law condemned murder, Jesus condemns anger. The Law condemned adultery, Jesus condemns even lustful looks.

However, we know that from the gospels that Jesus had many battles and arguments with Pharisees and Sadducees. These were the two groups who controlled and organised all the rites and rituals of the Jewish religion. However Jesus said to the people, "Do not practice what they preach. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on your shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they! Despite their well-meaning intentions, they had let the letter of the law overtake their hearts and spirit of the law. On another occasion, when asked by the Sadducees which was the greatest commandment of the law, Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind and you must love your neighbours as yourself." These words from Jesus are as powerful and relevant today as when he first spoke them. They are meant as much for us as they were for those who first heard them.

All too easily we can become like the Pharisees and the Sadducees; we can become slaves to the law of the gospel and miss what its message of hope and new life are really about. Pope Francis offers these words of warning to us, "People rigidly bound to the law suffer pain, pride and often a double life. God's laws are not meant to make us slaves but to make us free. To make us sons and daughters of God. God prefers mercy, tenderness, goodness and humility. May the Lord teach each of us to walk within the Lord's laws with these way".

Jesus is not asking us to break the law. He is calling us to go beyond the letter of the law and to deepen our appreciation of the message of the law. The good news of the gospel is more a matter of the heart than it is a matter of the head. May we love the Lord, ourselves and our neighbours with all our heart, all our soul and all our mind.

Today's gospel maybe difficult to digest for those of us who have personal experience with the issues named by Jesus. Perhaps there is anger festering right now between you and a loved one. Maybe you have been the victim or perpetrator of adultery. Who among us have not looked upon another with lust? Who among us does not care for someone who is divorced? Let us please be gentle with ourselves and each other as we take in Jesus's message. In coming to fulfil the Law, Jesus definitely did not come to shame or berate. He came to help us grow more faithful each day and to help us experience the healing of repentance and reconciliation.

Have a good and blessed week and half term to those whose children go to school. Keep safe.

Thank you once again to take the time to read my reflection for this week.



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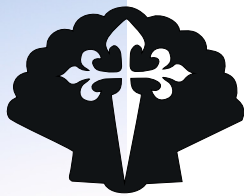
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Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm, or by appointment.

<b>Sixth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 11th February</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Betty & Wilbur Wright RIP (R & E Wright)
<b>Sunday 12th February</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Luigi Assirati RIP (Assirati Family) <b>11:00am</b> Helen Davies RIP (S&E Theodore)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 13th February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Jean Rawling RIP (Foundation)
<b>Saints Cyril and Methodius</b> <b>Tuesday 14th February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Bishop Pat Lynch (H Marvell)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 15th February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Pauline Jones RIP (M Mulvey) <b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 16th February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Joseph Fennessy RIP (G Mulroy)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 17th February</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Seventh Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 18th February</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Tom Evans RIP (Betty Evans) Nellie Lewis RIP
<b>Sunday 19th February</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Alice Furtado RIP (S&N Miranda) <b>11:00am</b> M Maria & Stanislaw Bracik RIP Janina & Tadeusz Bochnia RIP Agata Wietecha-Michnal RIP (G Sadstak)



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

19th February 2023

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*



### Fr David says...

Nothing comes from violence and nothing ever will. All we have to do is look at the evening news on our television to see countries and sadly different religious nations at war with one another. It is tragic.

When one side is attacked and bombed, the other side immediately strike back with equal if not more destructive force. We even see and hear this when politicians are only talking to each other. They react rather than respond to one another. We can also see them often threaten each other as they talk over each other and try to shout each other down. Even in our relationships when we are hurt we do not listen to the other but react in the same way. In doing so we do not allow ourselves to listen to the pain of the other. We seek revenge or try our best to as children do, to assert that we were in the right. Nothing changes in this way. It just perpetuates hurt and we still think that we are in the right and the other is in the wrong.

The last antithesis offered in the Sermon on the Mount deal with love of enemies. We should not look at "an eye for an eye as an inordinately strict punishment. It is actually meant to limit acts of revenge by making sure the punishment is not excessive but fits the crime. However Jesus asks his followers to take a different approach by resisting retaliation altogether. Those who are called to the Kingdom of Heaven are to go beyond the way the world usually works and serve God's kingdom on earth.

Jesus puts before us the question and the dilemma of what we should and how we are to behave when this happens to us. Do we return one painful word or action with the same anger? Jesus knows and quotes the Jewish Law. It was allowed to take an eye for an eye to prevent all our war between families, village and even countries. However as with last week's gospel, Jesus wants his disciples and us to go further. As his followers and disciples today and following his own example, Jesus asks us not to respond with anger, aggression or violence when a wrong is done to or against us. We are called not to let another person's anger towards us give us permission to lash out in violence verbally or in action. Challenging and difficult as this is, we are to take as our model, the life and actions of Jesus himself. This is the cost of being a Christian.

This may sound naïve, simplistic, unrealistic and even foolish. And while it can be done, it is by no means easy. There are three examples that we can look to and learn from. Mahatma Gandhi responded to unjust laws and oppression with passive non-resistance. He stood up and spoke out against the wrongs of the wrongs he saw, but did not respond with violence. Maximilian Kolbe, who gave his life in the concentration camp for that of another man's, refused to hate those who killed him. And finally Martin Luther King, following Gandhi's example also pretested against racism peacefully. By following the example of Jesus who did not return violence with violence, these three great figures also had their life

brutally taken from them. Yet their message and example live today for us. We may not be asked to give our lives for the gospel, but we are asked to offer each other the hand of peace, reconciliation and forgiveness. Somebody has to have the courage to take the first step to stop the violence.

However at the same time, it is helpful to recognise a couple of things. Firstly the perfection that Christ's followers are being called to is God's first. It is perfect because it is God's ways. Such a statement can cause us to assume a mutual exclusivity, if it's God ways, it cannot possibly be our way in an identical manner. It is simply beyond us. Perhaps part of today's scripture message is that teachings such as turning the other cheek and love of enemies might seem beyond us, however that does not make it utterly impossible, at least from God's perspective. So, we too hear the call of the perfect life, but we also draw on the witness of the scriptures – great men and women of faith and people near and far who can encourage us to join in the journey towards the perfection of Christ. Such sources show us the joy of such a life in our reality. This leads us to another important point; we are called to be perfect not as a matter of being inerrant or infallible in the total sense of the term. Such a thing is evidently not the experience of the world we currently live in. Rather it is a direction we are supposed to be heading towards, a model of being, illustrated in the person of Christ to show us what we are actually capable of. That we can stretch and move from moral infancy to moral maturity.

We tend to think of the Christian life, especially its moral dimensions as either on or off, right or wrong, black or white perfect or imperfect. However we must remember that the Christian life is just that, a life a dynamic existence in motion. We are a pilgrim Church after all. The call to be perfect is not a static state that we either are or are not. Only God can claim to have a perfect state of being. We, on the other hand are being called to form ourselves in the image of the Perfect one. The call to be perfect should not be equated to perfectionism. Jesus' teaching of the higher life should not be used as a verbal cudgel on ourselves or each other. It is an expression of who God is and what God ultimately wants. It is a reminder that, through Jesus we have a sense in what our purpose ultimately is. We may feel like we are fumbling around well short of the spiritual maturity that such high standards entail, but we are more capable than we think, it is possible. We should hear Jesus's words today as a loving reminder of what our true selves is capable of, even if we feel distant from it.

Moreover we need not run before we crawl, toddle or walk. Wherever we are at is where God will meet us, giving us vision of the next step on the way. Jesus will call us to "the perfect way" but will meet us in our "imperfect reality". In this imperfect reality, we can hear the voice of God in our prayer, in our sacramental life and in the people around us that will draw us closer to the perfection of God.

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



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 or by appointment.

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<b>Sunday 19th February</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Alice Furtado RIP (S&N Miranda) <b>11:00am</b> M Maria & Stanislaw Bracik RIP Janina & Tadeusz Bochnia RIP Agata Wietecha-Michnal RIP (G Sadstak)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 20th February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Private Intention
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 21st February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Christopher Nii Barnor Nathan RIP (V Nathan-Rogers)
<b>Ash Wednesday</b> <b>Wednesday 22nd February</b>	<b>09:30am</b> Bill Henderson - Birthday (LM Henderson)  <b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration  <b>07:00pm</b> Patrick Kirwan RIP (R&E Wright)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 23rd February</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Fr. Alec Fraser RIP (V Begley)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 24th February</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>First Sunday Of Lent</b> <b>Saturday 25th February</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Mary Carvalho RIP (D & N Miranda)
<b>Sunday 26th February</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Albert Mehr RIP (M Mehr) <b>11:00am</b> M Maria & Stanislaw Bracik RIP Janina & Tadeusz Bochnia RIP Agata Wietecha-Michnal RIP (G Sadstak)

### Second Collection

Next week's second collection is for the Clergy Support Fund for sick/retired Priests.





# ST JAMES THE GREAT

# Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

26th February 2023

First Sunday Of Lent



### Fr David says...

Wearing nothing but snakeskin boots, I blazed a footpath, the first radical road out of that old kingdom toward a new unknown.

When I came to those great flaming gates of burning

gold,

I stood alone in terror at the threshold between Paradise and Earth.

There I heard a mysterious echo: my own voice

singing to me from across the forbidden side. I shook awake—

at once alive in a blaze of green fire.

Let it be known: I did not fall from grace.

I leapt

to freedom.

In Ansel Elkins' poem, "Autobiography of Eve", Eve stands, frightened on the threshold between Paradise and the unknown. When she hears an echo of her own voice sing out to her from the place that is forbidden, she shakes herself awake. She is ablaze and alive. The poem concludes with a striking claim: Eve did not fall from grace. She leapt for freedom. In this poem and in this week's first reading, Eve has Agency. She knows what Paradise offers and what is forbidden there. More than the assurance of Paradise, she wants – come what may—freedom to choose for herself. Adam taking the fruit and tethering himself to his earthly love, ultimately chooses the same. Of course it is tempting. I relate to that. Most of all I want what I cannot have. My forebears in the garden also wanted the freedom to call their own shots, to decide for themselves what was and wasn't off limits to live freely and fully in a new world of their own making. What is more human than that? to live is to grapple with our limitations. In some sense, we are all trapped by our circumstances: we have life – the Garden – but of course there's a catch. We cannot have it all forever.

In this week's Gospel reading, this newly baptised man, who built his ministry on relationships with other people, pulls away from friends and family and comforts and everything familiar. He goes alone: from the Garden to the desert, from feast to fasting. From public life and ministry to solitude. He doesn't leap into the desert. He literally flat out refuses the temptations to leap from the temple to test God. Instead he retreats there. It isn't an impulsive with immediate reward. It is an intentional, deliberate action which he recommits to for 40 days and nights. Adam and Eve turn away from God. But every time Jesus is tempted, God is where he turns to. When he is hungry, he trusts that the food that will fully nourish him is the word of God. When he doubts, he redoubles his belief that God is watching out for him. When the possibilities of godliness

and kingdoms are dangled before him, he secures himself in a kingdom not of this earth where a place for him is eternally reserved. This is the choice we have agency over. When tempted to reach for that one thing we cannot have and thus most want. Maybe the power to control our circumstance or other people, or our fates. Jesus shows us that we can reach for God instead. Shame and guilt are not the point of these stories. The point is – The choice is as ever ours. That is how loved we are.

It is not random that Jesus was tempted in the wilderness after he had fasted for 40 days and nights. We are more vulnerable to inner conflict, more likely to see our own temptations revealed after fasting. The fast is a spiritual emptying – a revealing practice of what is holding us captive, what we turn to for sustenance and support that is not the Bread of life. Matthew's gospel invites us into the wilderness with Jesus. In the Bible the desert is the place of struggle, a place where God's people battle with temptations to neglect and abandon God. Our temptations aren't always as obvious as an embodied Evil telling us to throw ourselves off the temple's pinnacle. But the struggle is real.

When we are inadvertently neglecting our relationship with God we are more susceptible to easy answers and seek worldly ways to flee discomfort. Are we stressed out, afraid, lonely? Surely that bottle of wine, or that shopping spree, or that tub of ice cream in the freezer will solve all our problems. In studying this passage of the gospel, I noticed the ascending heights to which the tempter led Jesus. He started in the wilderness. Then he was led to the pinnacle of the Temple. Then he was led to a very high mountain. Each ascent offered more power more prestige more wealth and more distance from the grounding of his faith. Wealth and power segregate us from the people and the societal problems Jesus actively sought. Our capitalistic, consumerist society leads us to the same heights, separating us from the poor and the oppressed, tempting us to greedily jump all in. But Jesus knew not to fall for the tempter's ploys. Do we?? Contemplating this question or practicing a spiritual fast, will help us discern the grip these temptations have on us and our lives.

This Lent we are invited into a journey that has the potential to set us free. Lenten penitence is not about guilt. It is about freedom. Lent is a season that begins with an honest examination of our spiritual lives leading us to confess what is keeping us from God and each other. Do we feel free? During this Lent, let us return to God as our ultimate source of life and freedom.

Have a Blessed Lent everyone. God bless you all.



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Safeguarding Phone Number: 07591082743

Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,

<p><b>First Sunday Of Lent</b>  <b>Saturday 25th February</b> (Saturday Vigil)</p> <p><b>Sunday 26th February</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Mary Carvalho RIP (D &amp; N Miranda)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> Albert Mehr RIP (M Mehr)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> M Maria &amp; Stanislaw Bracik RIP          Janina &amp; Tadeusz Bochnia RIP          Agata Wietecha-Michnal RIP          (G Sadstak)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Monday 27th February</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Jill Lehane RIP (CWL)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Tuesday 28th February (Please note change of mass time)</b></p>	<p><b>9.30am</b> Marlene &amp; Richard Dibley RIP (K Dibley)</p>
<p><b>Saint David</b>  <b>Wednesday 1st March (Please note change of Mass time)</b></p>	<p><b>09:30am</b> Thanksgiving (Perera Family)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Thursday 2nd March</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Mark De Cesaris RIP (P McCarthy)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Friday 3rd March</b></p>	<p><b>No Mass from St James'</b>          Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.          Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:  <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></p>
<p><b>Second Sunday Of Lent</b>  <b>Saturday 4th March</b> (Saturday Vigil)</p> <p><b>Sunday 5th March</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Noah Rothern RIP (Rothern Family)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> People of the Parish</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> M Maria &amp; Stanislaw Bracik RIP          Janina &amp; Tadeusz Bochnia RIP          Agata Wietecha-Michnal RIP          (G Sadstak)</p>

**Second Collection**

This week's second collection is for the Clergy Support Fund for sick/retired Priests.



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

5th March 2023

Second Sunday Of Lent



### Fr David says...

There are moments in our deepest relationships when we really know love and intimacy, when we glimpse the depth of another in ways that cannot be put into words. In those times, we realise that the

truth of love is timeless, deeper and broader than can ever be described. In these moments we also see something new in the other that we had never known before. These moments surprise us as we had already put the other in a very small well nicely wrapped box. And yet there is more to know, more to comprehend in each other if only we can allow the time and space to do so. These moments are not constructed or planned. They are a gift. We feel transported on another level of being. And the only thing we can do is to allow the grace of the moment speak to us and embrace us. We need moments of transformation in our lives to be able to help us sustain those moments of suffering and pain. True moments of feeling loved sustain us through the deserts of life.

For the second Sunday of lent, we move from Jesus's retreat to the desert to his Transfiguration. The story of Jesus's Transfiguration is told in the three Synoptic Gospels – Mathew, Mark and Luke. In each of those Gospels, the Transfiguration follows Jesus's first prediction of his death and his teaching about the costs of discipleship. Jesus' Transfiguration is a promise of Jesus's glory, his Resurrection.

On the mountain in today's reading, a voice affirms that Jesus is God's beloved son in words reminiscent of the voice at Jesus's baptism. In addition, the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mountain connects this story with God's relationship to the people of Israel. Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets, respectively. Together with Jesus, they represent God's complete Word. The Transfiguration occurs in the presence of just three of Jesus's disciples: Peter, James and John. In Matthew's Gospel those disciples are among the first whom Jesus calls. The three men are identified as an inner circle among Jesus's disciples when Jesus ask them to accompany him to the Garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest. They were with him in his moment of transfiguration and they were with him in his darkest moment. It seems that in life like Jesus, we do experience both moments which are intimately interconnected.

Matthew, Mark and Luke give us a remarkable similar accounts of the Transfiguration. When Matthew tells us that Jesus was

"transfigured" before them, he uses the word that comes to English as metamorphosis. In Greek mythology, metamorphosis was what happened when gods took on human form. In contrast to that, Jesus, the fully human one became permeated with divine splendour. This absolutely overwhelmed the very disciples who had so easily proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ, the anointed son of God. It is one thing to make a great statement about what we believe, it is another thing entirely to begin to perceive even a tiny part of what might be implied in titles like Christ or God. Obviously the disciples realised that they had seen more than they could comprehend. Whatever they had thought about Jesus or the glory of God, their moment on the mountain showed them how paltry their imaginations had been. Jesus told them not to talk about it because any words they try to use would be so inadequate as to be almost sacrilegious.

The experience on the mountain must have been the high point of discipleship for the ones who accompanied Jesus that day. Because of that, it was something they could never adequately describe.

The mystery of the Transfiguration, Jesus's self-revelation as God's beloved, offers us more than just a glimpse of his divine vocation. Jesus appearance as God beloved, his revelation of divinity in humanity, gives us a preview of our own destiny it reminds us of the truth of Genesis's teaching that human beings are oriented to become ever and ever greater images of God.

As families and individuals this Sunday you might have some quality time and talk about some of your times of highs and lows. How have you been able to use the good times and experiences to sustain you in the difficult ones? I am sure that even for Jesus, this experience of the transfiguration to be once again affirmed by his Father must have sustained him through his passion and death. The same with the disciples, Jesus' Transfiguration must have been an event from which Peter, James and John drew courage when they faced the difficult events of Jesus's Passion and also the difficulties they had to face in their own lives in the future.

May you all have a blessed Sunday and week. Thank you for taking the time once again to read my reflection. God bless you all.



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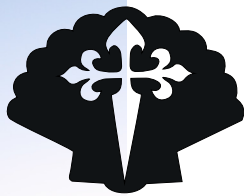
Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm. or by appointment.

<b>Second Sunday Of Lent</b> <b>Saturday 4th March</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Noah Rothern RIP (Rothern Family)
<b>Sunday 5th March</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People of the Parish <b>11:00am</b> M Maria & Stanislaw Bracik RIP Janina & Tadeusz Bochnia RIP Agata Wietecha-Michnal RIP (G Sadstak) Mary Shields RIP (Sheilds Family) <b>3:00pm</b> Stations Of The Cross
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 6th March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> People Of the Parish
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 7th March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Marian Kennedy RIP (M Hodder)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 8th March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Bill Morley RIP & Valerie Costigan (M Morley) <b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 9th March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Deceased members of the Fenner family
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 10th March</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Third Sunday Of Lent</b> <b>Saturday 11th March</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> People of the Parish
<b>Sunday 12th March</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Mr Armando Francisco Dias RIP (Cotta Family) <b>11:00am</b> M Maria & Stanislaw Bracik RIP Janina & Tadeusz Bochnia RIP Agata Wietecha-Michnal RIP (G Sadstak) <b>3:00pm</b> Station Of The Cross

### Second Collection

This week's second collection is for the CAFOD (Lent).





*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*

# ST JAMES THE GREAT

# Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

12th March 2023

Third Sunday Of Lent



### Fr David says...

I remember on my sabbatical more than eight years ago now, I decided to do something that I had never done before. I decided to go to Malta by trains and ferries. As some of you may identify the luxury of just sitting on a train for long

periods of time, reading, looking out of the window and sometimes having these chance encounters with people you would have never dreamt of meeting. I remember in a particular way my train journey from Torre del Lago in Tuscany to Rome. I ended up in a carriage with a honeymooning couple from Australia, an elderly couple from Grosseto Umbria, an elderly ex- Hungarian model and myself. First I remember trying to make it out as if I am engrossed reading my book but then it did not take long that an interesting conversation was going on around me. Somehow there is something magical knowing that you are with strangers and ninety-nine per cent you are not going to see them again. They all started asking each other questions about who they were. Something changed as these strangers started opening up about their own personal lives including the ex- model confessing of having had four husbands. At one point she asked me who am I and what do I do. I told them that I was a priest fearing that the conversation would end there. However it didn't. they were curious to know why I was a priest. What made me even think to be one. In a way it was my chance encounter to share my world perspective and the importance of my faith to a group of strangers. And the conversation changed into their own belief systems. I remember thinking afterwards when we all alighted from the train how grateful I was for risking to open up and share such a human/spiritual experience with them.

In the ancient world, your place as a woman was defined by your connection to a man: Father, Brother, Husband, Son. We are not just talking about social status- we are talking access to what's needed to survive. Like shelter from the extreme heat and cold of the desert. Food in your belly and clothes on your back. Protection from harm and abuse. Loving relationships to sustain you through the cruelties of life. Access to water on a regular basis. Where is the Woman of Samaria's Father? Most likely deceased. Where is her brother, her sons? Maybe she had none. Where is her husband? Scripture tells us she's had five husbands. Could it be in this harsh and cruel environment she has lost five husbands to death? Could it be because men in this time and culture control marriage and divorce, she has been throw away five times? "Go, you are not wanted". The man she is with now will not claim her legally either. She is an outcast in her community. We know this because in the ancient world households went to the Well based on their status. The most respected, admired women or their servants would visit the well

first. She is drawing her morning water at noon. She is alone. And not in the company of the other women. Not enjoying their camaraderie and companionship. This unnamed woman is barren of security. She has been thrown away, driven away, shared and shamed, outcast, isolated. She is a survivor of cruelty and abuse.

Today she finds herself at Jacob's Well and there is a Jewish man there. Does she wonder, "How much more shame and disgrace am I going to get today? Will I hear from his lips, "Half breed! Heretic!" In reality she only hears respect, truth and good news from Christ's lips.

The conversation – They are at a well, so Jesus uses the metaphor of water to share the Good News of living Water, cleansing, refreshing, restoring and new birth. These promises are available to her. In the ancient world, men and women don't speak like this to one another. Jews and Samaritans don't speak together. The righteous don't speak with the outcast. Jesus sees Her. Not what people label her to be. He sees how she's been abused, her great need, her wounds. Jesus also sees her perseverance, her giftedness and her keen mind. Jesus gives her a chance to reveal herself and she does. She is honest and he recognises it. The conversation could have gone any direction at this point. She dives deep into cultural and theological waters. They speak like Rabbi to Rabbi. Where do we worship and how do we worship and is there a place for me in worshipping God? Jesus and the unnamed woman of Samaria is the longest theological discussion in the four Gospels and one of the few time Jesus reveals that he is the Messiah.

Deep deep down, the questions she asks are these questions: Am I safe? My basic needs are tenuous. Do you understand my point of View? The Jews say I am not worshipping in the right place in the right way. What is my purpose? I don't fit in my culture's norms. Am I valuable? They have shamed me and abused me. Do you love me unconditionally? I have not experienced that. Do I belong? , My community treats me also as an outcast. Deep deep down, the questions she asks are the questions we ask God. We could sum up these questions with this: Does God want me and does God love me. The answer is always Yes ! it is yes to the woman of Samaria and it is yes to us. No matter what the world names us. No matter what circumstances we find ourselves in. No matter what we have done to survive. The answer is always Yes !. Yes you are safe with God. Yes God understands. Yes God has a purpose and plan for you in the world. Yes you are valuable and worthy. Yes you are loved unconditionally. Yes you belong to God and with God as a child of God.

Have a good week everyone and thank you once again for taking the time to read my reflection for this week. God bless you all.



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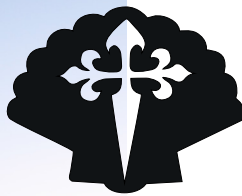
Safeguarding Phone Number: 07591082743

Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm. or by appointment.

<p><b>Third Sunday Of Lent</b>  <b>Saturday 11th March</b> (Saturday Vigil)</p> <p><b>Sunday 12th March</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> Mr Armando Francisco Dias RIP (Cotta Family)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> M Maria &amp; Stanislaw Bracik RIP            Janina &amp; Tadeusz Bochnia RIP            Agata Wietecha-Michnal RIP            (G Sadstak)</p> <p><b>3:00pm</b> Stations Of The Cross</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Monday 13th March</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Oscar Braganza RIP (E&amp;G Rebello)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Tuesday 14th March</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Diane Skilton RIP (C MacLeod)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Wednesday 15th March</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Cathal Moran RIP (Wharton Family)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Thursday 16th March</b>  <b>(Please note Mass today will be at the school at 9am)</b></p>	<p><b>9am</b> Austin Barradell RIP</p>
<p><b>Saint Patrick</b>  <b>Friday 17th March</b></p>	<p><b>No Mass from St James'</b>            Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.            Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:  <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></p>
<p><b>Fourth Sunday Of Lent</b>  <b>Saturday 18th March</b> (Saturday Vigil)</p> <p><b>Sunday 19th March</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Bill Pinder RIP (Scott &amp; Wedderspoon Family)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> Elizabeth Gillin RIP (M O'Mahony)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> James &amp; Martin Mulroy RIP (Mulroy Family)</p> <p><b>3:00pm</b> Stations Of The Cross</p>

### Second Collection

The next second collection will be on 19th March for Poor Parishes.



*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*

# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

19th March 2023

Fourth Sunday Of Lent



### Fr David says...

History is full with stories of people who triumphed over seemingly insurmountable disadvantages and challenges. Homer was blind as was John Milton but both men achieved unparalleled status as poets. Beethoven

was deaf when he composed his Ninth Symphony, so deaf that when his work was first performed, he could not hear a note of the magnificent ode, "Joy thou heavenly spark of Godhead" with which the symphony concludes. Helen Keller, one of the world's most re-known women, was blind, deaf and mute from early childhood, yet she became a teacher, author and educator. Anne Sullivan, Keller's teacher and companion for 49 years was half blind at birth, orphaned and institutionalised as a young girl. Nevertheless she dedicated her life to the care of the blind. When Sullivan became totally blind as an adult, Keller took on the role of teacher, helping her devoted friend to overcome her inability to see. Andrea Bocelli is arguably one of the most famous mainstream opera singers having sung in the most exclusive Opera houses in the world and has sang for most dignified audiences including to Pope Francis. However one of the most distinguishing features is his lost eyesight. Andrea had eye problems when he was very young and has even said that his mother was advised to abort him. He said that the courageous young mother decided not to terminate the pregnancy and the child was born. Andrea explained that his eyesight problems helped him to turn to music. He said that when he was five "my mother discovered that the only way to comfort me with my glaucoma was to play classical music on the record player". Soon after he lost his sight completely when he was 12 having had an accident at a football match. Triumphs like these bolster the human spirit with the knowledge that handicaps and hardships need not remain incapacitating. Indeed such experiences can prove to be the impetus for achieving greatness.

The Lenten season challenges us to reflect on those obstacles which tend to stunt our spiritual development. Like the people mentioned above and like the blind man in today's gospel, we are capable of overcoming whatever stands between us and the wholeness to which God calls us. In today's Gospel, the healing of the man born blind invites us to focus on the physical and spiritual aspects of sight and light. In the first part of the Gospel we hear Jesus's response to a prevalent belief of his time: that misfortune and disability were the result of sin. That belief is why Jesus is asked the question of whose sin caused the man's blindness – his own or his parents'. Jesus does not answer directly, but instead gives the question an entirely different dimension – through this man's disability, God's power will be made manifest. Jesus then heals the man.

The healing is controversial because Jesus heals on the Sabbath. The Pharisees, the religious authority of Jesus's time, understood that the Law of Moses forbade work

including healing on the Sabbath. They also have trouble believing that Jesus performed a miracle. To determine whether the man was really born blind, the Pharisees question him and his parents. The man challenges the leaders of the synagogue about their assessment of the good that Jesus has done. In turn they expel the man for questioning their judgement.

The final revelation and moment of enlightenment comes when the man born blind encounters Jesus again. Having heard the news of his expulsion, Jesus seeks out the man born blind and reveals himself to him as the Son of Man in this moment, the man born blind shows himself to be a man of faith and worships Jesus. Jesus replies by identifying the irony of the experience of many who encounter Jesus. Those who are blind will now see, and those who think they now see will be found to be blind. As in last week's Gospel about Jesus's encounter with the Samaritan woman, today's reading has many allusions to Baptism. The washing of the man in the pool of Siloam a word which means sent – is the prototype for Christian Baptism. Through the man's encounter with Jesus, the man born blind is healed, his sight is restored and his conversion to discipleship begins. The man born blind gradually comes to a greater understanding about who Jesus is and what it means to be his disciple while the Pharisees (those who should see) are the ones who remain blind.

The process of maturation in the faith is much like the example found in the story of the man born blind. The man is cured of his blindness, a symbol of an awakening of what was blocking his seeing – prejudices etc. each time he meets someone after the healing, the man comes to a deeper awareness of who Jesus is. In a similar way we continue to mature in faith as our relationship with and knowledge about Jesus grows.

I invite you to draw a time line of your life and to invite each member of your family to do the same. On the timelines ask yourself and the family members to identify significant moments in your lives, especially your life of faith. I would like to invite you all to reflect upon who Jesus was to you at each significant moment. How has your relationship with Jesus changed or matured? Who is Jesus for you now? Are you living your full potential despite the imperfections we all have? Or because of them?

Thank you once more for reading my reflection for the 4th Sunday of Lent 2023. God bless you all.



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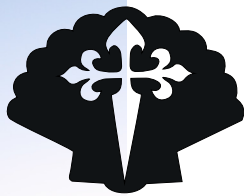
Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm. or by appointment.

<b>Fourth Sunday Of Lent</b> <b>Saturday 18th March</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Bill Pinder RIP (Scott & Wedderspoon Family)
<b>Sunday 19th March</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Elizabeth Gillin RIP (M O'Mahony) <b>11:00am</b> James & Martin Mulroy RIP (Mulroy Family) <b>3:00pm</b> Stations Of The Cross
<b>Saint Joseph</b> <b>Monday 20th March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Father James Hurley RIP (H Marvel)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 21st March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Nanette Gowers RIP (L Filugelli)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 22nd March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Private Intention (L Henderson) <b>11:00am</b> Eucharist Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 23rd March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Ada & Enzo Belloni RIP (L Belloni) Carmel Turton RIP (R Turton)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 24th March</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Fifth Sunday Of Lent</b> <b>Saturday 25th March</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Mary & Hugh O'Donnell RIP (Marshall Family)
<b>Sunday 26th March</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan RIP (M&J McGill) <b>3:00pm</b> Stations Of The Cross

### Second Collection

This weeks second collection will be for Poor Parishes.  
 The next collection will be on Good Friday for Holy Places.





# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

26th March 2023

Fifth Sunday Of Lent



### Fr David says...

I have always been interested in near death experiences. Some of us believe in them – others are sceptical. For me it gives me some kind of reassurance. Researchers have found that between 10 and 20 % of people who have

documented cardiac arrest – that is when their hearts stop – will report a near death experience says Dr Bruce Greyson, professor emeritus of psychiatry and neurobehavioral sciences at the University of Virginia. Greyson has been studying first-hand accounts of people who had gone through a similar experience for about 50 years. He says that “The best definition we have is that it is a profound experience that many people have that includes enhances though processes. Your thoughts are faster and clearer than usual. You have a sense of being in a timeless state. You often have a review of your life. It includes strong emotions like a sense of overwhelming peace and wellbeing, a sense of oneness with everything, an experience of unconditional love, a sense of being outside the physical body. But most significant to Greyson is what comes after a near death experience. He says “I have got story after story of people who couldn’t go back to the same profession, people often change careers or make other dramatic lifestyle changes. I truly believe that apart from our faith – these experiences of other people who had experienced near death gives us a reassurance that life after death is real and better than the one we are living in. Something to look forward to.

The theme of today’s Liturgy is resurrection and the life. The three readings of today fit beautifully together as they tell us death yielding to a new way of life. In the gospel today we hear the story of the death and resurrection of Lazarus – Jesus’s friend. This story has the underlying theme of life and death and new life. The story opens with the announcement that Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary is ill. Jesus’s immediate response is to say that this illness will not result in the death of Lazarus but that it will be an occasion for God’s glory to reveal to all and for the glory to come to his Son also. And though we are told that he had a deep love for Lazarus and his sisters, he remained in the same place for another two days. By the time Jesus arrived outside Bethany, Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. In those days, the common Jewish belief was that when a person dies, his soul remained near the body for three days before moving on to the spiritual world or the world of the dead. The mourning rites usually lasted seven days from the time of death. When the news reached the house that Jesus was entering the village, Martha rushed out to meet him while Mary remained in the house. Full aware of the powers of Jesus, she tells him that if he was there her brother would not have died yet she tells him that she has her trust in God and in Jesus. This meeting gives us the beautiful dialogue between the two persons where Jesus asserts those unforgettable words: “I AM the Resurrection

and the life”. This is the core statement of the whole story and is one of the seven great “I AM” statements in John’s gospel.

Next we have the encounter of Jesus with Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. She rushes out of the house to Jesus the moment she hears of his arrival from Martha and when she sees him, her response is like that of her sister. We now see the very human aspect of Jesus. Perhaps he is Messiah and Lord of life but he is surrounded by his two friends Mary and Martha and all their friends plunged into grief at the death of Lazarus, probably relatively young. We know already that Jesus is very attached to this family. It is likely that this family provided a place of refuge when things really got too hot for Jesus in nearby Jerusalem. When he sees them all weeping he himself is touched and was deeply moved and he too weeps with them for his friend Lazarus. The language used implies that Jesus like the others was sobbing deeply. This brings a reaction from the people to say how much he loved Lazarus. Soon after Jesus moves to the tomb and asked that the stone to be taken away from the entrance of the cave. Normally the entrance of the graves were covered with a large stone. That certainly got Martha’s attention. She must have suspected that Jesus wanted to look at the features of his departed friend. She warns him that the body has been there for four days and must have decayed in the heat. But Jesus tells her that she will see the glory of God. In the entire episode Jesus is the central figure, who challenged each participant by clarifying the central issue: the real meaning of death and life. In Bethany Jesus works this miracle and reunites Lazarus with his family. In fact the dead man now alive hobbles out of the cave, comes before them and are asked to unbound him and set him free. The community had the responsibility to unbound Lazarus from what was hindering him life and to set him free.

Today’s gospel reading presents to us two major messages. First it tells us that through our living faith in Jesus, all our physical bodies will be raised in the final resurrection. Secondly it also reminds us that the community has the power to free us in becoming ourselves and flourish or it can also keep us bounded and although our bodies are alive, our souls would not be allowed to flourish. What kind of community are we? One that allows other to live or one which hinders life?

This weekend, we, as a community at St James’s, are welcoming Nick Groves and his children Isabelle and Sebastian to our community as they are preparing themselves for baptism during the Easter Vigil. May our community welcomes them with joy and allows them to flourish. God bless you all. Have a great week as we prepare ourselves for Holy week starting with Palm Sunday next Sunday.



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Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm. or by appointment.

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<b>Sunday 26th March</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan RIP (M&J McGill) <b>3:00pm</b> Stations Of The Cross
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 27th March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Organ Donors & their recipients (CWL)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 28th March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Thanksgiving (L Henderson)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 29th March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Requiem Mass for Austin Barradell RIP
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 30th March</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Jessica D'Souza RIP (E&B Rebello)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 31st March</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Palm Sunday Of The Passion Of The Lord</b> <b>Saturday 1st April</b> (Saturday Vigil)	<b>06:00pm</b> Francesca Sio RIP (John Sio)
<b>Sunday 2nd April</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Francesca Sio RIP (John Sio) <b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan RIP (L O'Sullivan & Family) Francesca Sio RIP (John Sio) <b>3:00pm</b> Stations Of The Cross

### Second Collection

The next collection will be on Good Friday for Holy Places.

**REMEMBER THE CLOCKS GO FORWARD ONE HOUR ON SUNDAY AT 1AM**



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

2nd April 2023

Palm Sunday Of The Passion Of The Lord



### Fr David says...

"The two most important days in your life are the day you are born and the day you find out why. – Mark Twain.

Though I might invite disagreement, I am willing to risk it by stating that every life has a purpose. Though the purpose may never be found, ignorance of the purpose is not proof that it didn't exist. The purpose may be simple and unassuming. It might be momentous and majestic. It could be humble and obscure. But each life nonetheless has a purpose. Discovering one's purpose is one of life's most fulfilling accomplishments. Though many live their entire life without so much as a clue regarding its purpose. Being born - is about existence. Finding the purpose of one's life is about purpose. I would suggest and Mark Twain would probably agree, that with all the ups and downs of life, finding the reason you were born can provide a solid foundation. We all want to feel useful, needed and appreciated. We want to believe we have made a valuable contribution to the world during our relatively brief stay.

The Palm Sunday is not a liturgy for the faint-hearted. We start with a Gospel reading and procession, followed by the full Eucharistic celebration. Selections from Isaiah and Paul place Jesus's last hours in Jewish and Christian theological contexts and frame the solemn proclamation of the Passion according to Matthew. Altogether, the liturgy of the Word reminds us that Jesus's death was neither accidental nor blind fate but a destiny that he faced in conscious freedom. It was his purpose.

No threat or pain, not even death, would sway Jesus from being true to who he was and from the purpose he believed he had in life. Jesus's obedience, an attitude that sprung from his relationship with God, impelled him to face freely the definitive conflict of his life. Jesus' clearest expression of the decision to confront the powers aligned against him came with his entry into Jerusalem, every detail of which revealed who he was, even as his actions fulfilled ancient prophecies. He could have processed in with the crowds like any other pilgrim. But no, fully aware of his prophetic symbolism Jesus rode a common work animal into the city. Obedient to his discernment of God's will, Jesus entered Jerusalem as a Messiah who would not meet any human

expectations.

Never falling into the role of a victim, Jesus remained the protagonist. At the supper, he used and modified the traditional blessings to indicate that he inaugurated the new Covenant. In dialogue with those who would betray him, he offered compassion. Facing those who tortured and sentenced him, he refused to argue, knowing that his vision and power had no common ground with theirs. At the end using the words of a psalm, he shouted at God in utter desolation: "Why have you abandoned me?"

This cry of the heart is the ultimate prayer. Jesus representing every human being who has striven to be faithful and feels a failure in every way, could do no more than lament before God. This was the last gasp of one who believed in God more than in his own expectations. Even while feeling deserted, he turned to the God he could never fully comprehend. There is no greater act of faith than to pray in the midst of such desolation. Matthew tells us that when Jesus cried his last lament, the veil of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The veil that marked the separation of holy and profane was ripped apart, starting from heaven. In Jesus, a vulnerable, loving God had become visible and inseparable from creation.

Palm Sunday leaves us there, in death and desperation. Faithful disciples did the little they could do by burying him and watching where he was laid. During the Tridium, we will again remember the events of Jesus's Last days. We are invited to watch him, to learn from him what it means to have faith. We are encouraged to go to the depths with him, knowing that he goes with us.

The opening liturgy of Holy week calls us to be stout hearted. It reminds us that the godliness to which we would naturally cling to has nothing to do with the God of Jesus. This is the time to watch and pray and let Jesus lead us to new depths.

As we enter Holy Week, I pray that we, as a community of Faith would risk to allow Jesus's narrative of his passion, death and resurrection to speak to our inner most beings. May this week would be a week of God's graces poured over each one of us.

God bless you all during this very blessed time.



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<b>Sunday 2nd April</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Francesca Sio RIP (J Sio) <b>11:00am</b> Francesca Sio RIP (J Sio) Mary O'Sullivan RIP (L O'Sullivan) <b>03:00pm</b> Stations of the Cross
<b>Monday of Holy Week</b> <b>Monday 3rd April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Trevor Lyons RIP (G Whitley) <b>07:00pm</b> Lenten Reconciliation Service
<b>Tuesday of Holy Week</b> <b>Monday 4th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Austin Barradell RIP (O'Brien Family)
<b>Wednesday of Holy Week</b> <b>Wednesday 5th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Mary Predergast 2nd Anniversary RIP (Padfield Family)
<b>Maundy Thursday</b> <b>Thursday 6th April</b>	<b>07:00pm</b> Austin Barradell RIP (The Marshall Family)
<b>Friday Of The Passion Of The Lord</b> <b>Friday 7th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Stations of the Cross (Children) <b>11:00am</b> Walk of Witness <b>03:00pm</b> Good Friday Service <b>07:00pm</b> Prayers around the Cross
<b>Easter Sunday Of The Resurrection Of The Lord</b> <b>Saturday 8th April</b> (Easter Vigil)	<b>08:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 9th April</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> People Of The Parish

### Second Collections

The next collection will be on Good Friday for Holy Places.  
 The collection at the Masses over the Easter weekend are your personal offerings for your Parish Priest.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- desserts (Songe puddings)
- Razors,
- Canned Hot & Cold Meat
- Rice Pudding
- Shaving Gel
- UHT milk,
- Long life fruit juice

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

9th April 2023

Easter Sunday Of The Resurrection Of The Lord



### Fr David says...

In the novel *Les Miserables*, Victor Hugo says of the Head of Police – Javert “His duties were his religion ..... respect for authority and hatred of revolt against it”. Victor says about Valjean, ex- prisoner turned Major: “Hatred was his only weapon, and he resolved to sharpen it in prison and carry it with him when he left” Both men are two sides of the same coin. Javert’s father was on the galleys, his son was born in prison. Valjean ends up in one. To cut a long story short, Valjean turns out not to be the awful criminal Javert thinks he is, and he instead offers Javert the mercy and forgiveness that was once offered to him by the Bishop. Javert’s version of morality and rightness is then utterly derailed and he cannot cope. How can a lawbreaker, Valjean, be someone who imparts goodness and understanding towards someone who has treated him so unfairly? I find Javert always compelling. As I do with Judas. And the way they have portrayed on various theatrical stages. Both were outsiders to some extent, though Javert was part of a recognised authority, and Judas part of Jesus’s disciple group – one of the closest friends of Jesus. Who knew what was really going through Judas’ head when he betrayed him. Was he disillusioned by Jesus’s way of being a Messiah? Was he trying to follow the authorities’ orders to find a lawbreaker and there was money too.. But in the end Judas’ shame of himself is too strong to bear, particularly as Jesus offered no resistance and no explicit anger towards him. Valjean’s moment of compassion for Javert breaks into the depths of who Javert is. It breaks him apart. That’s what happens when Javert jumps to his death in the river. So thus with Judas he couldn’t cope with Jesus’s mercy and compassion towards him. And so he despaired and hung himself. We could all fall into the dangerous certainty of Javert and the heart-breaking misjudgement of Judas – be broken by both and take others with us. if there was ever a time when you wondered about the purpose of the man Jesus nailed to a cross, It was to be broken on behalf of us and carry all the beaten up humans of the world with him.

We view the events of Holy Week from the secure perspective of nearly 2,000 years. Crucially we have the benefit of hindsight. The bizarre incidents in the gospels fit into a sort of order, and we know how the story ends. The followers of Jesus, women and men, experienced it from within. They did not know that this would be the climatic week of three tumultuous years. Events that are literally iconic for us looking back, were

breaking around them. How were they to make sense of the madness: Jesus spontaneous act of vandalism in the temple; frenzied crowds, a secretive supper – party with opaque symbolism, violent abduction by an armed mob? Terrifying stuff was happening hour by hour. They must have worried for their safety and their sanity. They may have been pinning for the peaceful families they had left behind and wondering whether the whole Jesus thing was turning out to be a chaotic and humiliating mess.

How’s your week going? A bit of a scramble? Me too. I mean no threats of arrest yet, no weird stuff with fig trees or Roman soldiers at the door. I am not living in a basement in Ukraine or a refugee camp in Sudan. But even in my sheltered life there are too many loose ends for my liking. There are relationships needs attention and commitments that I should probably not have taken on. I have friends and parishioners who are sick and others who have died far too soon. The planet is groaning and world events seem out of control at the moment. Some night I go to bed feeling baffled and wondering whether it all makes sense. For many of us, our culture is less physically threatening but no less bewildering than it was for the first followers of Jesus. In the narration of Holy week we have no option but to live our lives forwards. We may not understand what is happening to us and around us from day to day. But we are called to follow faithfully through the mess and the muddle, in the hope that the story Jesus tells turns out to be true.

The Easter story is a story about human bodies – it is intensely physical, brutal, messy, bloody; so too the human journey from birth to death. This is the reality of the incarnation that God steps into our physical reality – very much within it, not set apart or observing from some other place.

I take peculiar hope from the fact that the stories that circulated in the early Christian communities have no qualm that their leaders when it came to it, were largely cowards. Or at the very best not at all impressive or heroic. Peter, John Phillip and the rest, only better than Judas by the slimmest of margins. During Holy week we must look at human weaknesses: sinners and saints, barely distinguishable. This gives me hope.

Have a Blessed Tridium and a Blessed Easter all of you. God bless you all during this time.



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Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,  
 or by appointment.

<b>Easter Sunday Of The Resurrection Of The Lord Saturday Saturday 8th April</b> (Easter Vigil)	<b>08:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 9th April</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Monday within the Octave of Easter Monday 10th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Private Intention (Foundation)
<b>Tuesday within the Octave of Easter Monday 11th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> In Thanksgiving for the safe arrival of Jude MacLeod
<b>Wednesday within the Octave of Easter Wednesday 12th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Austin Barradell RIP (L Henderson)
<b>Thursday within the Octave of Easter Thursday 13th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Rene Taylor RIP (A&P Rowland)
<b>Friday within the Octave of Easter Friday 14th April</b>	<b><u>No Mass from St James'</u></b> <b><u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will</u></b> <b><u>be live streaming their</u></b> <b><u>Mass at 09:00am.</u></b> <b><u>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</u></b> <b><u><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></u></b>
<b>Second Sunday Of Easter Saturday 15th April</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Rose Lyness RIP (McCarthy Family)
<b>Sunday 16th April</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Thanksgiving (G Rebello) <b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan RIP (M & J McGill)

### Second Collections

The collection at the Masses over the Easter weekend are your personal offerings for your Parish Priest.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- desserts (Songe puddings)
- Razors,
- Canned Hot & Cold Meat
- Rice Pudding
- Shaving Gel
- UHT milk,
- Long life fruit juice

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



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

16th April 2023

Second Sunday Of Easter



### Reflecting on the Gospel

Today's gospel is the same in each of the three yearly cycles, a fact that underlines its significance. It proclaims that the risen Christ is often in our midst

in ways that we do not expect and that even though Jesus is risen, we still have to confront the mystery and the glory of the wounds.

Terrified by the death of Jesus, dispirited and disillusioned over their own failures and their desertion of their Master, the disciples huddle behind closed doors. Mary Magdalene has announced to them that she had seen the Lord and delivered to them his message, but she is just a woman and, according to the socioreligious views of the time, a woman's evidence did not count! So these Jewish disciples (probably a more inclusive group than the Twelve become Eleven through Judas's treachery) lock their doors against "the Jews" (the Johannine term for the opponents of Jesus) and barricade their hearts against hope. But for One who can break the bonds of death, locks are no obstacles. Suddenly the Tomb Breaker is in their midst, and his first gift to them is his peace.

Biblical peace is much more than the absence of war, it is a wholeness and holiness of spirit, soul, and body. Its opposite is chaos, and this community is a community in chaos. To re-create the lives of these vulnerable disciples and bring them out of their chaos and hurt, Jesus then shows them his wounded hands and side. He stands before them in glorified reality of his humanity, of all that he has become by his life, death, and resurrection - and this includes his wounds. A risen Lord without his wounds would have little to say to the wounded ones in their Jerusalem room, just as he would have little to say to us. We can be rather cynical about the devotions of some cultures that seem to delight in processions, images, wayside shrines of a bloodied Christ, judging that they have not learned to go forward to his resurrection. And yet these people are usually the ones who know what it is to suffer with the crucified Christ who by his resurrection is now present with them.

Charles Peguy recounts a story about a man who died and arrived at heaven's gates. The recording angel said

to him, "Show me your wounds." "Wounds?" replied the man, "I haven't got any." And the angel asked, "Did you never think that anything was worth fighting for?" The crucified Christ knew that all his sisters and brothers were worth fighting for.

Our wounds tell us something about who we are. The death camp numbers branded on a Jew's arm, the distinctive and advertised scars of the missing person, the scars of lifesaving surgery, the hated or denied wounds to our own hearts: much of our identity lies in our wounds. Some of us allow our life to drain from our wounds, others grow to new life at these broken places, and this is resurrection - this is a call to go and be wounded healers of others.



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 or by appointment.

<b>Second Sunday Of Easter</b> <b>Saturday 15th April</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Rose Lyness RIP (McCarthy Family)
<b>Sunday 16th April</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Thanksgiving (G Rebello) <b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan RIP (M & J McGill) Richard Jedruszak RIP (E Jedruszak)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 17th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Marjorie Ingledew RIP (M Ingledew)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 18th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Fr. David Camilleri (H Marvell) Wellbeing of Fr. David (Francesca, Luisa and Liana)
<b>Saint Alphege</b> <b>Wednesday 19th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Michael Anderson RIP (A&P Rowland)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 20th April</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Anthony Olivelle RIP (Foundation)
<b>Saint Anselm</b> <b>Friday 21st April</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Third Sunday Of Easter</b> <b>Saturday 22nd April</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Mary Agnes Lokko - Nathan RIP (V Nathan-Rogers)
<b>Sunday 23rd April</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan RIP (G Mulroy) Ellen Greco RIP (S Theodore)

### Second Collections

Next weeks second collection will be for St George's Cathedral



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- desserts (Songe puddings)
- Squash/Cordial
- Canned Cold Meat
- Cooking Sauce
- Shampoo /Conditioner
- Long life fruit juice

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





# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

23rd April 2023

Third Sunday Of Easter



### Father David says....

As we journey through life with all its ups and downs, problems and distractions, we can certainly lose our perspective. We can lose all direction in life and left to ourselves we become disillusioned and remain uncertain of who we are, what life is all about. Any positive support from a friend, a pastoral encounter, a sincere understanding can place a person on the right path. Why? Because we feel heard. We feel visible again. We feel we are not struggling on our own. Human hope is a fragile thing and when it withers, it is difficult to revive. Hopelessness as a disease of the human spirit is desperately hard to cure. However hope sometimes comes from very unexpected places and people. Hope is revived when we expect little.

In the month of April in the year 30 AD, two disciples of Jesus went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They have witnessed dramatic events: the execution of their Teacher, a prophet, who was might in work and word. The days of this sad feast passed. They prepare to return to Emmaus in grief and shock, when someone runs towards them early in the morning with shocking news that the tomb is empty. Some women claim to have seen the angels in a vision and say that Jesus is alive. They are left more confused and sad. Along the way, a traveller joins them. He accompanies them and in the evening, something extraordinary happens.

Let's reread Luke's story as a response to the aspirations and expectation of these Christians in the early Church. We begin with the name. One of them is called Cleophas (a well-known figure in the early Church because he was Joseph's brother, the father of the Lord) and the other? The other could be an invitation to every reader including us, to insert their own name. It is an invitation to go with Cleophas along the path to recognising the Risen Christ, who is present where two are gathered in his name. The two disciples are sad: they have seen the collapse of their dreams, the failure of their plans. They expected a glorious Messiah, a mighty and triumphant king, but found themselves in front of a loser. The rabbis taught the Messiah would live a thousand years; Jesus instead is dead. Where we deceived? Was Jesus a fake Messiah?

It is the story of the Christian Communities of Luke. They are persecuted, victims of abuse. They see the triumph of the works of death. The wicked are better off than the pure in heart. They find themselves in the same state of mind as the disciples travelling to Emmaus. They also stop and their faces are sad.

It is also our story. We too, sometimes find ourselves in that state of mind. It happens when we must admit that cunning prevails over honesty when we are forced to acknowledge the lie becomes the official truth imposed by those in power when we see the prophets silenced or killed. Even then, we stop, sad,

resigned in the face of an inevitable reality, forced to admit that the new world announced by Jesus probably would never come true.

Luke deliberately puts the thoughts of many Christians of his communities on the lips of Cleophas and his companion. They know well what Jesus did and taught. They considered him to be a wise person, one who, with his messages of peace and love, has changed the hearts of many people, but he ended up in death, like everyone else. Whoever thinks in this way discovers only the outward appearance, the historical events in the life of Jesus. He does not have faith in him because he does not believe in his resurrection which cannot be scientifically verified. The consequence of this incomplete knowledge is sadness. Without faith in the resurrection, defeats are defeats; life ends with death, a senseless tragedy.

How do Cleophas and the unnamed disciple discover that Jesus, the loser, is the Messiah? How can they understand that life is born from death? The way that the Risen Lord leads them in their travel is through the Scriptures. It is the word of God that reveals the mystery. Not having understood the scriptures, the two disciples' reason as human beings. They cannot see with God's eyes what happened. The way of the cross is inconceivable and absurd for people. Only the one who awakens experiences that God has the power to transform the Cross to Life.

In the disciples' story on their way to Emmaus, all elements of the celebration of the Eucharist are present. There is the entrance of the celebrant, then the liturgy of the word with the homily (which touched deeply the disciples because it warmed their hearts), and finally the breaking of the bread. The eyes of the disciples opened only at the time of the Eucharistic communion and they realised that the Risen One was in their midst. However without the word, they would not have come to discover the Lord in the Eucharistic bread.

A final important element of this passage: the disciples on the road to Emmaus, as soon as they recognise the Lord, they rush to announce their experience to their sisters and brothers. It is an experience that must be shared and celebrated.

Luke wrote this narrative for the Christians in the 80-90 AD communities and aimed to offer them a way to experience hope in their hopelessness.

Have we ever experienced hope when we expected little? Have a great and blessed week everyone. Thank you for taking the time to read my reflection this week. God bless.



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 or by appointment.

<p><b>Third Sunday Of Easter</b>  <b>Saturday 22nd April</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 23rd April</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Mary Agnes Lokko - Nathan RIP (V Nathan-Rogers)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan RIP (G Mulroy)          Ellen Greco RIP (S Theodore)</p>
<p><b>Saint George</b>  <b>Monday 24th April</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Austin Barradell RIP (CWL)</p>
<p><b>Saint Mark</b>  <b>Tuesday 25th April</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Marjorie Farrell &amp; Kay Livingston RIP (L Barrett)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Wednesday 26th April</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Ruth Wheelwright RIP (C Wheelwright)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Thursday 27th April</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> George Lansbury RIP (Troy Family)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Friday 28th April</b></p>	<p><b>No Mass from St James'</b>  <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b>  <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b>  <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></p>
<p><b>Fourth Sunday Of Easter</b>  <b>Saturday 29th April</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 30th April</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Thanksgiving Mass for Perera Family</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> Ian McDonald RIP (E Burgess)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Austin Barradell RIP (Troy Family)</p>

**Second Collections**

This weeks second collection will be for St George's Cathedral  
 Next weeks second collection will be for the Priests Training Fund



**The current needs for this week are for:**

- desserts (Songe puddings)
- Cold meats
- Squash/Cordial
- Cooking
- UHT Milk
- UHT fruit juice

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

30th April 2023

Fourth Sunday Of Easter



### Father David says....

The spring season refreshes, revives and reinvigorates the natural world and us. Remnants of winter snows melt away, streams swell with runoffs, days become longer as nights grow shorter, flowers blossom and lambs jump with glee in our green fields. It is a joy to be alive after a long and cold and wet winter. We await the warmer days – the longer evenings of barbecues in our gardens and the re-uniting of family and friends. In the air, there is this hope for new life. It is no wonder that the liturgical season of Easter occurs during the season of spring. The newness of life so lush during these two seasons invites us to reconsider the image of the divine as shepherd.

As I was preparing for today's homily, what came to mind is this question? "Do you know the sheep you are called to minister to and with after 8 years?" This reminds me of when Pope Francis spoke to the clergy of the world, telling us that the shepherd needs to have the smell of the sheep. So when we are out and about, when we are doing the work we are called to do, do we know the needs and the smell of our sheep? Not that we are above, nor that we are below, but when we are among the people, do they know we are people they can come to? It is easy on a ministerial level, when doing the work we think God is calling us to, to dictate the needs of the community. But do we really have those necessary conversations even when they are uncomfortable?

In this whole synodal process invited by Pope Francis, we are reaching out and were challenged to reach out, to those on the peripheries, those on the margins those who may not be coming to church anymore for whatever reason and have those tough discussions on how we can truly be community. In this post pandemic society, what I and my colleagues have seen is this increased level of anxiety, this increased level of stress, this increased level of distrust in institutions, not only from the adults who are engaged in church, but also from many of our youth and young adults who are growing into leaders in society more so if they are connected to the faith in any way. Others do not feel anymore that church is relevant for them. It does not speak to their needs. So how are we, as church connected with those in the field, being those "field hospitals" and creating the spaces for the conversation with them?

In the old days when the Jewish shepherds went out, first of all, they couldn't read or write. They were not educated men. They were looked down upon. They were never allowed to give witness in a court case because they weren't smart enough. Worse than that, they would go out for days and sometimes weeks at a time, because the shepherds didn't stay at home and go into a nice trimmed sheepfold. They went wandering where the grass was. And so the shepherd would take them off sometimes, two, three, four weeks before returning home. And where ever he found a few stones that were set around, he would make a little sheep area for them, a little protection against the wild animals. And he would leave a gate. The gate wasn't made of iron that you carried around. The gate was just an opening among the rocks that he had piled up all around to protect the sheep. And that is why Jesus said "I am the gate" because the gate is not a thing, the gate is an opening into the sheep fold. And he would sleep there when they are inside - the gate feels secure and feel happy and feel content. And of course they know that the gate opening was just about five feet.

The Shepherd would need to sleep at the gate so that the late sheep can kind of nudge him and get in or which is even better, that the wild animals that are very anxious to get those lovely sheep they would have to walk over his body in order to get into the sheepfold – very courageous.

In today's gospel, however, the good shepherd is not one who is tenderly caressing the wounded sheep but is the fighter who at the cost of his own life, confronts anyone who endangers the flock. This is characteristic of a strong and fearless man who is fighting against bandits and against wild beasts which today's gospel takes as representing Jesus. The qualification of good does not refer to feelings; it does not mean sweet and lovable, but real authentic and brave. Jesus is the true shepherd because he is tied passionately to this sheep and ready to sacrifice his life for them. Villagers who were unable to lead their sheep and goats to pasture, resorted to hiring a worker who took care of the flocks of all. Strict legislation specified his responsibility; he had to defend the flock against a wolf, two dogs or a small animal but he could flee from a lion. A leopard, a bear or a thief. In his contract there was no clause to willingly sacrifice his life for the sheep. He did not have an emotional attachment to his flock and in the face of danger, as soon as he was allowed, he fled; he was not interested in the fate of the sheep but the salary.

The analogy of the "Good Shepherd" is directed not only at someone in church ministry, such as priest and religious, but at every Christian. Every disciple must have the heart of a true shepherd; he or she must cultivate the unconditional generosity of the Master with regard to all persons. The one who has a mercenary's heart adheres to the minimum requirements set in the contract; he or she quibbles over duties more or less circumvented and is faithful to the edicts of the law only in order to obtain a reward or avoid punishment.

Whoever has a heart like Jesus' does not count the cost. He or she does not ask about how far their rights extend or where his duties end; nor is he concerned about what rules are laid down, or what arrangements has been made with the owner. Instead a unique law governs his "foolish love" for persons. It is a love that knows no bounds. It does not stop in the face of any obstacle, risk or sacrifice. The one who does not love with the heart of Christ will never understand the disciple's choices, not his proposals, he or she shall judge the disciple as a dreamer, a deceived person, an imprudent and reckless dreamer.

Do I feel heard, listened to and visible in our community? or do I still feel that I am just a number? I and the Pastoral Care team are very happy to meet you and listen to you. Please keep that in mind. Have a good week and thank you for once more reading my weekly reflection.



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<b>Fourth Sunday Of Easter</b> <b>Saturday 29th April</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Thanksgiving Mass for Perera Family
<b>Sunday 30th April</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Ian McDonald RIP (E Burgess) <b>11:00am</b> Austin Barradell RIP (Troy Family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 1st May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Alexandra Henderson RIP (L Henderson)
<b>Saint Athanasius</b> <b>Tuesday 2nd May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Welfare of Baby Jude Macleod (L Henderson)
<b>Saint Philip and James</b> <b>Wednesday 3rd May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> William & Nora Kirwan RIP (R&E Wright)
<b>The English Martyrs</b> <b>Thursday 4th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Well Being of Elaine Brown (R&E Wright)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 5th May</b>	<b><u>No Mass from St James'</u></b> <b><u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their</u></b> <b><u>Mass at 09:00am.</u></b> <b><u>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</u></b> <b><u><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></u></b>
<b>Fifth Sunday Of Easter</b> <b>Saturday 6th May</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 7th May</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Victor Lobo RIP (E&G Rebello) Carmel Garry RIP & Greta Sullivan RIP (Mr & Mrs Garry) <b>11:00am</b> Anna Vassallo RIP (V Terry)

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection will be for the Priests Training Fund



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Washing Up Liquid
- Hot & Cold meats
- Squash/Cordial
- UHT fruit juice
- Canned Tomatoes
- Cooking Sauces

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

7th May 2023

Fifth Sunday Of Easter



### Father David says....

Pope Francis called for open doors and inclusivity during a visit to Hungary last weekend. The Hungarian government has long faced criticism over anti-immigration policies and rhetoric that has stoked xenophobia at home. Concerns about Budapest's treatment of minorities were exacerbated on the eve of the pope's three day visit when Hungarian President Katalin Novak unexpectedly pardoned a far right terrorist. Speaking to a large crowd in central Budapest on Sunday morning before wrapping up his trip, Pope Francis did not directly address the Hungarian government's policies but was blunt about the need to embrace outsiders. "How sad and painful it is to see closed doors" the Pope said during the mass. "The closed doors of our indifference towards the underprivileged and those who suffer. The doors we close towards those who are foreign or unlike us, towards migrants and the poor". "Please brothers and sisters, let us open those doors! He added. "Let us try to be – in our words, deeds and daily activities – like Jesus, an open door: a door that is never shut in anyone's face, a door that enables everyone to enter and experience the beauty of the Lord's love and forgiveness". Why are we, as human beings frightened of cultural diversity and inclusivity?

This reflects today's story from the Acts of the Apostles. The Jewish members of the Christian community in Jerusalem were diverse to the extent that they identified as Hebrews and Hellenists. The Hellenists' ancestors had been in the diaspora and spoke Greek – the original language of the books of the New Testament. The Hebrews were Palestinian Jews who spoke Aramaic the language of Jesus himself. Language was symbolic of the many cultural differences amongst them. Tensions came to a head when Hellenist widows felt slighted in the daily distribution – a phrase that could refer to food given them or to their ministerial assignments. In order to find a solution, the Leaders held what we could call a synod; they gathered the community to decide together how to resolve the problem. This synod could be considered a precursor to the greater synod or council they held to decide what would be required of Gentile converts to the faith.

Today's Gospel and second reading address situations of tension in the midst of diversity, showing how it can lead to something new and deeper than any of the participants would have imagined. In today's Gospel, Jesus makes the enigmatic statement that there are many rooms in his father's house. Earlier in this Gospel, he had described the Temple as his father's house, lamenting its desecration from being a house of prayer into a den of thieves. He then identified himself as the New Temple, the dwelling place of God. Jesus prayed for his disciples as if they could enter into him as into the Temple. "May all be one in as you, Father are in me and I am in you, that they

may be one in us".

It's a great temptation to take that beautiful prayer and ideal and say, "Someday, in heaven, that's what it will be like." This takes us back to the Christian community of Acts and its Synodal way of dealing with conflict. In Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis reminds us, "When conflicts are not resolved but kept hidden.... Silence can lead to complicity in grave misdeeds and sins. Authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict, but is achieved in conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation"

That's exactly what happened among the members of the community in Jerusalem. The widows and their supporters spoke out because the powerful were ignoring the needs and rights of the most vulnerable the leaders took the problem to the community and as a sign of validity of the complaint, they crafted a solution that called on Hellenists themselves to decide how the distribution should take place. Today's readings offer us practical methods and mysticism. The practical is a call to what Francis describes as genuine dialogue: looking at the other with care, listening deeply, touching the other, speaking, cultivating compassion and creating a culture of encounter. We cannot build community without encounter. We cannot be the chosen race and royal priesthood, a spiritual house, without opening ourselves to one another, especially in our differences.

The practical will lead us to the mystical, to dwelling in God through Christ. Compassion, solidarity, learning to treasure the difference that enrich us, all of this is what Jesus called "The Way". Pope Francis calls this synodality: learning to dialogue and to find in one another "reflections of the inexhaustible richness of human life". Those reflections reveal the unfathomable depths of God.

Cherishing the diversity God has created leads to the love of God and to keep us on our toes, the realization that there are more than five right ways to be transformed into a holy priesthood.

Let us cherish our cultural differences that we have been gifted with within our parish. seeing each other as an enrichment to one another and let us be a witness to the larger Society that it is possible because of our belief in Jesus, to live like brothers and sisters as a community of faith in harmony.

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



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 or by appointment.

<b>Fifth Sunday Of Easter</b> <b>Saturday 6th May</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 7th May</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Victor Lobo RIP (E&G Rebello) Carmel Garry RIP & Greta Sullivan RIP (Mr & Mrs Garry) <b>11:00am</b> Anna Vassallo RIP (V Terry)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 8th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Rachael Hayhurst RIP (J&K Goldsmith)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 9th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> For better health of Tina Nathan (A&P Lane)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 10th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Ferretti Family & Giussepie Corgnti (M Ferretti)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 11th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> For better health of Janet Jackson (A&P Lane)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 12th May</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Sixth Sunday Of Easter</b> <b>Saturday 13th May</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Sharon Fernandes RIP (Fernandes Family)
<b>Sunday 14th May</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Mary Scott RIP (M Scott) <b>11:00am</b> J McNamara RIP (H Marvell) John McPartlin RIP (McPartlin & Clubb Family) Geraldine Mulroy Birthday (Leish O'Sullivan)

### Second Collections

The next second collection will be on 14th May for The Maintenance/ Refurbishment/development Fund (MRD)



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Washing Up Liquid
- Hot & Cold meats
- Squash/Cordial
- UHT fruit juice
- Canned Tomatoes
- Cooking Sauces

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



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

14th May 2023

Sixth Sunday Of Easter



### Father David says....

Life has an abundance of negative experiences that it throws our way. We encounter broken relationships and sometimes those we trust can betray that trust in one way or another.

When that happens, our entire outlook on life can shift and it has many domino effects on our relationships with others down the line. One of the most traumatic behaviours a parent or other caregiver can do to a child is to abandon them, allowing them to suffer alone. The damages done to the child when grown are significant and should not be ignored. When parents abandon their children, their children grow up feeling unsafe in the world and feeling people cannot be trusted. These unsafe feelings lead to the child experiencing emotions where they feel they do not deserve positive attention or adequate care. Adults experiencing abandonment issues often experience problems in their relationships because they constantly fear that the other person will leave them. For someone who lacks self-esteem due to childhood abandonment, the fear of being abandoned becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as their clinginess and other negative behaviours tend to push away potential life partners and friends. Being aware of one's abandonment or attachment needs are the starting point of one's healing in order to build healthier relationships in the future.

Like last Sunday's today's Gospel is taken from the first of three farewell speeches given by Jesus at the last Supper. The disciples have now started to understand that Jesus is leaving them. They are obviously sad and anxious. Who am I now that – my rock is no longer around to protect me? How will I be able to cope without him? I totally depended on her – I feel deskilled to survive in this world with him. These are the questions which most people who experience bereavement of a significant partner or wife or husband or friend would feel once they are gone either through death, separation or divorce. For some they would also feel a sense of abandonment especially if they had abandonment issues in their childhood. Jesus in the Gospel today promises them that he will be leaving them alone – not to abandon them completely without protection or guidance. He said he would pray to the Father and send the other Paraclete who will always be with them. It is the promise of the gift of that Spirit that Jesus possesses in its fullness and will be infused into the disciples. The Spirit is called by two names. The Comforter (Paraclete) and the Spirit of Truth, the two functions he exercises on behalf of the believers. Comforter is not a good translation of the Greek Parakletos. Paraclete, a term taken from legal language and indicates someone called to stand beside another. The meaning of this first title is, therefore protector, helper and defender. He protects us against our accuser, our opponent and against sin. The second task of the Paraclete does not replace the first but fulfils a mission. Jesus is not going away; he simply changes the type of presence, no longer the

physical one but the Risen one. He stays with his disciples in a new way, infinitely more real – even in its invisibility more lasting and unlimited than before.

The second title is the Spirit of truth which sets out another function of the Paraclete. His work in the service of truth is expressed in various ways. The message of Jesus is for all peoples. It must be preached until the end of the world. Christians must remain open to the impulse of the Spirit who always reveals new things. He is by nature the one who renews the face of the earth. So it is a sin against the Holy Spirit to oppose renewal, to refuse innovations that favour the life of the community, that brings people closer to Christ and to the brothers and sisters that increase joy and peace, that helps people to pray better and free the heart from useless fear. Those who stubbornly remain attached to already obsolete and worn out religious traditions who are not diligently given to the study of the Word of God, who do not accept updating of rites, formulae or liturgical gestures, who offer old solutions to new problems, who do not accept with joy the discovery of biblical exegesis, place themselves in opposition to the Spirit of Truth. For the evangelist John, the term truth has a more profound meaning. It indicates a God who manifests himself in Jesus. He is the truth because the total revelation of God is realised in him to refuse him is a lie. It is a choice contrary to his truth. The Spirit is like the wind that sweeps towards higher ground and opens an irresistible path to salvation. It is difficult to imagine that the impulse of the Holy Spirit fails to introduce everyone to the truth. However tenuous it may be, why have doubt that this divine impulse toward life is stronger than the world still present in each of us?

Living in Christian fidelity is no easy task when the world invites us to go the other way. We cannot do it by ourselves; we need a helper. Jesus promises us the Holy Spirit as the indwelling helper to see us through life. Jesus assures his disciples as he does to us today that they will not be orphaned or abandoned. They will be filled with the Holy Spirit and if we are opened to receive he will guide our discernment and decisions always. Let us be sensitive to His inspiration in the ordinary events of our life.

Have a good and blessed week everyone. God bless you. Thank you once again to take time to read my weekly reflection.



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<b>Sixth Sunday Of Easter</b> <b>Saturday 13th May</b>  <b>Sunday 14th May</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Sharon Fernandes RIP (Fernandes Family)  <b>09:15am</b> Mary Scott RIP (M Scott)  <b>11:00am</b> J McNamara RIP (H Marvell) John McPartlin RIP (McPartlin & Clubb Family) Geraldine Mulroy Birthday (Leish O'Sullivan)
<b>Saint John Stone</b> <b>Monday 15th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> The Cholet Family (A&P Lane)
<b>Saint Simon Stock</b> <b>Tuesday 16th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Pat Mitchell (Mulroy family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 17th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Cyril Webster RIP ( H Wood)
<b>The Ascension Of The Lord</b> <b>Thursday 18th May</b>	Whole School Mass - Please note change of time <b>09:30am</b> Anita Rowland RIP  <b>07:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 19th May</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Seventh Sunday Of Easter</b> <b>Saturday 20th May</b>  <b>Sunday 21st May</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> John Pini RIP (P Pini)  <b>09:15am</b> Marie McArthur RIP (P Pini)  <b>11:00am</b> Christopher Arhah Nathan RIP (V Nathan-Rogers)

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for The Maintenance/ Refurbishment/Development Fund (MRD)



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Washing Up Liquid
- Squash/Cordial
- Canned Tomatoes
- Hot & Cold meats
- UHT fruit juice
- Cooking Sauces

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





# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

21st May 2023

Seventh Sunday Of Easter



### Father David says....

The spaces in between moments are where we often find some of the greatest riches of life. Life is naturally spacious, and it's the space that helps to give meaning to definition.

Ofentimes, awakening and other spiritual shifts in our lives bring about the close of different relationships – friendships, romances and working situations. In these moments, it is often important to pause in this space in between before running to fill in that place in your life. In this way we can complete any issues that were part of those relationships as well as identify other concerns before potentially getting lost and wrapped up in new relationships and repeating the same pattern of behaviour. Since relationships offer great learning experiences, the space in between relationships allows us to integrate what we have learnt and in these difficult situations, it allows you to grieve and to let go fully so that we have the space for something new.

The time between the Ascension of the Lord and Pentecost is a time of in between – it is a time of anticipation, apprehension and addressing God in prayer. Our first reading today describes how the eleven apostles and Mary and other disciples spend this time. After Jesus's ascension, His followers are at a loss. They are still very apprehensive about what may happen to them with Jesus not being with them anymore. As they think about Jesus's words to stay in Jerusalem and await the coming of the Holy Spirit, they long for and anticipate the Spirit's coming, not too sure what the Spirit's coming will mean for them and how. We are told that they spend their time devoted to lifting up one another in prayer, addressing Jesus and his Abba. Tradition has them staying in the place where Jesus celebrated the Last Supper. Their journey came to a drastic halt. They are in between narratives. That is a very uncomfortable place to be. Anyone who has lost someone by death or separation or divorce knows the palpable feeling of being in an in between place. It's a place of desolation, trying to grapple with what has happened and trying to make sense of it at the same time feeling stuck, without energy. Every morning trying to push oneself in order to get out of bed. The old constructed self has disappeared and the new one is nowhere to be seen. The healthy way of being is to go into the Upper Room and wait. There is no certainty in anything in this place. Just darkness and no desire for anything. You do not even have the strength to have any desire. Only faith keeps you going. Believing that after such a desolate place there must be something else. Believing beyond seeing.

The apostles as they await in darkness they seek to experience being in God's presence and support one another in this time and place. They understand each other's confusion, fear and anxiety. They had experienced it together. However their grief must have been so different from one another too. Mary, Jesus's

mother lost her son. James, Peter and John had lost their very intimate friend. The others were grieving their rabbi. It is ok to grieve differently as we all have different relationships with the one who has died.

In Peter's letter, his focus is upon those who are experiencing hardship or who might have to suffer. He addresses various members of the Christian community in the course of his letter, including newly baptised Christians, slaves and those undergoing persecution. He reminds his readers that if they have to suffer, it should be for being a disciple of Jesus and not for doing wrong deeds. He challenges them to offer their hardship as an act of giving praise and glory to God.

The Gospel is from Chapter 17 of St John's Gospel which is the prayer of Jesus for his disciples. Jesus realises that His time with His followers is drawing to a close. The next day He will be crucified and die. And even when He rises on Easter, He will only be with his disciples for a short period of time before He ascends to be with his Abba. Thus with anticipation of what will be happening over the next days, He addresses his Abba with his prayer for His disciples and for all those who will come into a closer relationship with Him, His Abba and the Holy Spirit through the ministry of those He sends forth.

As I ponder and reflect on today's readings, I realise that our life as Jesus's disciples is marked by apprehension, anticipation and addressing God in prayer. Our life is at times, filled with apprehension in two ways. First we are concerned about what lies ahead of us. In what ways might we have to suffer as we continue to follow our Master? How will we best proclaim the Good News to those whom we are being sent to? How will I and my loved ones be affected by the global sickness, climate changes, terrorism and war? Secondly we are to have moments of greater apprehension of what it means to be a faithful disciple of Jesus. Especially as we open Scripture and delve into the message in the Word the relationship we do have with him, His Father and the Holy Spirit.

We also have a greater sense of anticipation. We wonder how the new Me after the loss will be. How we can reconcile our grief and trauma into our new life healthily. Will it keep us bitter and resentful of life in general or have we learnt lessons in in between spaces to help us live our lives with more purpose and focus.

As we transition from Ascension of Jesus to look forward to Pentecost, we move forward with some apprehension, more joyful anticipation and being able to confidently address our needs to our God and give thanks and glory to the God who cares for us more than we can ever fully apprehend in this life.

Have a good week everyone. Thank you once again for reading my reflection for this week. God bless you.



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<b>Seventh Sunday Of Easter</b> <b>Saturday 20th May</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> John Pini RIP (P Pini)
<b>Sunday 21st May</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Marie McArthur RIP (P Pini) <b>11:00am</b> Christopher Arhah Nathan RIP (V Nathan-Rogers)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 22nd May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> John Buckley RIP ( Sheila Durkin)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 23rd May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Bill Morley Anniversary RIP (M Morley)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 24th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Chris Mailey RIP (Bunnage Family)
<b>Saint Bede the Venerable</b> <b>Thursday 25th May</b>	Whole School Mass - Please note change of time <b>09:30am</b> Anita Rowland RIP (Suzanne Horner)
<b>Saint Philip Neri</b> <b>Friday 26th May</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Pentecost</b> <b>Saturday 27th May</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Julian Blake RIP (J&S Blake)
<b>Sunday 28th May</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Anne Ryan RIP (Pat Sheary) <b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan RIP (G Coughtrey)

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for The Parish overseas project - The Divine Providence Hospital in El Salvador.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Cleaning wipes/spray
- Tinned Cold meats
- Tinned fruit
- UHT Milk
- Jam

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St James – A shining light in Petts Wood



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

28th May 2023

Pentecost Sunday



### Father David says....

Pope Francis says in Fratelli tutti – “Those who raise walls will end up as slaves within the very walls they have built. They are left without horizons, for they lack this interchange with others” In a world of populist civil leaders who pick on our fears of being

overtaken by immigrants and refugees and losing our sovereignties, some of us are sold on the narrative of closing boundaries and putting up walls to protect ourselves from the “other”. Life does not come forth through exclusion – exclusion ironically implodes and kills something of the soul. Inclusion on the other hand enriches us and the tension that it creates is creative. It generates life. It generates new thinking. It helps us to breathe more freely. Pope Francis as a prophet of our time is seeing that gradually the world is once again creating an “Us” and “Them” mentality. This halts growth and life.

Today we celebrate Pentecost, the feast of God’s Spirit filling the earth with all her creatures and cultures. To what does this feast invite us? Beginning with the Gospel of John, we can see the progression of the early church’s reflection on the Spirit’s effects on the Christian community. John begins by opening a window on what looks like the room where the disciples had recently celebrated the Passover with Jesus. But now after his death, they had locked the doors and gathered together in fear. Without warning, Jesus stood amongst them and bade them Shalom. Showing them the marks of his wounds, he again bade them peace. Then summarizing what he had said during the last supper and mirroring God’s gift of life to the first humans, Jesus breathed his Spirit into them and commissioned them to carry on his own vocation on earth.

Luke tells a version of this story in Acts, describing how the disciples had encountered Jesus over a period of 40 days. Then after spending 10 days waiting and praying together, the Spirit of God shook them out of all inertia, impelling them to assume their apostleship. The natural phenomena that most impresses the human imagination – fire, lightning hurricane, earthquake, thunder (Ex 19: 16-19) – are used in the Bible to describe manifestations of God. The sacred authors also used images to depict the outpouring of the Spirit of God. They say that the spirit is a breath of life (Gen 2-7), a force that restores (Ex 37: 1-14), a rumble from the sky, the wind that blows strongly, claps of thunder and tongues of fire (Acts 2: 1-3). All robust images suggest an uncontrollable burst of energy. Where the spirit touches, radical upheaval and transformation always occur; barriers fall, doors are opened wide, all the towers build by human hands and designed by the wisdom of this world shake: fear and passivity disappear: initiatives are developed and courageous decisions made. Whoever is dissatisfied and aspired to renew the world and humanity can count on the spirit. Nothing can resist its power.

Pentecost was an ancient Jewish holiday celebrated 50 days after the commemoration of the Passover. It commemorated the arrival of the people of Israel at Mount Sinai. We all remember what happened in that place. Moses climbed the mountain; he encountered God and received the Law to communicate to his people. The Israelites were proud of this gift. To thank God who chose them, the Israelites set up a feast: Pentecost. Saying that the Spirit descended upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost, Luke wants to teach that the Spirit has replaced the old law and became the new law for the Christian. What did God do then? He decided to change the hearts of people. With a new heart

– he thought – they could no longer need an external law. They would do good by following the impulses within them. Here is the Spirit’s law. It is the new heart – it is God’s life. When the Spirit enters into a person, it transforms them and from a bramble, becomes a fruitful tree, able to produce the works of God spontaneously. When a person is filled with the Spirit, something unheard of happens within them. They love with the love of God himself. From that moment he won’t require another law. If the old law was given amid thunder, lightning, flames of fire, how could Luke present the gift of the Spirit in a different way – the new law? If he wanted to be understood, he had to use the same images.

And the many languages spoken by the apostles? Luke used this phenomena in a symbolic way to teach about the universality of the church. The Spirit is a gift meant for all peoples. Faced with this gift of God, all barriers of all language, race and tribe collapse. On the day of Pentecost, the opposite of what happened at Babel occurred. People began to misunderstand and distance themselves from each other in Babel. Here the Spirit reverses the movement. He brings together those who are scattered. Whoever let himself or herself be guided by the Word of the Gospel and by the Spirit speaks a language that everyone understands and everyone joins in the language of love. It is the Spirit who transforms humankind into one family where all understand and love each other.

Although impelled by the Spirit, this evangelical adventure was never easy. At each new step of the way, Christians needed to broaden their outlook, question their dogmatic assumptions and ask the Spirit for guidance. That the process Paul describes in his first letter to the Corinthians, where he speaks of rejoicing in the Spirit’s diverse gifts. Paul teaches that every gift of an individual, a people or culture manifests the spirit bestowed for the benefit of the entire body.

Following Paul’s lead, Karl Rahner, the great 20th century theologian, commented that after the events of Jesus’s life after the Pentecost came to fruition in the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15: 1-31), the major step for the Christian community did not come until the Second Vatican Council in 1962-65 opened the church to the modern world and all her cultures.

What does Pentecost mean today? In the 21st century, when no part of the world is unreachable and every language is translatable in an instant, Francis tells us in Fratelli Tutti that it is time to appreciate the unavoidable and blessed awareness that we are all part of one another and can no longer think in terms of “them” and “those”, but only us.

As we celebrate God’s spirit present throughout creation, let us abandon our locked up mentalities and venture into mind and soul stretching interchanges with the wild and wonderful variety of the Spirit’s manifestations in our world. Pentecost is on-going!

Thank you once more for reading my reflection of the week. May God send the Holy Spirit on you all.



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 or by appointment.

<b>Pentecost Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 27th May</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Julian Blake RIP (J&S Blake)
<b>Sunday 28th May</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Anne Ryan RIP (Pat Sheary)  <b>11:00am</b> Mary O'Sullivan RIP (G Coughtrey) Bill Morley RIP (M Morley) Luigi Assirati RIP (A Assirati)
<b>Mary, Mother of the Church</b> <b>Monday 29th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Confirmandi (CWL) David & Barbara Bridle RIP (Foundation Mass)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 30th May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Sophia Belinda Lokko RIP (V Nathan-Rogers)
<b>The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b> <b>Wednesday 31st May</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Austin Barradell RIP (O'Mahony Family)
<b>Our Lord Jesus Christ</b> <b>Thursday 1st June</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Anne-Marie Mendonca (J&S Blake)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 2nd June</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>The Most Holy Trinity</b> <b>Saturday 3rd June</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Anne Conroy RIP (Mary & The O'Mahony Family)
<b>Sunday 4th June</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Mrs McLaurence RIP (McCarthy Family)

### Second Collections

This next second collection is on 11th June for the Maintenance/ Refurbishment/Development Fund (MRD)



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Cleaning wipes/spray
- Tinned Cold meats
- Tinned fruit
- UHT Milk
- Jam

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

4th June 2023

The Most Holy Trinity



In Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple*, Celie, a battered and exploited woman, meets the exotic and freespirited Shug. She tells Celie that mutual love should be the reality behind all our relationships; that love transfigures and brutality disfigures; that it's not only pleasing

God that matters, because God is always trying to please us back with surprises-just as Shug, the mistress of Celie's cold, distant husband, is a surprise for Celie.

The biggest "surprise" that God has sprung on the world is the love that takes flesh and comes among us in the Son. The gospel of today's feast again proclaims that God is not intent on judging and condemning the world, but judgment will happen-not as a future event but as a present reality for which we ourselves are responsible when we accept or reject the Son. Like Nicodemus-whose encounter with Jesus begins in the verses immediately preceding today's gospel (which most regard as continuing the dialogue between him and Jesus)-we are often "night visitors" to the mystery of God, afraid to come into the light, wanting to keep our acceptance and understanding of God within the confines of our own manageable and limited experiences. Today's feast invites us to remember God's most gracious hospitality, most free and generous love for all created reality. Through Christ and the Spirit, in whom our humanity is born again when the womb waters of baptism break over us, we are a precious and privileged part of this creation.

It will often be a struggle to live what we are, and we need the encouragement that Paul gives to the Corinthians in his Second Letter. This is a letter in which Paul has to deal with the pain of attacks on his apostolic credentials, has admitted his weakness, and has needed to write strong criticism to this often cantankerous church that he still loves dearly. In his closing, Paul bids the Corinthians farewell with words that encourage them to live in joy, peace, and love for one another, because this is the life that reflects their God. Liturgically, this is shown by the "holy kiss" (the sign of peace). Paul ends with the blessing that we would now describe as trinitarian: the grace that is received through the gift of Jesus Christ, the all-embracing love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit. This is the dynamism that binds together every Christian community. It is also the challenge to love, to comfort, to live in peace with one another.

As Augustine wrote, "If you see love, you see the Trinity." Over and above all theological speculation, the best way of meditating on and understanding something of the extraordinary mystery of the Trinity is to reflect on the love that we ordinary Christians show in our daily lives. Beautiful though this may be, it is only the faintest image of the love of Father, Son, and Spirit, whose communion is the source not only of our responsibility to one another but also to the whole

interdependent cosmos.



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 or by appointment.

<p><b>The Most Holy Trinity</b>  <b>Saturday 3rd June</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 4th June</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Anne Conroy RIP (Mary &amp; The O'Mahony Family)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Mrs McLaurence RIP (McCarthy Family)</p>
<p><b>Saint Boniface</b>  <b>Monday 5th June</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Austin Barradell RIP (P Baennan)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Tuesday 6th June</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Marjorie Melliush &amp; Family (P Melliush)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Wednesday 7th June</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Birthday of Marjorie Ingledew RIP (M Ingledew)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Thursday 8th June</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Father Louis Fitzmaurice (Foundation)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Friday 9th June</b></p>	<p><b>No Mass from St James'</b>  <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b>  <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b>  <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></p>
<p><b>The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ</b>  <b>Saturday 10th June</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 11th June</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Fr David Camilleri (J&amp;S Blake)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Thanksgiving Suzanne &amp; Caroline (G Whitley)</p>

### Second Collections

This next second collection is on 11th June for the Maintenance/ Refurbishment/Development Fund (MRD)



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- Tinned fruit
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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

11th June 2023

The Most Holy Body and Blood Of Christ



Fr David says....

Coming back from what I have named a "whirlwind experience" of myriad emotions, I had some time to gather myself and come in touch with some hindsight reflections. Yes of course there was the joy of the celebration of love in the newly married couple and also of my other nieces and nephew and siblings. However what stuck with me was the amount of meals we had together. Looking back I feel that the meals I shared together with family and friends were an expression of what we were experiencing. It's amazing the depth of conversations that were being shared at the table as more wine was being poured. Meals can become symbolic of both material nourishment but also as spiritual and emotional nourishment. Grief maximises when surrounded by euphoric crowds. There is a kind of disconnection with what is going on. And some people escape literally from such moments or else they engage and disclose much more than usual what they are going through. Weddings in a special way highlights the beauty of togetherness but also loneliness. And amidst all this, a meal becomes a sacrament of God's presence in our own uniqueness and vulnerability. God is present where we are at.

In preparation for today's feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, I tried to contemplate the meaning of this phrase from the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church – *Lumen Gentium* of the phrase "The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life" (11). I also had time to reflect on what Pope Francis's invitation to everyone to share in the life of the church, "The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak" (*Evangelii Gaudium*).

As we all know the Eucharist is being politically instrumentalized especially in the US. Dividing the parishioners in their views on who is worthy to partake in communion or not. Eucharist in community gives foundation for rehearsing inclusive space for the Body of Christ. Eucharistic remembering transforms lives. Our hearts should be healed, reconciled, given new life to live in union with God and the Saints. However as Francis adds, "Frequently we act as arbiters of grace rather than facilitators."

In our brokenness we share the transformative power of Eucharistic healing with the world. We become broken for the broken. When we do this, we continue to cultivate spaces of belonging community through acknowledging and accepting vulnerabilities, we open wide our church doors so that whole community might exist. Having been fed, we go forth to offer everyone the life of Christ.

Our readings today focus around God providing nourishment for us and our need to participate in this nourishment and give thanks to God for what we have been privileged to receive. God has taken care of not only the physical needs of a hungry people but also satisfied the spiritual hunger and thirst as a

people chosen by God journey along the way back to the land of promise.

The sixth chapter of St John's gospel is known as the Bread of life discourse. In this chapter Jesus equates the eating of the body and blood of Christ His Body. As Jesus proclaims the necessity of His followers eating His flesh and drinking His blood, many listeners turn away. They cannot stomach these words. Yet Jesus does not call them back and say, "I was only speaking figuratively. He lets them go. He wants His followers to really digest Him as their means of nourishment as they journey to the House of God. During the Covid pandemic, we were not able to gather as a community and be fed by the Body and Blood of Christ. I realise how blessed we are to once again gather each week in God's house. It is in that place where we are given not only Bread of life but the Word that comes from the mouth of God. As we gather as the Body of Christ, we are fed with God's Word. We then – give thanks to our God for all we have received, especially the very best gift – Jesus himself. As a way of showing our thanks, we remember and re-enact and re-live what Jesus did on the night before he died. We take bread and wine and pronounce Jesus's words over the gifts. This is my body, this is my blood which is poured out for you..... Do this in memory of me. With the proclamation of Jesus's words He is truly present with us. We are then privileged to feast on his Body and Blood – our food for the journey.

In our contemporary experience, we can become so easily comfortable in our accomplishments and ability to satiate our seemingly every need. It is an almost clichéd notion that we have become masters of our own distraction. Comfortable in our ability to manipulate our lives and our world in all sorts of ways. To not want for anything, yet never able to be entirely satisfied either. Of course there are many who do not experience such agency. But for many to recognise the genuine need that we all have can be so easily masked by the plethora of material goods.

This and much more is captured in today's feast. The Body and Blood of Christ is the every sustenance of God for life's journey. The ongoing celebration where we are frequently called to remember is also an opportunity to connect with our needs. To recognise just how much we actually do need God in our lives. It is so easy to become distracted, so easy to feel that the only nourishment we need is that which fills our actual bellies and desires. Jesus's declaring that he is the bread of life is not only a statement of where we receive our nourishment but that we actually need such nourishment. Something that is evidently easy to forget.

Thank you for taking the time to read my reflection on this Sunday's feast. Let us keep in our thoughts and prayers all the first Holy Communion children and parents who are doing their First Holy Communion this weekend. God bless you all.



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<p><b>The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ</b>  <b>Saturday 10th June</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 11th June</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Fr David Camilleri (J&amp;S Blake)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Suzanne &amp; Caroline - with appreciation &amp; thanksgiving (G Whitley)          Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Monday 12th June</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Austin Barradell RIP          (Blackheath &amp; Chislehurst Catenians)</p>
<p><b>Saint Anthony of Padua</b>  <b>Tuesday 13th June</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Francis &amp; Catherine Sexton (P Melliush)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Wednesday 14th June</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Requiem Mass for Anita Rowland RIP</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Thursday 15th June</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Rev Sue Bull RIP &amp; Antonia Gowers RIP</p>
<p><b>The Most Sacred Heart Of Jesus</b>  <b>Friday 16th June</b></p>	<p><b>No Mass from St James'</b>  <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b>  <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b>  <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></p>
<p><b>Eleventh Sunday</b>  <b>Saturday 17th June</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 18th June</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Freddy Askelof RIP (R Turton)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Tom Cott RIP (T Wood)          John Mulvey RIP (Maureen Mulvey)          Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)</p>

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection is on 11th June for the Maintenance/ Refurbishment/Development Fund (MRD)



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned vegetables
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- Adult Toothpaste

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*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

18th June 2023

Eleventh Sunday



Fr David says....

“Our heart is the soft centre of our ego less self and it has one impelling desire: to open. The heart is the capacity to open. This is the force that complements our other powers. It takes us beyond our limits. It contains our ability to reach out so that it is the antidote to despair. We are spiritually coded in ways we have not yet dared even to imagine”. This is a quote from David Richo’s book called *The Sacred Heart of the World*. He is a therapist, author and teacher who integrates psychology. He also says that “Devotion does not end at a shrine or image. It is only authentic when it reaches all the way into ourselves and into our lifestyle with an utterly transforming power”. In his book he seeks to return the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to its cosmic origins.

This week, I am hoping also to explore the spirituality of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and see its relevance to us living in 2023.

Living a spirituality of the heart means learning to live each day with trust in God’s love. We have come to recognise and believe that the love God has for us. God’s love is already present and will never change. God’s love is unconditional, we are loved because God chose to love us. Recognition of God’s love can come only from God within who speaks to the heart. When we meditate on the Gospels. We allow Jesus to touch our hearts. We begin to know God’s personal love in a way that is beyond feelings and thoughts. No sermon, retreat or talk can convince us of God’s love. We can affirm the message and life events can offer an experience of God’s love, but only God can convince our heart. It is not enough to recognise God’s love. There is also a need to accept his love. We usually hesitate to accept God’s love and his offer of intimacy. There is an innate fear of getting too close to God. People fear that if they get too close to God, they will have to give up too much that they enjoy in life. Instinctively people know that God’s love is demanding and will become the primary relationship of their lives.

When we experience God’s personal unconditional and faithful love, we are moved to desire a change of our hearts and minds. Mostly we are moved to let go of whatever might block our relationship with God and growth in our relationship. All the spiritual writers teach us that letting go is the most effective way to participate in one spiritual growth. We are usually fearful to change. We want to get rid of obstacles to love without having to change. If we are able to accept and trust God’s personal, unconditional and faithful love, we cannot remain the same. We start this conversion by choosing to be willing to let go and to allow God; both are necessary for transformation as necessary as breathing in and out. Spirituality of the heart teaches us to open our hearts to God. We need to be open to receive whatever gift God wants to give us and to allow Him to touch our hearts and transform our lives. This transformation happens in and through life events. Life events change us.

One of the great gifts of the spirituality of the heart is that it integrates life and thought; life and scripture; life and reflection. We can only grow spirituality by becoming immersed in our own life to do that we need to experience- our daily losses and disappointments and the feelings of anger and sadness that accompany our journey. We only grow by taking up our cross. Life is a series of letting go events, especially as one moves from one stage of life to another.

Spiritual growth includes a challenge to be patient for God’s transforming action. This demands that we are prepared to wait until God comes to transform our lives.

The way people most easily talk about conversion experiences is by describing how they were, what happened and how they are now. What was their human condition? How did the events of their life affect them, especially with regard to their ability to trust, to love and to receive love? What was/ is their experience of intimacy, of a closer relationship with God or another? How did this love change their way of thinking and acting their way of relating? When people listen to each other’s stories about hurt and loss, about intimacy and change, they affect each other. People experience growth in community. Growing spiritually is a community process. When people are hurt they go into isolation. Isolation is a symptom of being hurt and of the destructive power of hurt. When people share stories, they are invited out of isolation, into relationship again.

Finally a spirituality of the heart is a desire to be a new person in a new relationship and allow this transformation to affect all of one’s relationship. The mission is to share the experience of intimacy and conversion with others by words and actions. It is a gift offered not a compulsion urged. It is freely received and freely given, to anyone who wishes to receive it. Sharing one’s story gives the message of Jesus’s flesh today. The focus is on Jesus and what he has done in our lives, so that we might remember Jesus and be grateful to him.

So the devotion of the Sacred Heart of Jesus is not an end in itself. Like all good spiritualities, it leads us to a personal spiritual journey which is not always easy however it leads us towards transformation and life.

Thank you for taking the time once again to read my reflection. God bless you and Happy Feast.



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<b>Eleventh Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 17th June</b>  <b>Sunday 18th June</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Freddy Askelof RIP (R Turton)  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Tom Cott RIP (T Wood) John Mulvey RIP (Maureen Mulvey) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)
<b>Saint John Rigby</b> <b>Monday 19th June</b>	<b>10:00am</b> John & Irene Toomey RIP (I Webb)
<b>Saint Alban</b> <b>Tuesday 20th June</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Birthday of Maurice Ingledew RIP (M Ingledew) T A Jacob RIP (N Roy)
<b>Saint Aloysius Gonzaga</b> <b>Wednesday 21st June</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Luigi Ugo RIP (Liana Levoir) Patrick Van der Vorst (K & A Evans)
<b>Saint John Fisher</b> <b>Thursday 22nd June</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Joel Barclay Parker RIP (A Parker)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 23rd June</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Twelfth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 24th June</b>  <b>Sunday 25th June</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Martin James Quin RIP (G Thompson)  <b>09:15am</b> Callum Taylor RIP (Padfield Family)  <b>11:00am</b> Joel Barclay Parker RIP (A Parker)

### Second Collections

The next second collection is on 9th July for the Apostleship of the Sea



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*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

25th June 2023

Twelfth Sunday



Fr David says....

In the early days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, a unique video went viral. An Ukrainian woman confronted some Russian soldiers, called them invaders and fascists among other things, and became famous for giving one of them sunflower seeds. She said he should keep the seeds in his pocket so that they would grow once he was buried under Ukrainian soil. Some of us might have cheered her on. Others might have been shocked. Those words were coming out of real pain seeing her country being invaded so aggressively. Those words were real and it would be imprudent for us to judge her from our comfortable sofas at home here in the UK. Our country is blessed with peace at this moment in history.

As our readings from Jeremiah and the psalms today remind us, we are not the first to cry out to God in our despair, nor the first to ask, "How could you let this happen?"; nor the first to ask, "Where are you God?". Jeremiah and the psalmist both cling to a stubborn hope, a firm conviction that they will see the wrongs against them righted in their lifetimes. I know I don't have to tell you that It doesn't always work that way. I know that each one of us carries our own grief, our own loss, that every day the news brings fresh reports of a world in which injustice, greed and inequality always seem to be the victors.

And that is why I find Jesus's words in today's gospel so interesting. It is part of his commissioning of the disciples, sending them out on their first mission. As Jesus gives them their instructions, directly preceding the passage we hear today, he details the trials and difficulties that await them. They will be betrayed, hated, flogged, and put on trial he promises. And then, one last thing, he says. Do not fear. I bet the disciples were thinking what I am thinking – "Um, What? Is this a mission I want to go on?"

The official documents issued in the name of Domitian begin with: "Our Lord and God commands you to do the following..." The worship of the emperor mainly spread through Asia Minor. A temple and a colossal statue of the god Domitian were erected in Ephesus. Christians could not bestow divine honours on the king. For this, misappropriation, punishment, discrimination and confiscation of property began. Many could no longer bear this constant harassment. They were at the limit of endurance and on the cusp of the risk of apostasy. How to help them through this challenging time?

To encourage the Christian community, Mathew inserted in this historical context into his Gospel, adding the saying of the Master regarding the difficulties and persecutions that the disciples would have to bear. For Christians, persecution is not accidental. It is an inescapable fact. What recommendations did Jesus make to his persecuted disciples? He begins by warning them of fear.

Fear has a positive vital function. It signals danger, prevents rash, risky, foolish responses. However, if it gets out of control. It hinders courageous action and resolute choices. For those who have decided to follow Christ, fear is often the worst enemy. It manifests itself in fear of losing a position, of seeing the esteem of superiors diminished, of losing friendships, of being deprived of property, of being punished, demoted or for some even of being killed. Whoever is afraid is no longer free. It is normal to be afraid, but woe to those dominated and guided by fear, they end up being paralysed.

In today's Gospel, Jesus insists three times: "Do not be afraid". And each time, he adds a motive to justify his recommendation. When I think of my heroes, I think of people who never faltered in their work and others worked so hard to keep hidden. St Oscar Romero, Dr Martin Luther King, Gandhi and many others. Prophetic voices they let the spirit to hear God's whispers and they shouted them from the rooftops. I am sure they were also acquainted with disappointment, doubt, and discouragement. I am sure they all raised their fists to the sky, asking God why, wondering where God was.

Maybe it is because all of my heroes knew that intimate hair counting love of God to carry on. Maybe it is because the work that they did, drew a direct line from that love in order to need to build a world that treats every human as equal.

Scripture shows us time and time again that God is not afraid of our emotions, lament, for grief, for anger. We will not be the last to weep, to voice our despair, assured that there is not a cry we make that God does not hear and perhaps it is God who knows suffering so personally that can indeed lead us not to fear.

When we look at our children growing up, we do feel grateful and so proud however at the same time, I am sure that you parents wrestle with how to entrust them to a dangerous world. What a heartbreak when their little hearts are broken. I personally have no answers for this however I do know that we are deeply fiercely, tenderly loved, all of us, not just your and my family, but the human family and creation, by the God who is light and who calls us to be light ourselves to one another.

Thank you for once again reading my reflection for this weekend. God bless you all and please take care of yourselves and one another.



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 or by appointment.

<b>Twelfth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 24th June</b>  <b>Sunday 25th June</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Martin James Quin RIP (G Thompson)  <b>09:15am</b> Callum Taylor RIP (Padfield Family) Maria Cheony Choo Niah RIP (D Brookes)  <b>11:00am</b> Joel Barclay Parker RIP (A Parker) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 26th June</b>	<b>10:00am</b> 1st Communicants (CWL)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 27th June</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Frank Hanley RIP (E O'Leary)
<b>Saint Irenaeus</b> <b>Wednesday 28th June</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Austin Barradell RIP (J Keen)
<b>Saints Peter and Paul</b> <b>Thursday 29th June</b>	<b>Whole School Mass - Please Note Change Of Time</b>  <b>9.30am</b> Dorothy Robson (Foundation Mass)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 30th June</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Thirteenth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 1st July</b>  <b>Sunday 2nd July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Martin James Quin RIP (G Thompson)  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Paul Keller RIP (B Keller) Peter Keen RIP (J Keen)

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

2nd July 2023

Thirteenth Sunday



Fr David says....

Last week, I was speaking to someone who belongs to a parish which is very far away even from our diocese, who was sharing an incident she had at her own parish. She described her parish as a small parish in the country. It is also a very welcoming parish. Everyone seems to know one another by name. This particular person has not been long a Catholic and she is very much enthused and sustained by her faith and community. However she described herself as an introvert and also that from time to time she admits suffers with depression. Usually she finds her church as an oasis, a place of comfort and consolation. On this particular day, she said she did not feel herself very well and she needed some space in order to be with herself and her God. However a well-meaning parishioner who is excellent in hospitality and making people welcome went to her and started probing her about why she was looking so upset. The conversation which could have become a very pastoral encounter was transformed into a solution focused exercise. She told me that the parishioner did not realise that all she needed that day was to have some time by herself with God and this particular parishioner who prided herself by being so welcoming, assumed that by giving her instructions what to do with her depression was the way she was helping her. Unfortunately this encounter affected her so much that she is finding it difficult to return to Church even though she said she is missing receiving the host for her own personal spiritual sustenance. Although I truly believe that the most important aspect of parish life is to be welcoming and hospitable, it does not mean one has the right to intrude in each other matters without consent. Real Hospitality and welcome makes us feel vulnerable as we lose control in order to make sure that the other's needs are met and not ours.

The Shunemite woman, in the first Reading, receives the prophet Elisha and therefore receives blessings for her graciousness and hospitality. The reading speaks about Elisha, the prophet who took the place of his master Elijah the prophet. Elisha continues to announce God's message and is known as a holy man. The woman of Shunem desires to extend a welcome to Elisha. She does not only provides food for him, but sets aside a room in her house – actually on the roof of the house, for the prophet and provides him all the comforts during his frequent visits. Obviously this hospitality also extends to Elisha's assistant, Gehazi. Such kindness is not unnoticed by Elisha nor by God. After consulting with this assistant and presumably with God, Elisha promises what the woman has longed for: a child. The woman's generosity to the prophet was surpassed by the benevolence of God.

The Gospel calls us too, to hospitality; it is about receiving others and therefore receiving Christ. But this hospitality goes beyond what we usually mean by the word. It is not about

throwing parties or offering a bed when it will make us look good or give us fodder for our social media feeds. It is not a hospitality of convenience. This is rather a hospitality of the heart. It is about being willing to move around our very selves in order to make space for others, that is why Jesus's words about receiving others and offering cups of cold water are paired with those about taking up our crosses and losing our lives. This hospitality is about giving of ourselves which is sometimes uncomfortable. But Jesus is calling us to something deeper here. We do not give up our lives for no reason, but because in doing so we imitate the self-giving unconditional love of God. By making this space for other, by pushing our comfort zones, we find our truest selves. Discipleship demands a radical embrace of the divine in our daily lives. Maybe that looks like welcoming the pain of unhoused neighbours into your heart and allowing it to move you into action. Maybe seeking forgiveness from a colleague. Maybe the radical welcome to which Jesus calls us looks as simple as offering a "hi, how are you?" to the person sitting by themselves a few pews over.

It is always a pleasure to hear from new parishioners that they felt welcomed as they come to our parish. They feel that there is a special culture of hospitality at St James's as people tend to welcome them and make them feel at home. This also has a lot to do also with new parishioners who allow themselves to engage with the established parishioners.

It is always good to ask these questions and not to allow ourselves become complacent and rely on our laurels. How hospitable is our parish at meeting new parishioners where they are at? Does our worship community reflect a warm welcoming presence as a sign of God's love? Does the parish's hospitality style follow a prescribed and formalised pattern or is it a free joyful response to God's grace?

In many ways, when we think of extending Christian hospitality we must also reflect on our own journey of faith and discipleship. In order to welcome someone fully into community we need to first feel that we also completely belong to the community, the community that connects us to God's love.

Thank you once again for taking the time to read my reflection. I am hoping that I will be seeing you this coming weekend (9th July) as we celebrate together the Feast of St James's – the patron saint of our parish with the Fun Run and the Garden party. God bless you all.



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 or by appointment.

<b>Thirteenth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 1st July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Martin James Quin RIP (G Thompson)
<b>Sunday 2nd July</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Paul Keller RIP (B Keller) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Peter Keen RIP (J Keen)
<b>Saint Thomas</b> <b>Monday 3rd July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Seamus O'Mahony RIP - Birthday (Foundation Mass) Liam Robert Morrisroe RIP (D Morrisroe) Father David Camilleri (H Marvell)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 4th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Sexton & Melluish Families (P Melluish)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 5th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Mike Margolis RIP (A Ward)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 6th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Organ Donors & Recipients (Parker Family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 7th July</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Fourteenth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 8th July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Hugh Forde RIP (Forde Family)
<b>Sunday 9th July</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)

### Second Collections

The next second collection is on 9th July for the Apostleship of the Sea



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned Hot Meat
- Canned Cold Meat
- Canned Potatoes
- Sweets
- Shampoo
- Hair Conditioner
- Ladies Deodorant
- Shaving Gel

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



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

9th July 2023

Fourteenth Sunday



Fr David says....

It is such a breath of fresh air to meet people who do not know how good and magnificent they are. They have such an air of freedom about them. They do not care about impressing anyone. They do not play the games of I am going to tell you how much I am important or how much I am intelligent. They are normally good listeners as they do not try to impress you about where they have been and how hard their lives have been, trying to make you feel pity for them. They are comfortable in their own skin. They are the humble ones not in trying to be falsely modest but in acknowledging their gifts without flaunting them. They are not impressed by titles, degrees, wealth or position of power. They can see the authenticity of the others and that is what really matters for them.

In the first reading, the prophet Zechariah reflects a comparable combination of greatness and humility in his vision of the arrival of Zion's king. His saviour arriving meekly on a donkey is a parody. It mocks the pretentious power of overlords who ride giant stallions and frighten children with the clamour of their armour and war chariots. Zechariah's people had witnessed the arrogance of such conquerors; some among them even recognised that the bullies' posturing and grandiosity were ultimately nothing more than attempts to hide the fragility of the tyrannical power. The Prophet tells his people that God's king will be the antithesis of their oppressors. Horses, chariots and weapons will be banished under the king. The one who comes in humility has no need of weapons. His victory is based on winning the hearts and minds of the people, therefore he is the only ruler whose reign remains safe from rebellion.

In today's gospel reading, Jesus also celebrates the power of humility as he thanks his Father that his message has come home to the humble. We can imagine Jesus almost dancing with joy as simple people listen to him and get it. These are people who have got caught in the dynamic of Jesus's love and mission. They have been captured by the love of his tender Father. They can face those who disdain them with the self-assurance that comes from knowing they are loved beyond measure. Jesus explains the privilege of "little ones" those who are the antithesis of the "wise and learned". The wise ones he's talking about might be called sophisticated. We could think of their learning as technology or technique, the ability to control things. Those are acquired skills, achievements of mind and muscle that enable people to manage their world. Useful as these abilities are, they do not automatically put us in right relationship with ourselves, others or the natural world around us. We can recognise these wise and learned by the way they strut, letting the world know they consider themselves above the rest – a status they believe they have earned, as if they had chosen wisely when and where to be born.

The little ones? They are different. Their strength is in the fact that they don't think they know it all. They are open to the free gift of God's love, never expecting to deserve it. They do not feel that they are entitled. The more they discover, the humbler they become and thus even more open to God. This cycle of continual growth in humility creates greatness of soul. Not only that, but the humbler people are, the freer they become. The freer they are, the less impressed they will be by the self-acclaimed sophisticated ones. They can laugh at parodies of power and importance and feel sympathy for people who rely on them. Their humility and confidence whose courage and humour, all spring from the energy of God's Spirit dwelling in them.

This brings us to Jesus's invitation, "Come unto me all who are burdened...my yoke is easy". Imagine the freedom you feel of never feeling you had to impress others or demonstrate your worth. Imagine what it would feel like to have genuine sympathy for the wise and learned, who rely on themselves, compelled to make a show of their prestige. Imagine laying down all those heavy burdens!

This weekend we are celebrating the gift of our Community under the Patronage of St James's. None of us has arrived where Jesus is inviting to. We are all pilgrims on this journey which we call Life. Like St James and the pilgrims who go along the Journey of Santiago di Compostela, we are also searching for something in our lives to fill in the void that we feel. We are together on this journey as a community of faith. We help each other when we need support in times of crisis and pain. We stop and listen to one another when our hearts are full of burden. We encounter each other in different stages of the Camino. We create friendships. We bond. We continue the journey. Always hearing Jesus's consoling words of "Come to me you who are tired and overburdened and I will give you rest to your soul". I hope that you will experience Jesus's comfort and rest through the gift of the sensitive listening of the members of St James's.

This weekend let us celebrate the gift of the Journey, the gift of Community and the gift of Life.

Thank you for taking the time to read my reflection this weekend. Have a great feast! God bless you.



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 or by appointment.

<b>Fourteenth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 8th July</b>  <b>Sunday 9th July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Hugh Forde RIP (Forde Family)  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Paul Keller RIP (B Keller) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 10th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Irvin Dean RIP (M O'Mahony) Marlene & Richard Dibley RIP (Kelly Dibley)
<b>Saint Benedict</b> <b>Tuesday 11th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Barry Head RIP (G Head)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 12th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Italo Ferretti RIP (M Ferretti) Alfredo Cotta RIP - 33rd Anniversary (Cotta Family) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 13th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Welfare of Ned O'Connor (Mary)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 14th July</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Fifteenth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 15th July</b>  <b>Sunday 16th July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Wellbeing of Martin J Rogers (V Nathan-Rogers) Bridgit Brewer RIP (J Dillane)  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Colin Willard RIP 30th Year Anniversary (P Willard) Paul Keller RIP (B Keller) Austin Barradell RIP - Wedding Anniversary (S Barradell) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)

#### Second Collections

This weeks second collection is on 9th July for the Apostleship of the Sea  
 Next weeks second collection is for the Maintenance & Refurbishment Fund



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned Hot Meat
- Canned Cold Meat
- Desserts, Jelly
- Sponge Puddings, Angel Delight
- Sugar
- Shaving Gel
- Kids Toothpaste

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

16th July 2023

Fifteenth Sunday



Fr David says....

I have taken a few friends already to Castle Farm and they all, including myself who has seen it many times already, get goose bumps every time we are approaching these vast vibrant purple coloured carpets of lavender. For most of us we take it for granted that we shall see the same explosion of colour in soil every summer and we maybe forget the hours of hard work given by a cohort of labourers to plant them and nourish them with the best soil to grow healthily and stunningly. I myself was awakened to this reality during Covid. Amidst the greyness of the isolation which I was experiencing, I thought that the Castle Farm lavender in summer would be a means to help me feel alive again with the magic of their vibrancy. Until one day driving towards them with a skip in my heart, I very soon realised with sadness that they were nowhere in sight because of the lack of human labour. Nature has this magic on us humans if we are awakened to it. Nature heals our souls with its beauty whether it is completely in the wild or manicured like the Lavender fields. The soil needs to be prepared in order to receive the seeds.

Today we are introduced to parables, and I think we are all fairly familiar with parables. Parables are really a form of writing and preaching that the ancient rabbis in Israel used in order to explain the closeness and the goodness about the mystery of God's Kingdom. And so it is that Jesus being a rabbi, he made use of this pedagogical form of teaching. A parable needs a little bit of explanation because this form of literature is really not familiar to our time – it is close to riddling or giving examples. And these parables are rather interesting, because in a group like we in a parish, we can use a parable and ask people what they thought of it and we might get fifty responses to it. Now another thing about parables is that we do not explain them. And that is why we did not read the second part of today's Gospel because Jesus explains the Parable of the Sower. Some though feel that Jesus was not explaining the parable, but it was his disciples, later on, in order to help people unfamiliar with parables, to give them a start about how we might approach listening to a parable and allowing it to reach down deeply into our heart.

For Matthew's community there was internal tension and division between Christians grounded in their Jewish heritage and Gentile Christians who knew nothing of this, and external tension between Christians and Jews and especially with those of the Pharisee party after the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70AD. The latter were suspicious of anything or anyone whom they suspected of undermining the already devastated Jewish community. Matthew's community needed to be encouraged by hearing that God was the Lord of the Harvest, despite the poor soil, the rocks and thorns that was the church and world. We are in no less need of such encouragement today.

The seed is a wonderful symbol of the kingdom – small, hard, unattractive to the senses. Yet within it lies the promise of life, of growth, of harvest. But for all its promises, it remains only a seed unless it surrenders itself to an environment that can realise its

potential. When that happens, the seed grows gently, quietly. There is no instant produce. This parable can help us review how well we live our discipleship. At different times, even during the different day and individually or communicably, we can be different soils about which Jesus speaks. We can be people who receive the Word on the edge of the path, those who skirt the real issues, disciples of the surface commitment and no depth. Or our lives can be rocky soil, enthusiasts of the moment who soon lose interest. Again we may offer a patchy, thorn infested welcome to the seed of the Word and the potential for its growth is endangered by our entanglement with self-seeking concerns or apathy and so the seed does not come to maturity and bear fruit. Then there are the times when we are good soil for the seed when we welcome, obey and witness to the Word God enables us to bear a fruitful harvest for the kingdom.

As a parish community, what are we doing to cultivate the seeds that have been entrusted to us? Do we provide ample, rich soil for seeds to grow, or do we choke the seedlings by creating a culture that is not conducive even detrimental to healthy flourishing? Do we create rocky ground by quantifying grace and weaponizing sacraments? Do we perpetuate thorns by crafting divisions and distinctions that are not of God? Do we leave people vulnerable to isolation and fear, insisting that we know best instead of listening and accompanying? We cannot lament that people are not coming to our parish if we refuse to be places of nourishment and support. But if we want safe spaces, we must be willing to create those spaces ourselves. Following the examples of Jesus, we must lower ourselves, choosing vulnerability over power, humility over prestige, and weakness over strength. We must be willing to make room in our hearts and minds for other voices, even when they challenge what we find comfortable. We must be willing to work for peace and justice, even when it is not convenient.

We need to be willing not only to advocate for, but to stand in solidarity with the immigrant and refugee, the person who lives without a home, and the person who lives with anxiety and depression. We must combat the evils of abuse, racism, sexism, xenophobia and homophobia in all forms. In doing so we are cultivating an environment where seeds can grow, where people can thrive.

But we do not do this on our own. While we must work to cultivate the ground, the psalmist reminds us that it is God who waters the lands and breaks up the clouds. It is God who crowns the year with bounty and harvest. Everything we do is a response to God's invitation. We need to collaborate with God in the vineyard.

Have a great week as we are approaching the end of the academic year and the beginning of the Summer Holidays.

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



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<b>Fifteenth Sunday Saturday 15th July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Wellbeing of Martin J Rogers (V Nathan-Rogers) Bridgit Brewer RIP (J Dillane)
<b>Sunday 16th July</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Paul Gabrel Thornberry RIP (R Turton)  <b>11:00am</b> Colin Willard RIP - 30th Anniversary (P Willard) Paul Keller RIP (B Keller) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Neil McDonald RIP (Linda McDonald) Austin Barradell RIP (Sheila Barradell)
<b>Feria Monday 17th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Seamus O'Mahony RIP - Anniversary (Foundation Mass)
<b>Feria Tuesday 18th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Sheila Simon RIP (Foundation Mass)
<b>Feria Wednesday 19th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Mrs Maureen Condon RIP (The Field Family) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)
<b>Feria Thursday 20th July - Whole School Mass</b>	<b>10:00am</b> All School Leavers
<b>Feria Friday 21st July</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b>
<b>Sixteenth Sunday Saturday 22nd July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Moira Lyons RIP (G Whitley)
<b>Sunday 23rd July</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Elizabeth Margaret Mary Weekly RIP (Foundation Mass)  Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for the Maintenance & Refurbishment Fund



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned Hot Meat
- Canned Cold Meat
- Desserts, Jelly
- Sponge Puddings, Angel Delight
- Sugar
- Canned Fruit
- Cooking sauces

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

23rd July 2023

Sixteenth Sunday



Fr David says....

Back home in Malta, we celebrate the feast of Corpus Christi with a lot of pomp like most Catholic Countries I assume. The Seminary which I belonged to was in a town called

Rabat. The Corpus Christi feast was celebrated in a very special way in this particular town. Amidst the procession along the streets of Canons and Monsignori, altar servers and seminarians, there are also always the children of the First Holy Communion of that particular year throwing petals of flowers on the streets as a Priest holds the big monstrance underneath a canopy carried by four men usually. The residents are always eager to decorate their town house's doors with their best healthy looking plants. On this particular Feast day a number of years ago, a woman went to her garden and found the best looking plants she could find and placed them outside her door. Very soon, policemen were approaching her and asking her about the plants. The woman innocently told them that in truth her son had the green fingers at home and that she, that particular morning, saw these two beautiful plants and placed them outside the door to honour the Body of Christ. The policeman very quickly asked about the whereabouts of her son. She could not understand the reason why. The Police then had to let her know: Mam they said – those beautiful plants outside your door are not ordinary plants – they are marijuana! Beautiful healthy plants are not always what we think they are!

In this Sunday's gospel, Jesus is again the storyteller who uses vivid images as a vehicle to carry the truth of his words to the crowd. In the first of the three parables, the weed with which the enemy over seeded the wheat was probably darnel. In its early appearance, this is almost indistinguishable from wheat, and it is only when the heads of the plants begin to fruit that the weeds are recognized. If it is harvested and milled with the wheat, the flour will be spoiled, so the immediate response of the landowner's slaves is to uproot the weeds. But their master has a shrewd confidence in the ability of his wheat crop to survive competition with the entangled weeds for nutrition and irrigation. He tells his slaves to wait until the harvest time when the reapers will more easily distinguish the weeds from the wheat and so not only will he have rescued a good harvest but he will also have a useful supply of fuel from the dried weeds.

The central meaning of the parable is that the kingdom of God takes root in imperfect communities of "wheat and weeds", and in both an imperfect church and world. The parable depicts a world with which we are familiar. A world where evil is mingled with good – weeds among the wheat. While the world is still God's garden which as we know in Genesis was good, however evil has been in existence since time memorial. They live side by side. Thus we have all kinds of evil in the world from the most banal everyday variety, such as lies, jealousy, deceit, egotism and selfishness to the most egregious like wars,

human trafficking, mindless exploitation of earth's resources, labour camps and torture chambers. Today's gospel is not telling us that we should do nothing about these weeds in God's beautiful garden. As the Irish Statesman, Edmund Burke reminds us "All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good people to do nothing". There is much we can and must do, but we may not act prematurely to try and eliminate all evil from the world. We must not hasten the final judgement, which belongs to God alone. It is not for us to put ourselves in God's place. Unfortunately, history provides us many examples of the disastrous outcome of ill-conceived attempts to rid the world of evil. Getting rid of dictators in countries thinking we are doing the right thing and leaving the country in a much more vulnerable state than before. Even good people and good nations rarely get it right when they try to remove the weeds from God's garden.

The history of the church too has been marred by arrogant efforts to rid the Church of those regraded as propagators of error and confusion, resulting in witch-hunts and regular purges that continue right up to our time. I am thinking particularly of the shameful manner in which theologians like Gustav Gutierrez and the Boff brothers and the Belgian theologian Jacques Dupuis SJ, one of the finest theologians of the post-Vatican II era, was treated by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. In his letter to the recent appointed Head of the Congregation, Archbishop Fernandez, Pope Francis referred to the immoral methods used by the Doctrinal Office in the past, when rather than promoting theological knowledge it chased after possible doctrinal errors. While acknowledging the importance of safeguarding the faith, Pope Francis insists that nothing must overshadow the power and mercy of God.

The good news is that we have a Master Gardener God who assures us that all will be sorted out in the end. God's kingdom grows slowly but surely as the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast. This assurance should free us from a dangerous preoccupation with getting rid of the weeds in God's garden and trying to become gods ourselves, and focus instead of sowing seeds of the kingdom. We can confidently leave the problem of the weeds to the master gardener and look forward to the day when He will gather the wheat into the barn. Instead of judging each other whether they are wheat or darnel, we need to keep in our mind this quotation which I found on Facebook lately "Everyone you know is fighting some battle you know nothing about. Be Kind always". I think this is the best response to the challenge of today's readings.

Thank you for reading my reflection for this week. Have a great summer holidays all of you. Keep safe and come back to us refreshed. God bless you.



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<b>Sixteenth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 22nd July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Moira Lyons RIP (G Whitley)
<b>Sunday 23rd July</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Elizabeth Margaret Mary Weekly RIP (Foundation Mass)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 24th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Bernard Schwenk 80th Birthday Celebration (H Marvell) Wellbeing of Keith Brelsford (K&A Evans)
<b>Saint James</b> <b>Tuesday 25th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)
<b>Saint Joachim and Anne</b> <b>Wednesday 26th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> John Robertson RIP (D Robertson)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 27th July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Oliver Wilson RIP (Padfield Family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 28th July</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 09:00am.</b>
<b>Seventeenth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 29th July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Martin Quin RIP (M O'Mahony)
<b>Sunday 30th July</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Gay Baker RIP (M O'Mahony)  <b>11:00am</b> Ausin Barradell RIP (Suzanne Horner)

### Second Collections

The next second collection is for the Maintenance & Refurbishment Fund on 13th August.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned vegetables
- Canned cold meat
- Desserts, Jelly
- Sponge puddings
- Angel Delight
- Canned potatoes
- Cooking sauces
- Ladies shower gel

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





# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

30th July 2023

Seventeenth Sunday



Fr David says....

The gaining of Wisdom may be our most important task in Life. Wisdom however is one of those qualities that is difficult to define because it encompasses so much but people generally recognise when they encounter it. Psychologists tend to agree that wisdom involves an integration of knowledge, experience and deep understanding, as well as a tolerance for the uncertainties of life. There is an awareness of how things play out over time, and it confers a sense of balance. Wise people generally share an optimism that life's problems can be solved and experience a certain amount of calm in facing difficult decisions. Intelligence may be necessary for wisdom, but it definitely isn't sufficient. An ability to see the big picture, a sense of proportion, intellectual humility and considerable introspection also contribute to its development. Wisdom and faith are in some way intertwined. They both depend on de-centering oneself and seeing a broader picture. Religions often emphasise the importance of living a meaningful life, building community and caring for others and mentorship and scholarly pursuits, all of which pertain to developing wisdom.

In the first reading Solomon asks for and receives a "discerning judgement" – a heart wise and shrewd as none before have had. The Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw once said, "We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility of our future" The Roman writer Seneca writes "No man was ever wise by chance".

Today's gospel concludes three weeks of readings from the 13th Chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Throughout these three weeks we have heard Jesus teaching crowds about the Kingdom of heaven and we have heard Jesus interpret some of his teachings for the disciples, in this week's Gospel, Jesus offers three more short parables. We need to remember that before the parables were written down, they were told and retold by people who added details according to the circumstances and situations in which they lived. First century story tellers used allegories to connect features of Jesus's parables with their own political, religious and community happenings. People usually see God as the sower in the first parable. It is God the farmer who throws the word out to the good people as well to bad people. The parable is an illustration of God's all-inclusive love for human beings.

The Parables of the buried Treasure and the Parable of the Precious Pearl are found only in the Gospel of Matthew and they belong with each other as did the first two parables. The usual interpretation of these two parables is that Jesus is both the hidden treasure and the precious pearl. As we go through life, we are the unnamed person and the merchant who first seek Jesus or what gives meaning to our lives and then someday find Jesus. It is up to us to sell all that we have to possess him. Jesus says, "where your heart is, that is where your treasure will be". If

we want to know what our heart is like, then we have to answer this question for ourselves. The heart hungers. It hungers for many things, but what it hungers for mostly is security. Everyone of us wants to feel secure. We think that money will solve all our problems. And yet – does it? It obviously helps us to feel comfortable but does the pursuit of money fills the heart and the soul?

What Jesus wants us to know is – what is our treasure? What is the thing that you and I treasure most, that we are ready to never give up, that brings out in us. Not an eagerness for money and success but for Love? What do I love? What do I sacrifice myself for? What do I care about? If the answer is money, then we have not looked deep enough into our hearts. Because money is just an object that comes as a little security but doesn't usually deliver. It is not worth the effort of our whole heart yearning for it and spending our time trying to accumulate it?

So what are we yearning for? Is it the pursuit of wisdom? The pursuit of inner peace? The pursuit of God?. Jesus the very face of God came to earth to tell you personally "You are forgiven and loved and cared for and I am going to prove it, not just by telling stories but by laying my life down for you". And it is God who lays his life down out of love. Now this is a great treasure. Yes we must, just like little children, we must search for the treasure and then make sure that it is something that is the treasure that I need. And then and only then will I have found the hidden Christ, the Hidden God who is in all of our days and hours and time.

May we make wisdom the pursuit of our lives. This demands determination and intentional search. We need to desire it first. Have the wisdom to set boundaries, surround ourselves with wise people or people who are on the same journey. Learn from our mistakes. Reflect on our experiences, learn from other people's mistakes. Wisdom is a skill to be learnt.

One of the greatest pearls of spiritual wisdom is, as long as we are living, we will never have all of the wisdom we need. What we learned yesterday was enough for yesterday. Keep ourselves aware that every minute we will be open to the new things that life wants to teach us about the environment, ourselves and others. As we evolve spiritually so do the messages that we must add to keep the spiritual journey going. Often people attempt to live their lives backwards. They try to have more things or more money, in order to do more of what they want so they will be happier. The way it actually works is the reverse. You must first be who you really are, then do what you need to do, in order to have what you want.

Thank you for taking the time to read my reflection for this week. For those who are going on holidays. Refresh yourselves and come back to the community safe and sound. Blessings on you all.



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 davidcamilleri@rcaos.org.uk  
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 or by appointment.

<b>Seventeenth Sunday Saturday 29th July</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Martin Quin RIP (M O'Mahony)
<b>Sunday 30th July</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Gay Baker RIP (M O'Mahony) <b>11:00am</b> Ausin Barradell RIP (Suzanne Horner) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)
<b>Saint Ignatius of Loyola Monday 31st July</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Vocations (CWL)
<b>Saint James Tuesday 1st August</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Wellbeing of Francesca (L Levoir)
<b>Feria Wednesday 2nd August</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Martin Mulroy RIP & Deceased Family Members (G&A Mulroy) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)
<b>Feria Thursday 3rd August</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Thanksgiving for 55 years (I & I Webb)
<b>Saint John Vianney Friday 4th August</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>The Transfiguration Of The Lord Saturday 5th August</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Health of carolyn Morris-Clapp (L&C Hayden) Jayden Chittilappily - Birthday (N Roy)
<b>Sunday 6th August</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Henry Smith RIP (E&S Theodore) Tom Cott RIP (T Wood) Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland)

### Second Collections

The next second collection is for the Maintenance & Refurbishment Fund on 13th August.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned vegetables
- Canned cold meat
- Desserts, Jelly
- Sponge puddings
- Angel Delight
- Canned potatoes
- Cooking sauces
- Ladies shower gel

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

**3rd September 2023**

Twenty-Second Sunday



Fr David says....

...



All the Masses being said at St James' will be live streamed  
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 Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,  
 or by appointment.

<b>Twenty-Second Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 2nd September</b>  <b>Sunday 3rd September</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Christine & Jim Callinan Ruby Wedding Anniversary Barbara Bridle RIP (Foundation Mass)  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Rose Furtado RIP (E&G Rebello)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 4th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b>
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 5th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b>
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 6th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Mrs Barbara Bridle RIP (M Riches)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 7th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b>
<b>The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b> <b>Friday 8th September</b>	<b><u>No Mass from St James'</u></b> <b><u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will</u></b> <b><u>be live streaming their</u></b> <b><u>Mass at 10:00am.</u></b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Twenty-Third Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 9th September</b>  <b>Sunday 10th September</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Dr Margaret Evelyn Ledger (Foundation Mass)  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Dominic Braganza RIP (E&G Rebello) Patrick & Lilian Da Cunha 40th Wedding Anniversary

### Second Collections

The next second collection is for the Catholic Education Services on 10th September.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned vegetables
- Canned cold meat
- Desserts, Jelly
- Sponge puddings
- Angel Delight
- Canned potatoes
- Cooking sauces
- Ladies shower gel

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





# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

10th September 2023

Twenty-Third Sunday



Fr David says....

Who hasn't been hurt by the actions or words of another? Perhaps a parent constantly criticised you growing up, a colleague sabotaged a project or a partner had an affair. Or maybe you have had a traumatic experience such as being physically or emotionally abused by someone close to you. These wounds can leave lasting feelings of resentfulness, bitterness and anger – sometimes even hatred. However if you hold on to that pain, you might be the one who pays most dearly. By embracing forgiveness, you also can embrace peace and hope. Let us consider how forgiveness can lead you down the path of physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

However what is forgiveness? Forgiveness means different things to different people. But in general, it involves an intentional decision to let go of resentment and anger. The act that hurt or offended you might always be with you. But working on forgiveness can lessen that act's grip on you. It can help us to free us from the control of the other person who harmed us. Sometimes, forgiveness might even lead to feelings of understanding, empathy and compassion for the one who hurt us.

Forgiveness doesn't mean forgetting or excusing the harm done to us. It also doesn't necessarily mean making up with the person who caused the harm. Forgiveness brings a kind of peace that allows us to focus on ourselves and helps us to go on with life.

Forgiveness is at the very heart of the gospel. In today's gospel Jesus knows that because the members of The Way, as the movement of Jesus was initially called, are human, there are going to be moments that conflict and hurt are going to be part and parcel of its reality. He is instructing them about how to handle conflict. First of all it is very easy to see that Jesus knows that Forgiveness and reconciliation within the group is a process. It is not that simple. Why? Because he knows that we as humans have our own basic wounds that keep on showing up and triggered within our life time. That we are bound to hurt one another. We are bound to find it difficult to forgive and reconcile. When there is hurt it is very easy to deal with it by leaving the community so that we do not have to deal with it. However no community is perfect and so if we keep changing communities to find the perfect community, we would end up feeling very disillusioned. We need to realise that the perfect community does not exist and that every community is made up of flawed human beings like us.

How then do we achieve the letting go which can feel like an impossible task? Even if we desire it, our emotions can rise up at the least expected time and overwhelm us with anger and pain. In our own strength, forgiving others in the way we have received God's forgiveness is impossible, but with God nothing is impossible, and with his Spirit inside of us we can go through a process that leads us to true forgiveness.

Working through pain can only happen once we admit that we have been hurt. And acknowledging this can intensify the feelings. Tears, feelings of resentment and ruminating thoughts are a

good indicator that something is wrong. Do not numb yourself or stuff the emotion down, as that cuts off the process of forgiving others before it is even begun. Another important element of forgiveness is to think about the time when we have had to ask for forgiveness. How did it make us feel?. When have we wronged another person and did they extend forgiveness to us, or withhold it? Remembering God's forgiveness towards us also is an important part of the process of forgiving others. Forgiveness is more than just saying a prayer and moving on. It is a serious decision that we make over and over again. The process will most likely be uncomfortable and painful but it will always be worth it at the end.

Jesus's instructions in today's gospel is to try to speak to the person who is the subject of our pain personally. This is not always easy especially when we are still angry as we can do more harm than good at this point. We need to have gone through some steps of the process first. We also need the gift of wisdom in order to know what is the best way of handling the situation. We would need to pray on the situation and also for the person who has hurt us beforehand. If he or she do not listen or hear us, we need to include some kind of mediator who could help us listen to one another's hurt. This can be a very humbling moment in the process. As this is the moment that we need to realise that we are also wounded and broken. And we need to acknowledge our part in the hurtful situation. Maybe the action or words had triggered our own unresolved issues of the past and we have projected our issues on the person whom we have thought hurt us. The inclusion of the Church in the issue is a huge step to take. However it happens sometimes that the issue and the tension between two individuals in the parish does affect the running smoothly of the parish itself and so sometimes more individuals might need to be involved in the process for healing to happen within the group. This need to involve a skilful facilitator who would facilitate a group healing meeting.

Today's readings speak on a topic that we all have had experienced in one way or another in our lives. We have all made mistakes in dealing with hurt. However what I take out of the readings today is that there is a healthy way of dealing with conflict and there is a very unhealthy and unwise way of dealing with it. Forgiveness and reconciliation is a skill we all need to learn.

Let us pray for our parish at the moment as we are experiencing the pain of loss in a real way. Let us keep the families involved in our hearts and prayers.

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



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<b>Twenty-Third Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 9th September</b>  <b>Sunday 10th September</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Dr Margaret Evelyn Ledger (Foundation Mass)  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Dominic Braganza RIP (E & G Rebello) Arvie Macabenta Knott RIP (her friends) Patrick & Lilian Da Cunha 40th Anniversary
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 11th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Bernard McGeorge RIP (G & B Ford)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 12th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Rene Rodrigues RIP (Cotta family)
<b>St John Chrysostom</b> <b>Wednesday 13th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Jack Goldsmith RIP ( J Goldsmith) Margaret Goldsmith RIP (J Goldsmith)
<b>The Exaltation of the Holy Cross</b> <b>Thursday 14th September - Whole School Mass</b>	<b>Please note change of time</b>  <b>9.30am</b> Nora & John Forshaw RIP (M Morley) Father Cyril Provett RIP (M Morley)
<b>Our Lady of Sorrows</b> <b>Friday 15th September</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Twenty-Fourth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 16th September</b>  <b>Sunday 17th September</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish  <b>09:15am</b> Eamonn Dillane RIP (J Dillane)  <b>11:00am</b> Thanksgiving Mass (Lasitha Perera family)

### Second Collections

The next second collection is for the Catholic Education Services on 10th September.  
 Next weeks second collection is for the Parish Maintenance Fund.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned rice pudding
- Canned custard
- Canned fruit
- UHT fruit juice
- Squash
- Men's deoderant
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Multi-surface wipes/sprays

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



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

17th September 2023

Twenty-Fourth Sunday



Fr David says....

"It is very difficult to stand behind an altar and lead people in words of peace and reconciliation and forgiveness when I feel very far from that myself" so said the Rev. Julie Nicholson, announcing her intention to resign her role as

vicar of St Aiden's church in Bristol. What had estranged her from one of the most fundamental tenets of her Christian faith is the killing of her daughter, Jenny. The 24 year old, a gifted musician, died in one of the four terrorist bomb explosions in London on 7th July 2005. Who could blame her lack of forgiveness? Certainly not Gee Walker whose 18 year old son, Anthony was killed in a racist attack in Liverpool just days after Jenny Nicholson was blown at Edgware Road. Yet when two youths were accused of the killing of her son, Mrs Walker astonished the nation by announcing that she forgave the murderers. In the same week, she gave another interview in which she elaborated that she feels "no hate for them whatsoever" and indeed she wanted to find out what lay behind the hate which led them to kill her son". I just feel like asking them, what is missing in their lives? She said. "I know it is strange, but it is true. I did love to do the motherly thing and sit them down and find out why. As for hate, none at all. I just feel sadness".

Human instinct draws the vast majority of us closer to the vicar's response. Our instinct is to fight hate with hate. So much so that Anthony's mother was actually criticised in several areas of the country for voicing her sentiments of forgiveness. Every Christian theologian informs us that forgiveness and rehabilitation can come only after true repentance. Repentance though is not essential for true forgiveness. If it was, forgiveness would not seem so perverse. In the gospel today, St Peter asks Jesus how often he should forgive those who wronged him? Seven times? No Jesus said 70 times seven. It seems like Christ's request to God as he is crucified, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" just impossible. Counsels of perfection may be OK for the son of God, but we mere mortals struggle with the notion.

Acts of forgiveness are tremendously costly. However something is transformed in such moments in the soul of society and of the person who forgives. Gee Walker understands the personal dimension of that. "Why live a life sentence? Hate killed my son, so why should I be a victim too? Unforgiveness makes you a victim and why should I be a victim?" she said.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu articulated the social dimension of the same insight on a remarkable BBC2 programme in 2006, called "Facing the Truth" which brought together face to face victims and killers from Northern Ireland's Troubles.

The archbishop, who oversaw the running of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in his South Africa after the end of apartheid, said that for the victims, "Holding on to your resentment means you are locked into your victimhood and you allow the perpetrator to have a hold on your life. When you forgive, you let go, it sets you free and it will probably set free the perpetrator. There is much to be won from making yourself a little vulnerable. For society that gave way out of a cycle of recriminations about the

past. It is a truth which reaches beyond South Africa. Forgiveness is a process rather than an act. Theologian Henri Nouwen understood that. His book *The Return of the Prodigal Son* is a meditation on the gospel as illustrated in Rembrandt's painting of the same name. Initially he explains, we are drawn to the image of the prodigal himself, putting ourselves in his shoes, recalling the wrongs we have done in our life, feeling his guilt, expressing his repentance although we resist the idea that we need complete forgiveness because it goes against human nature.

It is important not to confuse forgiveness with pardon. Truth and Reconciliation Commissions will not always be a substitute for Justice. Sometimes the time is not good for forgiveness either. Forgiveness is a moral act of gratuitous love that introduces an opportunity into history. It opens up a possibility in relationship between individuals and between an individual and society. It attempts to break the repetitive cycle of hate. It does not deny that a rupture in the right order of things has taken place. But it refuses to be bound by the logic of hatred. It does not deny what has been done or its consequences. But it determines that the event or action should lead to new possibilities.

At the heart of that is a key insight of Desmond Tutu. His experience in South Africa he says have made him believe that there is no such thing as an "evil person – only evil deeds". Perpetrators don't have horns, don't have tails, they are as ordinary looking as you and me" Perhaps that is what makes it so hard to forgive them. "Anger begets hatred, begets more violence".

Something within us seems to feel that we have a right to continue in our anger towards someone who has hurt us badly. To make it worse, when we reflect on a past upset, we relive it in our minds and in our bodies. We feel the emotions welling up in us, even though the incident was ten, twenty or maybe even thirty and forty years ago. Before we realise it, we are there at the scene of the attack. We once more feel the rage we had and obviously still have. All of us have our own personal battle stories. Everyone has been wronged by someone, hurt by someone. But no one has the right to harbour a grudge at last not if we consider the staggering amount of mercy God has showered upon us and moreover if we have experienced forgiveness from another in our own lives. All of us have received abundant mercy from God because he loves us too much to hold a grudge.

May we learn to let go and forgive. The world would be a much better place if forgiveness on both individual and societal level we would learn to forgive.

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



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<b>Twenty-Fourth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 16th September</b>  <b>Sunday 17th September</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish  <b>09:15am</b> Eamonn Dillane RIP (J Dillane) <b>11:00am</b> Thanksgiving Mass (Lasitha Perera Family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 18th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 19th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Relatives & Friends of James Porter (Foundation)
<b>St Andrew Kim Tae-gon</b> <b>Wednesday 20th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Timothy Jolly & Family (Davies Family)
<b>Saint Matthew</b> <b>Thursday 21st September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Private Intention (T Willard)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 22nd September</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Twenty-Fifth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 23rd September</b>  <b>Sunday 24th September</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> John Jagger RIP (S Jagger & Family) <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Arcanjo Furtado RIP (S&N Miranda) Sheila & Noel Miranda Thanksgiving

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for the Parish Maintenance Fund.  
 The next second collection if for CAFOD (Harvest) on 8th October.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned rice pudding
- Canned custard
- Canned fruit
- UHT fruit juice
- Squash
- Men's deoderant
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Multi-surface wipes/sprays

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

24th September 2023

Twenty-Fifth Sunday



Fr David says....

Jealousy is a complex emotion that we often think of in terms of love and relationships – a boyfriend who forbids his girlfriend from talking to other men for instance or a person

who cannot stand to see her old flame post pictures with a new partner on Facebook. But the feeling can occur in almost every type of human relationship – from siblings competing for parental attention to co-workers trying to impress a respected boss. Various factors such as childhood experiences, parental relationships and fear of abandonment can cause jealousy. For example a child may feel jealous if their parents spend more time on their siblings than on them. Through repetition, such experiences can lead to fear of abandonment and insecurity in relationships, resulting in a continued feelings of jealousy. In addition people may also form expectations of what others should do for them, and if these expectations are not met, they may experience harmful jealous feelings. This emotion can significantly affect our mental health. In terms of relationships, jealousy can lead to anxiety, due to worry or suspicion. It may cause people to doubt themselves and their partners leading to insecurity and lack of trust. Jealousy can have adverse effect on our mental health. To cope, it is important to focus on self-love and strive for acceptance. This process involves understanding that nobody is perfect and that it is ok to make mistakes. Valuing who we are and understanding our self-worth is a fundamental step towards managing jealous feelings.

Today's readings continue to challenge us not to resent God's generosity but strive rather to reflect it in our relations with one another. Our first reading from the prophet Isaiah reminds us that God does not think the way we think, nor act the way we act. Just how different God's thoughts and ways are to ours is clearly illustrated in the parable of the Vineyard Owner in today's gospel. It is important to note the significant elements of the story. The first noteworthy element is that it is the Owner himself who goes out in search of workers for his vineyard. This was not the normal practice for an employer in Jesus's time. If he needed extra workers he would send his foreman or one of his employees to the marketplace to pick them up. The Vineyard Owner however goes to the marketplace himself. And he goes there several times, at different hours of the day, in search of workers to harvest his grapes. He is not just concerned about his business. He is clearly concerned also about the predicament of those who have been standing around all day in hope of finding someone to hire them.

The second significant element in the story has to do with the wages the workers receive at the end of the day. If you dare to do that nowadays, you would be confronted with unions and human rights and that is how it should be. No one deserves to be abused. However were they abused? Starting with those who were employed last, which was standard procedure in

Jesus's time, the last to be employed receive their wages first and they receive a full day's pay, the same as those who have worked all through the day. Indeed he would be forced out of business. We easily can identify with the complaints those workers who having laboured throughout the heat of the day, expected to receive more money than those who had worked for just one hour. And yet they have, as the parable makes clear, no justifiable grounds for their complaint. They received a just wage, the salary their employer had agreed with them.

Finally we come to the main point of the parable, the sting in the tail as they say. The last words of the Vineyard Owner: "Why be envious because I am generous". These words alert us to what the parable is all about. It is not about work and wages, about industrial relations or social justice. It is about God's magnanimity of heart, his extravagant generosity especially to the late comers, those overlooked, left behind or pushed to the margins of society. God's ways, while not contradicting the demands of social justice, infinitely transcend them. God does not make contracts with us, as if we could bargain or negotiate for a better deal. He makes covenants in which he promises us everything and asks of us everything in return. When he keeps his promises, he is not rewarding us for effort, but doing what comes naturally to his overflowing generous nature. Fortunately God does not treat us according to our efforts but according to his boundless generosity, mercy and compassion. Today's readings not only illustrate the divine logic, the logic of gift. They also challenge us to imitate God's ways of thinking and acting in our relationships with one another. They challenge us to stop focusing on our entitlements or counting our deserts, and move from the narrow world of human calculation, of competition and rewards, into the magnanimous world of divine logic. Where nothing has been earned and everything is a gift. Everything is free.

As we celebrate the Welcome Back Weekend this weekend, let us keep in mind God's generosity towards all of us especially those who feel marginalised, last in our society. Hopefully no one feels left out at St James's. let us make it a point that we do reach out to those who we see on their own, awkward and new within our parish. let our parish be a place where everyone feels included and loved. "Love one another as I have loved you". Have a great week. God bless you and thank you for reading once again my reflection for this week.



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 or by appointment.

<b>Twenty-Fifth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 23rd September</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> John Jagger RIP (S Jagger & Family)
<b>Sunday 24th September</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Arcanjo Furtado RIP (S&N Miranda) Sheila & Noel Miranda Thanksgiving
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 25th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Children & Young people as they start the next stage of their lives (CWL)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 26th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> People Of The Parish
<b>St Vincent de Paul</b> <b>Wednesday 27th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> John & Anne West - 54th Wedding Anniversary (AM Bombone)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 28th September</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Liam Doran RIP (M Hodder)
<b>Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael</b> <b>Friday 29th September</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Twenty-Sixth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 30th September</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 1st October</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Zenaida Lim RIP (R Lim) <b>11:00am</b> Canon John McNamara RIP - 3rd Anniversary (H Marvell)

### Second Collections

The next second collection is for CAFOD (Harvest) on 8th October.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned rice pudding
- Canned custard
- Canned fruit
- UHT fruit juice
- Squash
- Men's deodorant
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Multi-surface wipes/sprays

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

1st October 2023

Twenty-Sixth Sunday



Fr David says....

I think we all know someone who thinks that they cannot say no to others. It might also be you! Their motive is to please. To appear good in front of others. They have an intrinsic need to please as they cannot say no in case they are rejected or looked down upon. And yet deep down they know that they cannot go through their promise. They try to be popular by creating the impression that they are obliging and dedicated. In reality however they have no commitment. Our word matters greatly in our relationships, whether in our family or at work or among our friends or with God. When we do not have our word, then we have nothing because we cannot be trusted with even the smallest responsibility. We become unreliable, like the second son in the gospel parable about the father asking his two sons to work in his vineyard. The father depended on him. But he assumed that he could easily fool his father. His word was meaningless and lacked integrity.

Dependability is a desired character trait for all genuine human beings. Otherwise, people are wasting their time with us. They would not trust us any longer. After the second time, people would start seeing through us. We can let other people down. It is better to be honest from the outset and say that we do not have the time to commit or that we are not the right people to ask for that favour instead of offering our help and disappoint them on the way. I admire people who after asking them whether they are happy to help in different ministries within the parish, they think about it and say that although they feel honoured to be asked, they know that they would not be able to commit themselves wholeheartedly to what they were being asked because they have other commitments. I love these people because they know themselves. And I know that if things changed in their lives, they would be happy to volunteer their time and skills. They know their limitations and with sincerity they can say no. I feel that I know where I stand with them.

The gospel readings of these last Sundays of Ordinary time reflect the tense atmosphere of Jesus ministry in Jerusalem. He has come to the final confrontation between the "Chief Priests and elders" and himself and all he stands for. It is literally a mortal combat since it will lead to his death, but he himself remains non-violent. It would be good to let our meditation on this Sunday's gospel to be influenced by this context.

The question posed by Jesus touches a fundamental human dilemma: the gap between words and deeds, between intention and decision, between desires expressed in the calm reflection and the quick fixes of lived life. This is a gap we all know, primarily in others whose deeds often fail to match their high minded words. This lesson is an important reality check in our practice of discipleship: it is easy to prattle, practice is more problematic. However the gospel also raises profound

questions for us than simply reminding us to practice what we preach. The gospel poses us a series of interconnected challenges. There is a challenge to act with integrity bring the inward person and the outward person into harmony. This is not simply the moral and the psychological challenge of integrity but is at the heart of right living and faith. This quest for harmony takes place in the presence of God: we need to have integrity not just in ourselves, but to have integrity in the divine presence before whom we are transparent.

We know that integrity is a quest for wholeness. That the various parts of our lives will be connected up to one another. Wholeness involves us as individuals, as members of families and communities and is links keep spreading out. We are called by God to be people of obedient faith and that means that we are not just dealing with a religion of ideas or warm feelings. Anything declared as believed is tested in so far as it informs our commitment to the creation. The obedient son first rebelled and then recognised the path that he should follow. Being disciples involves taking this second look at our actions. We all like to declare our independence and to state boldly that "We will not serve". It is part of our human nature to be aware of our independence and freedom. Yet we as disciples have to balance this with our appreciation of the limitations of our knowledge and of the Wisdom that created us. Integrating awareness of our freedom with our acknowledgment of the Christ as our teacher is an essential part of completeness and wholeness. It is part of the wisdom and integrity of holiness. There is also a challenge to each of us to acknowledge the generosity of God. We all tend to think of ourselves as models of humanity and as Christians we even tend to think of ourselves as model disciples. But here lies a great illusion. Those whom Jesus met that were self-satisfied automatically excluded, the tax collectors and prostitutes, he sat and ate with them that they might come to know the goodness and forgiveness of God.

We need sound heads, compassionate hearts and willing hands. The vineyard is where we live all the time. The call is to live in truth, love and justice. We need to believe in the possibilities of a better world, and to become people who can decide on what is right in the sight of God and do it. We will often resist. We want to do what is right and do the opposite. God understand our mixed motivation. In all of that we need the Christian vision and a desire to do the world a world of good.

Thank you for reading my reflection this week once again. God bless you all.



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<b>The Holy Guardian Angels</b> <b>Monday 2nd October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> In Gratitude <b>7pm Healing Mass</b>
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 3rd October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Private Intention
<b>St Francis of Assisi</b> <b>Wednesday 4th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Rev Bernard O'Brien RIP (L Henderson)  <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 5th October - Whole School Mass - Please note change of time.</b>	<b>9.30am</b> Francis Fletcher RIP (M Connell)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 6th October</b>	<b><u>No Mass from St James'</u></b> <b><u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their</u></b> <b><u>Mass at 10:00am.</u></b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>  <b>5pm - 7pm</b> Eucharistic Adoration
<b>Twenty-Seventh Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 7th October</b>  <b>Sunday 8th October</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> Geraldine Mulroy (L O'Sullivan)

### Second Collections

Next weeks second collection is for CAFOD (Harvest)



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned rice pudding
- Canned custard
- Canned fruit
- UHT fruit juice
- Squash
- Men's deoderant
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Multi-surface wipes/sprays

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*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

8th October 2023

Twenty-Seventh Sunday



Fr David says....

As bishops and lay people from around the world prepared to gather at the Vatican this week for the beginning of the Synod October 4 – October 29th, Catholics considered as opponents of the model of Church which Pope Francis is proposing staged their own show near the Vatican. The day before the Synod began, Cardinal Burke and other traditionalist prelates made public an exchange of letters with Pope Francis in which they aired grave doubts, about the legitimacy of a major assembly of the world's bishops and laypeople that will, on Wednesday the 4th of October (Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi), begin discussing some of the most sensitive topics in the church. The synod is all about discussing how the Church can be more relevant in today's world – a continuation from Vatican 11 in the 1960s. In their letters, they urged Pope Francis to slam the door shut on proposals that they believe would erode the doctrine of the church, including woman's ordination and blessing of same-sex unions. Instead Pope Francis cracked the door open. In his response, he seemed to reverse a 2021 Vatican ruling that came down against the blessing of gay unions. While he clearly upheld the church position that marriage could exist only between man and woman, he said that priests should exercise pastoral charity when it came to request blessings. Pope Francis's supporters consider the multiyear meeting, the so called Synod of Synodality, to be the potential culmination of his decade long papacy and a vehicle through which he may bring about change. The gathering at the Vatican, which for the first time will include and give a vote to lay people – including women is central to Francis's bottom up view of the church. The people envisions an inclusive institution that upends the traditional hierarchy and forces bishops to listen to and work with their flock more. Prophets have always been persecuted and killed.

In today's Gospel, Jesus once again speaks to the priests and elders with a parable. In this parable the landowner leases his vineyard to tenants and send his servants to collect the portion of the harvest that they tenants owe him. Several times the servants are sent to collect payment, and each time they are beaten and killed by the tenants. Finally the landowner sends his son to collect his rent. The tenants, believing that they will inherit the vineyard if the landowner dies without an heir, plot together and kill the landowner's son. In telling the parable, Jesus is clearly drawing upon Isaiah 5:1-7, which is today's first reading and one that the priests and elders would have known well. Jesus doesn't have to explain the symbolism of the parable; the Pharisees would have understood that the vineyard represented Israel, the landowner represented God, the servants represented the prophets and the bad tenants represented the religious leaders. Yet Jesus nonetheless explains the meaning of the parable for his audience: the Kingdom of God will be taken from the

unbelieving and given to the faithful. The chief priest and elders have condemned themselves with their answer to Jesus's question. Matthews Gospel was written about 70 years after Jesus's death and reflects the conflicts and tensions found in the Christian community for whom Matthew was writing. Many biblical scholars believe that the tension between Matthew's community and their Jewish neighbours can also be heard in today's reading.

The gospel parable is very challenging. On reading it, we may initially be shocked by the disrespect and aggression of the tenants who treated appallingly several messengers from the landowner. Indeed we are reminded of the cliché "Don't shoot the messenger just because you don't like the message". In addition, we are all aware of instances where a person who is a key person in a team or on a project has been unfairly rejected and unjustly despised by other people. Sometimes rejection happens when those people simply do not understand how necessary and vital the person being rejected is for the success of the team or the completion of the project. However more often and more sinfully, rejection is the result of jealousy and vindictiveness. We all know such instances from work and life in general but ever more so from sport, politics and church both locally, nationally and internationally.

The parable advises us about the extent to which some people will go to further their own interests and ambitions. They will do anything to have their own way. They will compromise their principles. They will blatantly disregard the reputations of friends and colleagues. They will intimidate and frighten them. In their ruthlessness, they will even shot the messenger because they do not like the message. As many did to Jesus.

Ironically the messenger is often the only person who can help them or redeem the situation. If only they would have the good sense to recognise this. In the words of the parable: "it was the stone rejected by the builders that became the keystone".

The Gospel today reminds us of the importance of listening to God's word. God speaks to us in many ways – through Scripture, through our Church tradition, in our Church's teachings and through modern day prophets like Pope Francis. Are we attentive and receptive to God's word to us through these messengers? Or are we once again because we do not agree with the message, we shoot the messenger/prophet?

Next week, a group of 30 parishioners including myself are going on a Pilgrimage to Italy – Rome and Assisi will be the main pilgrimage places. I am assuring you all that you will be in our prayers and thoughts. Please keep us in your prayers.

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



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<b>Sunday 8th October</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Geraldine Mulroy (L O'Sullivan)
<b>Saint John Henry Newman</b> <b>Monday 9th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Private Intention
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 10th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Derek Melliush RIP (P Melliush)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 11th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Annie Mendonca (Jane) <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 12th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Saint Edward the Confessor</b> <b>Friday 13th October</b>	<b><u>No Mass from St James'</u></b> <b><u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their</u></b> <b><u>Mass at 10:00am.</u></b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Twenty-Eighth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 14th October</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 15th October</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Ruth Wheelwright RIP (C Blanchette)

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for CAFOD (Harvest)  
 Next weeks second collection is for the Parish Maintenance Fund



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned rice pudding
- Canned custard
- Canned fruit
- UHT fruit juice
- Squash
- Men's deoderant
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Multi-surface wipes/sprays

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

15th October 2023

Twenty-Eighth Sunday



Fr David says....

- Today's readings highlight the covenant relationship between God and the chosen people. The reading from the prophet Isaiah showcases the joy that can come from a life dedicated to the Lord. God will provide for God's chosen people. Every tear will be wiped away. Death will no longer have the final say. The people look to the Lord in awe and wonder: "This is the Lord for whom we looked; / let us rejoice and be glad that he has saved us!"
- Today's gospel highlights a different side of the covenant relationship. God desires to have a people and to provide a rich banquet for them. God expects the chosen people to show up. Covenant relationships must go both ways. God provides for the people-and the people must obey God. Obedience has never been the easiest practice. People then and now get busy, make other plans, and rebel against powers that appear to tread on their freedom. The chosen people in the parable reject the king's invitation-so the king calls others to the feast and warns the chosen ones of their impending doom. Obeying God matters. Showing up for significant relationships matters.
- Today's readings may challenge us to reflect on the ways we show up for God-and the ways we fall short. We are members of God's chosen people today, baptized into the life of Christ and his church. May our minds and hearts be open to God's gracious invitation.



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<b>Twenty-Eighth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 14th October</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 15th October</b>	<b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> Ruth Wheelwright RIP (C Blanchette)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 16th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Saint Ignatius of Antioch</b> <b>Tuesday 17th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Anita Rowland RIP
<b>Saint Luke</b> <b>Wednesday 18th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Austin Barradell RIP <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 19th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Clare Cavadino (M Connell)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 20th October</b>	<b><u>No Mass from St James'</u></b> <b><u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their</u></b> <b><u>Mass at 10:00am.</u></b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Twenty-Ninth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 21st October</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Tom Gillin RIP (M O'Mahony)
<b>Sunday 22nd October</b>	<b>09:15am</b> The Harrington/Crowley Family (Harrington Family) <b>11:00am</b> Harry McAleer RIP (Weeks Family)

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection is for the Parish Maintenance Fund  
 The Next Second Collection will be on 29th October for World Mission Sunday/ Missio



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Canned rice pudding
- Canned custard
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- Squash
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- Shampoo & Conditioner
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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

22nd October 2023

Twenty-Ninth Sunday



Fr David says....

In the book "The Little Prince", it says "it is with the heart that one can truly see, what is essential is invisible to the eye". In our own daily lives, we need to be aware of what we consider being essential. Is it having more money so that we can spend it on things that we want rather than need? The social media constantly bombards us with advertisements working on our insecurities and selling us simplistic answers for happiness. They offer us the message that if we buy a certain phone, drive a certain car and wear certain clothes, we will be happy, secure and fulfilled. We need to name it as it is. This is a lie and definitely fake news. The real good news is that our dignity does not come from spending money on things we don't actually need. Our dignity and value come from being created, loved and known by God. This is not as simple as it sounds either. It is a journey that we all need to make in order to feel safe and secure within ourselves. However, although it is a hard journey, it is possible to achieve in our lifetime.

In today's Gospel Jesus and the religious leaders in Jerusalem continue their tense exchange of questions and changes. At this point the disciples of the Pharisees, together with the Herodians, try to entrap Jesus by their question about the payment of taxes. Matthew sets up an unusual partnership between the Pharisees and the Herodians. The Herodians were supporters of Herod Antipas, a Jewish political leader who collaborated with the Romans. Such collaboration would have required a compromised observance of the Mosaic Law. The Pharisees, on the other hand, taught scrupulous observance of the Mosaic Law and opposed Roman occupation. Herodians favoured the payment of the taxes; the Pharisees opposed it. The Herodians and the Pharisees approach Jesus, asking that he take sides in their dispute. If Jesus answers with the Pharisees, he shows himself to be an enemy of Rome. If he answers with the Herodians, he offends popular Jewish religious sensibilities. Jesus' response to this attempt to trap him exposes the guile of his questioners. From his first words to them, Jesus shows that he is very much aware of what they are trying to do. He asks to see a Roman coin, which is readily provided to him. It may have come from the hand of a Herodian, but the Pharisees show themselves to be quite willing to accept this compromise. Jesus has already exposed the Pharisees as hypocrites.

Jesus takes his response one step further. He asks that his questioners examine the coin. Agreeing that it is Caesar's image on the coin, Jesus tell them that it must belong to Caesar. Avoiding the question of lawfulness altogether. Jesus answers their question with a simple logic. Then, going further still, Jesus tells them that their obligation is to pay to God that which belongs to God.

Jesus's response to the Herodians and Pharisees suggests the ethic that Christians ought to adopt. It reminds us of the

importance of keeping things in their proper perspective. Jesus never laid down rules and regulations. He laid down principles and that is why his teaching is timeless. He gives us the principle then tells us to think and figure it out for ourselves. He makes His appeal not to some lofty principle but to common sense. The implication is that the coin has Caesar's picture on it, so give it to him. But the most important line is "Give to God what is God's. God does not want taxes, he does not need our vote and He does not need you to take up arms in His defence. But God does deserve to have our heart and conscience. These should never be given to a human institution or even to a human relationship. Our greatest joy, our greatest loyalty belongs to God. Again this is not as simple as it sounds. Sometimes we think that because the Leader of a certain political party asserts that he or she believes in traditional values, then we think they are automatically doing what Jesus wants. How wrong can we be?. Leaders demands our votes and so they would say anything even fool us by making us believe that their agenda is coming from a place of god. In reality it might be that their real agenda is to have our vote. On the other hand, sometimes other political leaders might seem for us to have a more anti-Christ agenda however they might be more Christ like in their attitude than we think they are. We need to be more aware of whose policies are more Christ like than others.

The Roman coin was stamped with the image of Caesar. The human heart is stamped with the image of God. We are made in His image and likeness. Perhaps the question is "Shall we, can we and do we give to God what is God's. We all at the same time in life have to make decisions. Do we serve God or Caesar, money or God? Being human we sometimes make bad choices and we ask the question, What should I do? What must I do to be authentic and to live the life God has called me to live?"

An old Indian was sharing his wisdom with his grandson. He told the grandson that we have two wolves inside us who struggle with each other. One is the wolf of peace, love and kindness. The other is the wolf of fear, greed and hatred. "Which wolf will win, Granddad? Asked the grandson. The wise old Indian said to his grandson "which ever one you feed and which ever one you encourage"

I would like to thank you for your thoughts and prayers whilst we were on our pilgrimage. We have had a graced time in Italy and we are back safe and sound. We have thought of you and prayed for you every day whilst on Pilgrimage. Be assured of that.

Thank you for reading once again my reflection for this week. May God bless you.



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<b>Twenty-Ninth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 21st October</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Tom Gillin RIP (M O'Mahony)
<b>Sunday 22nd October</b>	<b>09:15am</b> The Harrington/Crowley Family (Harrington Family) <b>11:00am</b> Harry McAleer RIP (Weeks Family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 23rd October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Remembering Mummy's Birthday-Annita Ugo RIP (L Levoir)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 24th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Requiem Mass for Arvie Knott RIP
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 25th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Mr Italo Ferretti RIP (Ferretti Family) <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 26th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Ivy Dorothy Fry & Arthur Charles Clifton Fry RIP (Foundation Mass)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 27th October</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b><u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</u></b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Thirtieth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 28th October</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 29th October</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Private Intention (Roberta Svile) <b>11:00am</b> Mr Italo Ferretti RIP (Ferretti Family)

### Second Collections

The Next Second Collection will be on 29th October for World Mission Sunday/ Missio



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned Hot & Cold Meats
- Milk UHT
- Sugar
- Desserts, Hot sponge puddings, jelly etc..
- Men's deodorant
- Shaving Gel

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*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

29th October 2023

Thirtieth Sunday



Fr David says....

Today the word love is overused and undervalued at the same time. We love everything from various foods to cars, from movies to retailers, from people to God himself. We may not consciously distinguish one use of love from another. Because the English

language do not have other words to articulate the different aspects of love, I am referring to CS Lewis who tried to distinguish the different loves by publishing his book *Four Loves* in 1960 and based on a radio series he did with the BBC a few years prior to the book release. According to Lewis there are four types of love – Storage (Affection), Philia (Friendship), Eros (Romantic) and Agape (Charity). Affection covers an array of loves. Like animals, the car of mother to her baby is a picture of affection. It relies on the expected and the familiar. Lewis describes it as humble. Affection can sit alongside with other loves and often does. It is the familiarity of the people with whom you are thrown together in the family, the college, the religious community etc. The affection for the people always around us, in the normal day to day of life, is the majority of the love we experience, even if we do not label it as such. Lewis thinks that Friendship on the other hand likely has closest resemblance to heaven where we will be intertwined in our relationships. We develop a kinship over something in common and that longing for camaraderie makes friendship all the more wanted. Friendships have begun faith movements, developed entire areas of thought and contributed to many projects from art to business. Different than friendship, lovers – romantic love - are always talking to one another about their love and are normally face to face absorbed in each other. The danger in romantic love is to follow blindly after a feeling of passion. Then we celebrate the passion and think its absence means such love has died. Certainly true love is not fickle though the feeling is useful. When we discover afresh that romance is more deeply set than the drive served by our culture, than we will more rightly hold our spouse/partner in the model of unconditional love. Charity is our chief aim according to Lewis, the unconditional love of the Father to us through his Son. Affection, friendship and romantic love are each the training ground for Charity to grow. Lewis mentions St Augustine's deep loss of a friend who says that such desolation is what occurs when we give our heart to anybody or anything but God. "All human beings pass away," says Lewis Yet we are made to love and we are in want of it. if we play it safe, we are not living out the Gospel, but burying the coin in the safe ground as the parable says.

This week's gospel follows close behind the Gospel read last Sunday. It is the last of three questions put to Jesus by Jewish religious leaders who are trying to trick him into saying something that might get him arrested. This reminds us that the context for today's reading is the mounting tension between Jesus and the religious leaders in Jerusalem. The Herodian's and the Pharisees asked the first question which was about taxes. The Sadducees asked the second question which was about the Resurrection. The third question considered in today's Gospel is asked by a Pharisee who asks Jesus about the greatest of the commandments. The questions requires Jesus to interpret the Law of Moses. The Mosaic Law consist of the Ten Commandments and many additional rules, numbering over six hundred. Adherence to the Mosaic Law for a devout Jew is an expression of faithfulness to God's covenant with Israel the ranking of the Commandments was regularly debated among the teachers of the Law. Jesus answers the Pharisees' question with a twofold summary. Jesus says that all the commandments can be summarized in two commandments: love

God and love your neighbour. Both of these were central elements of the religious tradition Jesus learned from his Jewish community. Indeed these continue to be central aspects of contemporary Jewish religious understanding. Jesus response to his questionnaires' proposed an integral connection between these two aspects of the Jewish Law. Love of God finds its expression in our love for our neighbour. No other divinity is to be worshiped except God, and the need to treat others fairly, especially the widows, the orphans, the strangers and the poor.

The first reading from Exodus, gives us one important insight into these questions. Love for the Jewish tradition and for Jesus too, can never be separated from justice. And in the Bible, justice nearly always involves giving special concern to the needs of the vulnerable: the widow, the orphan, the worker, the poor person and the migrant. The Church's modern social teaching stresses this as well. "Justice is the primary way of charity", Pope Benedict affirmed in his encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*. We practice love of neighbour and begin to understand what it truly means – by doing the work of justice, that is by promoting the rights and dignity of other persons, especially those who are most vulnerable.

Love is not the Romantic emotion one feels when one is close to an individual who returns the same emotion. Love is not the physical attraction for another person. Love as described throughout scriptures is a decision to do and be for another. The highest form of love is giving of self to another. Thus martyrdom – witnessing one's life is the supreme form of love of God. And giving of one's life for another person is the greatest example of love of neighbour. Love is more of an attitude that leads to action. It is a response from knowing one is loved by God.

Jesus is truly love incarnate. He is the human embodiment of God's love, not just in his willingness to be born as a human and live among us, but in his very lifestyle of compassionate caring for those whom he meets, climaxing in his death and resurrection. As his disciples, we are invited to imitate Jesus and we love as he has loved others and us. That is easy to say in theory but the practical application is a little more difficult. To me it means I must be constantly conscious of my actions and examine what I do and why I do. I need to make a thoughtful decision to act in a way that best reflects my love for God and love for others. So often I act without thinking. I let my emotions control my actions instead of letting my thoughtful decisions control my actions. I must strive for a balance between the affective, cognitive and behavioural aspect of my life. I need to consciously look at my feelings, reflect on them, try to understand the meaning of them and then make a decision on how I will love out what I have experienced and processed. If I am frustrated, I must reflect on how I can speak less harshly and more caringly. If I am tired, I should think before I say things that I would not say otherwise. It is a life long journey.

Thank you for reading once more my reflection this week. God bless you all and Good luck for all who are starting school again this week.



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<b>Thirtieth Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 28th October</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>Sunday 29th October</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Private Intention (Roberta Svile) <b>11:00am</b> Mr Italo Ferretti RIP (Ferretti Family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 30th October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Sick Members Of the Parish (CWL)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 31st October</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Frank Mayers RIP (J Mayers)
<b>All Saints</b> <b>Wednesday 1st November - Please note change of time for Mass - Whole School Mass</b>	<b>9.30am</b> People Of the Parish <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration <b>07:00pm</b> People Of The Parish
<b>The Commemoration Of All The Faithful Departed</b> <b>Thursday 2nd November</b>	<b>10:00am</b> James Weekly RIP (Cliff Blanchette)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 3rd November</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Thirty-First Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 4th November</b> <b>Sunday 5th November</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Dr Felix Soosay RIP (Mary, Rose & Family) <b>09:15am</b> Bill Kenney RIP (M Scott) <b>11:00am</b> Agnes Poyser RIP (E&S Theodore)

### Second Collections

This weeks second Collection is for World Mission Sunday/ Missio  
 The Next Second Collection will be on 12th November for The Archbishop's Appeal.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned Hot & Cold Meats
- Milk UHT
- Sugar
- Desserts, Hot sponge puddings, jelly etc..
- Men's deoderant
- Shaving Gel

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

5th November 2023

Thirty-First Sunday



Fr David says....

As we all know, there are several different religions around the world, many of which with their own profound spiritual texts. The purpose of religion in general, is to unite a group of people under the same values and principles and to facilitate their collective and individual communication with a God/ Allah, Higher Power and/or philosophy. In other words, religion was meant to enhance spirituality. That said, it must also be said that it is entirely possible to be a very religious person yet be totally out of touch with spirituality and its essential connection to an authentic Self. That is not to separate the two, for it is also entirely possible to be both religious and spiritual. On the other hand, it is also possible to be so caught up in religion that one does not make room for the spirit (or Spirit) to express or become known at all. Only if one is fully open to the spiritual element of religion will religion enhance one's mental health and spiritual life. If one is religious but not spiritual, one's spirituality and mental health is not enhanced. In fact it might be very disturbed. Religion that teaches us that we must rely completely on external advice or external books, as opposed to listening to the urging of one's soul, is a religion which is destructive to mental health. Certainly, external advice can be useful but only in the case in which the person receiving that advice authentically agrees with that advice. Certainly sacred texts are useful, but the interpretation of those texts should be proceed through the mind, heart and soul of each individual, rather than set down as final and only truth by an external authority. When an external authority, be it a book, a person or a religion has final control over everything we do, say and think, it is impossible for us to find and begin to live out of our own truest, deepest souls. We live oppressed by the external authority. Spirituality is a very personal and individual journey into the inner terrain of one's own soul. The person on such a spiritual journey may use all manner of external tools to facilitate that journey like attending a church, temple or mosque and reading of sacred texts and joining and engaging with others in various collective spiritual practices and spending time in one on one conversation or counselling by and with certain spiritual leaders. But the person on the journey is deciding on the direction of their journey. It is not being decided for him or her by external authorities or texts. So unless religion is leading to a deeper spiritual experience it is likely not enhancing one's spirituality and also mental health.

Today's gospel sounds a bit strange.; phylacteries, tassels, don't call anyone teacher or father. It comes from Matthew's Gospel, so we need to put on our Jewish ears to understand, for it was written for a Jewish audience. The Jews were well aware of the continuity of their faith. God had revealed the Law to Moses, who handed it on to Joshua, who handed it on to the elders, who handed it on to the scribes and the Pharisees. The religion of the scribes and the Pharisees became a religion of showiness, because they took the Ten Commandments and spelled them out and out until they had six hundred and thirteen rules which were in their words – the fences around the commandments.

The scribes in the time of Jesus were like today's religious

intellectuals, theologians and professional canon lawyers who are adept in applying the Law to everyday life. The Pharisees formed a fraternity of highly religious laymen who joined together to observe the Mosaic Law meticulously. Matthew's description of Jesus's criticism of the scribes and the Pharisees was mainly directed towards elements within the Judeo-Christian community which sought to impose an extremely narrow and burdensome interpretation of the Torah on the Gentile converts. Jesus condemnations were meant also as a warning to future Christian Leaders about possible abuses of authority in their own ministry. They were never to say one thing and do another. Instead they should faithfully follow their Master's teaching and avoid titles and practices which would imply arrogant superiority which can lead to hypocrisy. The Holy Spirit, through Matthew's account emphatically remind us that Jesus never intended His followers to divide themselves into "Clergy and laity", Into superior and inferior. But rather intended a community of mutual love and service in which the leaders and teachers were to be servants of those they led and taught. This is exactly what Pope Francis keeps on reminding us when he speaks against "Clericalism". The three sins of the Scribes and Pharisees are: 1. That they lacked integrity of life and failed to practice what they preached. They created a double standard. 2. Legalistic - In metaphorical language, Jesus accused Israel's religious authorities of imposing on the people heavy burdens that were difficult to obey. The Scribes and Pharisees in their excessive zeal for Gods Law split the 613 laws of the Torah into thousands of rules and regulations affecting every movement of the people, thus making the observance of God's laws a heavy burden. 3 Seekers of vain glory displaying proud exhibitionism. They use their positions in how they dressed and behaved as being the privileged elite in the community. This becomes an Ego trip. It is not about service and God. It is all about themselves.

Matthew's account suggests that in the first century Church a Christian caste system was starting to emerge with leaders beginning to wear distinctive clothes and demand titles like Rabbi, Teacher, Father, and Master. According to the evangelistic account, any religious stratification runs counter to Jesus's teachings. Jesus condemns the coveting of titles, distinctive clothes, places of honour, and marks of public respect. Such demands on the part of Leaders make it impossible for the community to truly experience Jesus.

It is easy to read today's gospel and start pointing fingers at others. Of course, I can point a criticizing finger at all the officials I know, political, religious or otherwise. But let me ask myself the question: "Am I so different from them?" it is important that I see how this applies in my life. The Gospel is addressed to me. How touchy I am about the way people treat me, especially if I have some title or responsibility even if it is that of a parents or teacher? Respect cannot be demanded – it can only be earned.

I thank you for taking time to read my reflection for this week. May God bless you all.



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<b>Thirty-First Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 4th November</b>  <b>Sunday 5th November</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Dr Felix Soosay RIP (Mary, Rose & Family)  <b>09:15am</b> Bill Kenney RIP (M Scott) <b>11:00am</b> Agnes Poyser RIP (E&S Theodore) Arvie Knott RIP (M Riches)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 6th November</b>	<b>10:00am</b>
<b>The Dedication of the Cathedral Church of Saint George</b> <b>Tuesday 7th November</b>	<b>10:00am</b> For the repose of the soul of Luigi Ugo (L Levoir)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 8th November</b>	<b>10.00am</b> Cotta Family Intentions (Cotta Family)  <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration
<b>The Dedication of The Lateran Basilica</b> <b>Thursday 9th November</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Wellbeing of Fr Brian Maxwell
<b>Saint Leo the Great</b> <b>Friday 10th November</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Thirty-Second Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 11th November</b>  <b>Sunday 12th November</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Margaret & Des Kelly RIP (Davey Family)  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11:00am</b> John McPartlin RIP (McPartlin & Clubbs Family) Amanda & James Mulroy & Family RIP (A&G Mulroy)

### Second Collections

Next weeks Second Collection will be for The Archbishop's Appeal.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Vegetables
- Tinned Hot & Cold Meats
- Milk UHT
- Sugar
- Desserts, Hot sponge puddings, jelly etc..
- Men's deodorant
- Shaving Gel

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

12th November 2023

Thirty-Second Sunday



Fr David says....

Pope Francis deplored the “desperate” situation in Gaza on Wednesday as he urged the faithful to take “only one side” in the Israel-Hamas conflict, the side “of peace”. Speaking during his weekly audience in St Peter’s Square, Francis said “War does not solve any problem, it only sows death and destruction, increases hatred, manipulate revenge. War he said “erases the future”. The Pope pleaded for all possible efforts to avoid a humanitarian catastrophe. On Sunday last then he said “I forcefully ask that children, the sick, the elderly and women, and all civilians do not become the victims of the conflict”. Pope Francis spoke as Israel was preparing its troops for a ground assault in retaliation for unprecedented attacks it suffered when fighters rampaged through its town shooting men, women and children and seizing hostages. “So many have already died. Please no more spilling of innocent blood either in the Holy Land or in Ukraine or anywhere else. Enough! Wars are always a defeat, always” he said. Some 1.300 people were killed in the unexpected onslaught, while Gaza authorities said that more than 2.300 people had died, a quarter of them children, and nearly 10,000 wounded as Israel responds with intense bombardment to the aggression. Pope Francis called for prayers to counter “the diabolical force of hate, terrorism and war”. On Friday the Vatican offered to mediate in the conflict. Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican’s Secretary of State, said that the attack by Hamas on Israel citizens was “inhuman”. Referring to the Israel’s response and the widely expected ground assault, Parolin said “it is the right of those who are attacked to defend themselves, but even legitimate defence must respect the parameter of proportionality”.

As we are celebrating Remembrance Sunday this year, I am very much aware that we are surrounded once again by the atrocious daily news of a new war. We are seeing in front of our eyes the devastation which a War leaves behind. We are realising once again who are the real victims of war – the children, the women and elderly in other words - the vulnerable. When are we going to learn? So yes let us remember the great sacrifices that our ancestors have suffered for us to be free. Let us thank them for it. However let us always remember of the trauma a nation goes through when in war. And that it takes many future generations to overcome it. Many are asking where is God in this situation? Is He asleep?

There is no doubt about it, the first Christians fully expected Jesus to return soon. But they were disappointed as days, weeks, months and years went by, and Jesus was a no-show. Some began to wonder if Jesus was coming back at all. Matthew’s gospel was an answer to this dilemma. It is aimed at those who are losing heart, losing faith and giving up. He offers a parable from Jesus that basically warns his followers to be always ready, no matter what the schedule. The Lord, like the bridegroom, will indeed come, but He will come when we least expect him. So do not be foolish, be prepared.

Christians have been prepared for more than 2.000 years now. Even with a no-show and with weaker urgency than the early Christians.

And there are people in every century who say they know exactly when Jesus is coming. Far out as they are, they are very popular. Even now some evangelical Christians feel that Christ will come soon. Maybe because our world is in such a mess that some just yearn for Christ to come and put an end to it all. But we are stuck with the meanwhile. Until Christ comes, what do we do? How do we live? Matthew gives us an answer in today’s gospel. He offers us two themes: be prepared, be recognized. First be prepared. Not only for the visitation of Jesus on Judgement day and death, but also for his visitation in life. Jesu is here already. The inspiration to help those in need, the out of the blue sense that we should pray, the time we ask ourselves, is that all there is? Should I be doing something different with my life? Or the sudden impulse to do good, to be more noble and less selfish. Then there is the more insistent attention-getters: the death of a loved one, the onslaught of an illness. Or looking in the mirror and seeing an old person looking back. Or seeing the awesomeness of nature. The falling asleep child in your arms, your first child or grandchild.

All these common occurrences are inspirations of the Holy Spirit. These are all visits of Jesus. He comes to us in the now. If only we would stay awake, recognise and embrace these times when the groom arrives, we would be prepared, no matter when the final visit.

The second lesson in Matthew’s gospel is to live in such a way as to be recognised by Jesus. And we are recognised by Christ not by our card carrying memberships but by our faith and good works. We cannot borrow the oil of faith. We cannot borrow another’s good works. We must respond to God’s call ourselves. Yes Christ will come to judge the living and the dead, but no one knows the day or the hours. I suggest that we live as if Christ is coming today, not in fear and trembling but in the realisation that the Christ who is coming is already here in so many ways.

Christ is in those around us, here and now. He touches us in the hungry we nourish, in the stranger we welcome. In the sick we take time to visit and to console, or the child we encourage. When we touch them, we touch Christ and so when he does come he will recognise us because we will not be strangers to Him. So let us stop worrying about the end of times, when Christ will come. He is coming to us today as we come up and receive Him. And if we are looking for Him, He is seated all around us.

Let us keep on praying for peace today. And let us start by being in peace within ourselves first and foremost and those around us. Let us light a candle for Peace.

Thank you for reading my reflection once more and God bless your week.



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<b>Thirty-Second Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 11th November</b>  <b>Sunday 12th November</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Margaret & Des Kelly RIP (Davey Family)  <b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish <b>11:00am</b> John McPartlin RIP (McPartlin & Clubbs Family) Amanda & James Mulroy & Family RIP (A&G Mulroy)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 13th November</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Celebration of the life of Florence Hunter RIP (A Parker)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 14th November</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Alston Antao - Thanksgiving - Birthday (K Antao) John McPartlin RIP (McPartlin & Clubb Family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 15th November</b>	<b>10.00am</b> Marie-France Gault RIP (G Head)  <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 16th November</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Chris & Aljo Pullan RIP (N Roy)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 17th November</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b>
<b>Thirty-Third Sunday</b> <b>Saturday 18th November</b>  <b>Sunday 19th November</b>	<b>06.00pm</b> Cyril Anthony Soyza RIP (S Soyza) Wellbeing of Victoria Nathan-Rogers (M Rogers)  <b>09:15am</b> Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)  <b>11:00am</b> John McPartlin RIP (McPartlin & Clubb Family) Harry McAleer RIP (G Mulroy)

### Second Collections

This weeks Second Collection will be for The Archbishop's Appeal.  
 The Next Second collection will be for National Youth Sunday on 26th November



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Tinned Cold Meat
- Desserts
- Sweets
- Fruit Juice
- Childrens Toothpaste
- Shaving Gel
- Multi Surface Wipes & Sprays

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

19th November 2023

Thirty-Third Sunday



Fr David says....

When I think of talents, I do think of people like my friend Jacob Portelli, the Maltese Harpist, who had enthralled us a couple of months ago at St James's with his amazing skill of playing the harp. To top it all, I know that he also plays the cello, the violin and also is a cardiographer. I look at him and say – God has gifted you with lots of talents and you are using them to the full. Before he embarked on his little tour, he visited most of the monasteries in Malta and gifted them with his gift of harp playing for free as he did to us. I marvel when I see people like him with so much talent and yet still grounded and unassuming. He plays because of his love of music and his love to help others encounter God through his talent of music. He is using his skills of music not only for his own self-gratification but in order to give joy to others. However, once you make use of your gifts whatever they are, you also risk other's judgements and jealousy. Some people do not make use of their talents because they are afraid of being criticised and judged. Others want a stress free life without the hassle of hard work. When you feel trusted by those who have authority over you and they give you freedom to express yourself then you will feel enthused to flourish. When you feel frightened under your authority figures, because they do not trust you completely in what you will deliver, then we tend to deliver mediocrity.

This Sunday's gospel passage continues from last Sunday's. It is a long parable telling us what the kingdom of heaven is like – that is what it is like to experience grace coming into our world. Most people find this parable difficult because of the master's seemingly exaggerated anger and also he is very hard on the third servant who was already less gifted than the others. If this is what the kingdom of heaven is like, then it is bad news indeed. The key to such an interpretation is to remember Jesus's situation when he gave this teaching. As with last week's passage, he was at the end of his public ministry, frustrated at the hardness of heart of the Leaders of the people. The Mosaic tradition had taught generosity of spirit and compassion for the oppressed. The leaders had let this glorious tradition become their personal possession, an excuse for meanness and exclusiveness, a way of protecting their positions of privilege.

Jesus is highly indignant at what they have done with God's gift and rightly so. We need to enter into his feelings. The God of the bible is so passionately committed to the cause of the poor that when they are ill-treated, his anger flares up. The property in the parable then, is not personal wealth. The property in the parable is God's precious gift intended to multiply and be life giving for all. Its true purpose is distorted by the third servant's meanness that is why he is called good for nothing. The parable then gives us two messages. To those who have been made to feel excluded from the kingdom (tax-collectors and prostitutes), Jesus brings the good news that this is totally against God's will. In fact God is very angry that they have been excluded. To his disciples he issues a stern warning. Do not fall prey to a similar narrow mindedness. The history of the Church like our individual stories tell us how right he was to warn them. We all fall into the trap of seeing our

talents as our personal possessions that we can do what we like with. God's will is that we see them as gifts to be shared so that they can be multiplied. The teaching of Jesus so full of potential for transforming the world and yet so often hidden under a bushel. Christians have dug a hole in the ground and buried it. Nature which God has made so bountiful, now becomes a matter for personal greed with resultant scarcities. Family traditions of openness to all, allowed to degenerate into snobbishness and racism. Individual talents – physical, mental and spiritual intended to be a blessing for families and societies, become things to be bought and sold. Do we know that we celebrate Jesus who made us conscious of this betrayal?.

The parable is not all negative. The Master is also someone we can celebrate. He is the kind of leader who does not cling to power. He entrusts his property to those who work with him without counting the risk. This parable is crucial teaching for our modern Western Culture which glorifies mistrust as not merely necessary but actually beneficial. People who have no trust and confidence in themselves, in others and in life, end up losing even what they have. On the contrary people who have that kind of trust end up being given more. Jesus's message is go ahead and trust. How we need teachers and leaders like that. He issues a stern warning to those who have no faith. Learn to believe in yourself.

We are all called to build the kingdom of God, but no two people have exactly the same task in this project which we call creation. Each of us is called to being God's love, presence, light and peace into a particular world. This is our calling. This is the unique set of talents that has been entrusted to each of us by God. Do I believe in this? Do I have the confidence to acknowledge God's given talents and share them with others in the community? Do you feel that you are being called to share those talents within the parish?

Today our thanksgiving focusses on these sets of talents that each of us has been given, and repentance is for those times when we as individuals have hidden our talents and failed to build the kingdom and our prayer is that we will each follow our unique calling more closely in the future.

Is God through this week's liturgy nudging you to be part of the many ministries within our parish? Many of our parishioners are making use of their talents within the parish and I wish to thank you all for taking God's invitation to contribute seriously. For others who feel reluctant for some reason or another – may your find the courage to come forward and offer your talents to the community of St James's.

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



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 or by appointment.

<p><b>Thirty-Third Sunday</b>  <b>Saturday 18th November</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 19th November</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Cyril Anthony Soyza RIP (S Soyza)          Wellbeing of Victoria Nathan-Rogers (M Rogers)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> John McPartlin RIP (McPartlin &amp; Clubbs Family)          Harry McAleer RIP (G Mulroy)          Tracy Wrafter RIP (T Wrafter)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Monday 20th November</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Kerry Murphy's health</p>
<p><b>The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b>  <b>Tuesday 21st November</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> In Thanksgiving for Granddaughters Mollie &amp; Alice (Jon Cunningham)</p>
<p><b>Saint Cecilia</b>  <b>Wednesday 22nd November</b></p>	<p><b>10.00am</b> Chris Barrett RIP (Loma Barrett &amp; Family)</p> <p><b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Thursday 23rd November</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Mary &amp; Mucker &amp; Family (K Murphy)</p>
<p><b>Saint Andrew Dung-Lac</b>  <b>Friday 24th November</b></p>	<p><b>No Mass from St James'</b>  <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b>  <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b>  <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></p>
<p><b>Our Lord Jesus Christ, King Of The Universe</b>  <b>Saturday 25th November</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 26th November</b></p>	<p><b>06.00pm</b> Deceased Brothers of Council 327 of Knights of St Columba</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Sexton &amp; Melluish Families (P Melluish)          Keith Dale RIP (R Scott)</p>

**Second Collections**

Next weeks second collection will be for National Youth Sunday on 26th November



**The current needs for this week are for:**

- Desserts
- Longlife Milk
- Cold Tinned Meat
- Fruit Juice
- Childrens Toothbrushes
- Shaving Gel
- Deoderant

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



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

26th November 2023

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King Of The Universe



Fr David says....

The Last Judgement by Michelangelo - This is it. The moment all Christians await with both hope and dread. This is the end of time, the beginning of eternity when the mortal becomes immortal when the elect join Christ in his heavenly kingdom and the damned are cast into the unending torments of hell. What a daunting task. To visualise the endgame of earthly existence and furthermore to do so in the Sistine Chapel, the private chapel of the papal court where the leaders of the Church gathered to celebrate feast day liturgies, where the pope's body was laid in state before his funeral and where to this day the College of Cardinals meets to elect the next pope. No artist in the sixteenth century Italy was better positioned for this task than Michelangelo whose completion of the chapel's ceiling in 1512 had sealed his reputation as the greatest master of the human figure. Pope Paul III was well aware of this when he charged Michelangelo with repainting the chapel's altar wall with the Last Judgement.

Today we celebrate that Jesus is our sovereign Ruler – our king the prophet Ezekiel portrays God as a shepherd who separates rams from goats. The concept of God being a shepherd is repeated in Psalm 23. Ezekiel speaks to the Babylonian exiles giving them hope that God will once again rule over the divine flock and give Good pasture and protection to those who have been willing to run from the wayward journeying back to God. The message of God tending the lost sheep would have been reassuring to those who seemed to have no direction in life. And what better guide for them than to have God leading them back to a place of security, peace and rich food.

The Gospel's account of the Son of Man reigning over the final judgement scene is unique to Matthew. This is what Michelangelo was commissioned to depict on the Altar of the Sistine Chapel. Jesus separates the Good Sheep from the bad. The basis of this division is not over some theological point of discussion. It not over rituals and practices. It is based on how individuals have treated the poor and lowly. Jesus so identifies Himself with the afflicted and needy that what people have done to assist and care for those in need, they have been done to Jesus. And when people have refused to aid the disadvantaged and disenfranchised people in crisis, they have refused to meet Jesus's needs.

The standard that we can use to measure our growth in the ways of the Lord Jesus for this past liturgical year in the Church's calendar can be the same as in the Gospel. Have we ministered to, and served, those who were in need our help? Another way of examining our actions is to ask the question? Did we look for the Jesus in the people with whom we came in contact during this past year? We have been given an ample occasion to show our concern for others, not just locally such as those who have lost loved ones during the year but also globally with

the many people suffering because of poor economy, wars or excessive weather phenomena or other natural disasters. If we were conscious of, and tended the concerns of, those around us, even if it was just remotely or digitally, then we would be experiencing a closer relationship with God. And to switch this around, if we have spent time, more time than in previous years drawing closer to Jesus, then we will have cared more for the people we have crossed our paths. It goes hand in hand. Our relationship with God parallels our caring and serving of others.

The sheep in the parable are clearly very surprised. This is obviously not what they were expecting to hear. One gets the impression that they hardly remember doing these things, although definitely they had done at least some of them and certainly they do not remember ever doing anything of the kind for Jesus. They did it from the generosity of their hearts as human beings. Then he turned to the goats whom he called cursed, he condemns them for not doing any of the things he mentioned above and for not recognizing Jesus in their sisters and brothers.

There are a number of things to notice here. None of the things Jesus mentions are religious in nature. There is no mention whatever of any commandments being observed or violated. People are condemned not for doing actions which were morally wrong, but for not doing anything at all. The actions are done or not done to Jesus and not just for Jesus. In other words, Jesus is truly present in every person I meet. I am not just nice to this person whom I may not care about very much, in order to do a good act which Jesus will reward and add to my bank account of good deeds. People cannot be used even for spiritual purposes.

St Theresa of Calcutta was a good example of this. The more time she spent in prayer, the more energy she had to minister to the poorest of the poor. And the more time she was in service of others, the more time she wanted to spend in prayer and the closer she drew to Jesus. Even though she did not always feel any strong and positive emotions.

If this past year was not as prayerful and spiritually growth filled as we would have liked, the Good News is that we still have time. We can begin right this moment. We help to bring about the Reign of God right here and right now. In anticipation sharing in the eternal reign.

In a very special way, we are praying for the gift of peace in the world especially in the Middle East and Ukraine. That Jesus our King would change the hearts of those who are far away from him, and help them come to a peaceful resolution especially for those innocent people who are suffering.

God bless you all. Have a great feast day. Next week we start Advent.



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<p><b>Our Lord Jesus Christ, King Of The Universe</b>  <b>Saturday 25th November</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 26th November</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Deceased Brothers of Council 327 of Knights of St Columba</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Sexton &amp; Melliush Families (P Melliush) Keith Dale RIP (R Scott)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Monday 27th November</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Deceased Members Of The CWL (CWL) Cyril Webster RIP (H Wood)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Tuesday 28th November</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Deceased Members of the Morley Family (M Morley)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Wednesday 29th November</b></p>	<p><b>10.00am</b> Brian Kirwan RIP (R&amp;E Wright)</p> <p><b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration</p>
<p><b>Saint Andrew</b>  <b>Thursday 30th November</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> C L Paul RIP (N Roy) Roy Paul - Birthday (N Roy)</p>
<p><b>Feria</b>  <b>Friday 1st December</b></p>	<p><b><u>No Mass from St James'</u></b>  <b><u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their</u></b>  <b><u>Mass at 10:00am.</u></b>  <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b>  <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b></p> <p><b>5:00pm - 7:00pm</b> Eucharistic Adoration</p>
<p><b>First Sunday Of Advent</b>  <b>Saturday 2nd December</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 3rd December</b></p>	<p><b>06.00pm</b> Paul Keller RIP (B Keller) Wellbeing of Camille Nathan - Wilson (V Nathan Rogers)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> Patrick Denvir RIP (Foundation Mass)</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> John Malyon RIP (E &amp; M Malyon) Jean Baker RIP (R Scott)</p>

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection will be for National Youth Sunday on 26th November  
 Next weeks second collection will be for the JPIC project



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Desserts
- Longlife Milk
- Cold Tinned Meat
- Fruit Juice
- Childrens Toothbrushes
- Shaving Gel
- Deodorant

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





# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

3rd December 2023

First Sunday Of Advent



Fr David says....

The Jesuit mystic Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1957) talked about how to move in the continual journey of becoming. He wrote "Above all, trust in the slow work of God. We are quite naturally impatient in everything to reach the end without

delay. We should like to skip the intermediate stages. We are impatient of being on the way to something unknown, something new. And yet it is the law of all progress that it is made by passing through some stages of instability – and that it may take a very long time". Sometimes we are tempted to look to the past as an ideal age. As we grow older, we tend to idealise the past and really block maybe the times that were not ideal at all. How many times we hear ourselves say that the best music was when we were younger. Or else how life then was simpler. If only life remained the way it was! Really? Those who suffer most in life are those who hold on to past experiences yearning for the past and cursing the changes with time. Those who suffer most are those who cannot allow themselves to change and have different ideas, different opinions. They hang on to a crystallised reality which does not exist anymore. There are those who live their lives resentful of change. That is not what Jesus did. He knew the treasures of his tradition, he cherished them but he knew that time moves in only one direction, therefore what is to come, hard as it might seem to be, promises to be more than this or any moment of the past.

Our season of Advent this year the shortest possible because Christmas falls on a Monday – invites us into hopeful anticipation. While we wait "for the revelation of our Lord", we will need to learn to appreciate Jesus's hours of passion and Teilhard's disturbing stages of instability. We can appreciate them as hope soaked promises in a process of growing in grace. Advent is the time to anticipate what we cannot yet see, and to trust that it will come. Each day's grace will build on the last.

As we begin Advent, we might recall some of our most memorable experience of anticipation. Was it waiting for the birth of a child or the day of the wedding? Perhaps something seemingly much more mundane like the end of the school year, the moment when your date was to pick you up or meet you at the restaurant.

Waiting reminds us that, like it or not, we don't control the universe. At the same time, we won't discover the new unless we are open to it. Advent anticipation adds open-ended hope to all our anticipation. We keep growing, there the future is both predictable and promising. Sometimes, it seems that Advent is designed to be confusing. Theologians call it a time of already and not yet. Today's gospel captures that dilemma perfectly. Jesus says, "Be on the lookout!" For what? For the coming of something you cannot predict, something that will take you by surprise at the least expected moment. Jesus consistently avoided the trap of giving details about the end times. They were and still are in an unpredictable process of becoming. Nevertheless, he offered somber hints when he described the unpredictable time to come for him. He said it would come, "in the evening, or at midnight or at cockcrow, or in the morning" Those were precisely the hours leading up to his passion. Jesus was arrested while praying in the evening.

His interrogation by the religious leaders took place after that, presumably around midnight. Cockcrow was the moment Peter to deny knowing him, in the morning, the Sanhedren handed him over to Pilate. Those were the moments for which he was watching. The disciples remembered this clearly because those worst of times blossomed into the resurrection. For what are we supposed to be watching?

Mark is the shortest of the four canonical Gospels and in the view of the most Scripture scholars was the first of them to be put down in written form, probably sometime in the 60s AD. The Gospel of Mark was probably written at a time when the Romans had swept through upper Galilee to suppress a Galilean revolt. This region was where Mark's Judeo-Christian community lived. This community was besieged by three hostile forces, all of which demanded loyalty from the followers of Jesus as former Jews. Since Palestine was the breadbasket of the Empire, the Romans controlled it through military might and local alliances. The high priests and their minion collaborated with the Romans and imposed their own oppressive burden of regulations and Temple taxes. Armed Jewish nationalists had seized the Temple by force and wanted to expel the Romans from the region. At the time Mark wrote his Gospel, the Roman legions were posed to destroy the Temple and all of Jerusalem with it, once and for all, and thus end the Jewish nation as it had existed before. Hence Mark reminded the Christian community of Jesus's injunction to be alert and awake for Christ's second coming, recalling Jesus's parable about the gate keeper.

Absentee land owners and wayfaring masters were a common thing in Jesus' time. The owners of large properties often lived elsewhere, leaving servants in charge of caring for and carrying on business as if the owners were still present. This kind of situation would be a test for the servants left in charge. Would they be faithful day by day or would they wait until they heard the master was about to return and then quickly get things in order? The trouble was that often they didn't know when the land owner would return. The absence of the master was a test. It reminds me what Ofsted inspection is for the School. Speak to any Staff in a School and they would let you know the need to be alert and ready for the inspection which could come at any time.

As we enter into the season of Advent this year, we are also reminded to await new birth. That new birth happens when in waiting. Are we going to be completely absorbed by Christmas alienations or are we also taking some time to reflect on our lives and what the birth of Christ really means to us?

The parish of St James is offering different ways of preparing ourselves for Christmas both as individuals but also as a community. Get involved and let us make this Advent as meaningful as ever. The Christmas Fair is on the 10th December after both Sunday Masses – the 9.15am and 11.00am. The Advent Programme is on its way, the Charismatic Prayer meeting will start on this Sunday the 3rd December at 1.00pm, the Advent Carol Service is on the 18th, Advent Reconciliation Service on the 19th and Christmas meditation on the 21st. There is something for everyone.

God bless you! Have a safe and blessed week.



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 or by appointment.

<b>First Sunday Of Advent</b> <b>Saturday 2nd December</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Paul Keller RIP (B Keller) Wellbeing of Camille Nathan - Wilson (V Nathan Rogers)
<b>Sunday 3rd December</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Patrick Denvir RIP (Foundation Mass) Gwendolyn Graham RIP (J Villalta)  <b>11:00am</b> John Malyon RIP (E & M Malyon) Jean Baker RIP (R Scott)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 4th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Ray Duggan RIP (K&A Evans) Jerry & Ann Marie O'Connor & Family (K Murphy)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 5th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Catherine Sheenan RIP (S Durtin) Annita Ugo - Liana's Mummy (Liana Levoir)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 6th December - Please note Mass will be held in the school.</b>	School Mass <b>9:00am</b> Fr John Troy RIP & Declan Troy RIP (J Bromage & family) <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration - In Church
<b>Saint Ambrose</b> <b>Thursday 7th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Maureen Dillane RIP (J Dillane)
<b>The Immaculate Conception Of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b> <b>Friday 8th December</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Second Sunday Of Advent</b> <b>Saturday 9th December</b>	<b>06.00pm</b> Relative & Friends of Fyson Family ( <b>Foundation Mass</b> )
<b>Sunday 10th December</b>	<b>09:15am</b> St Clair Family - Frank & Amy (J Villalta)  <b>11:00am</b> Bertha Da Cunha RIP (Da Cunha Family) James Mulroy RIP & Health of Geraldine Mulroy (A Mulroy)

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection will be for the JPIC project  
 Next weeks second collection is for the Maintenance Fund



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Desserts/Puddings/Jelly/
- Cold Tinned Meat
- Men's Shaving Gel
- Angel Delight
- Fruit Juice
- Women's Deodorant
- Longlife Milk
- Washing Up Liquid

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# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

10th December 2023

Second Sunday Of Advent



Fr David says....

We are being traumatised by the scenes of atrocities which we are witnessing through the media about what is happening within the Middle East. We have been given a bit

of relief with the ceasefire for some days and the releasing of hostages – being moved by seeing them reconnecting with their loved ones. This has given us some ray of hope. However after the ceasefire, the situation seemed to have escalated to another level. During this time of Advent and Christmas where the narrative of our celebration hails from the same land, somehow is connecting us more with the tragedy of what is actually happening. My thoughts and prayers goes to the innocent people who are trapped in the middle of this war. I have witnessed on the social media, Catholic Palestinians lighting the first candle of their Advent Wreath last Sunday. This Sunday they will light the second candle dedicated for peace and hear the Prophet Isaiah in the first reading say “Comfort, Comfort my people”. They will light it during war raging in the Holy Land, increasing political extremism and dark moods made darker by long winter days. They are lighting their Advent wreath despite the dangerous, political chaos in their lives. With disillusionment and desperation growing around them, I hear them say – “We have no choice here but to hope in a better future – as people of faith, we don’t rely on hope in the situation around us. It is very politicised and there is no hope in that. Our hope comes from believing that history is firmly in the hands of God. Today the Middle East could still serve as a stark metaphor for Advent. God’s people are awaiting in the wilderness of exile, looking for concrete signs of God’s promised future, desperate for peace. But relying on God for hope doesn’t mean denying how bad things really are. Rather relying on God for hope helps us through the struggle because we have a vision of the future which God desires for us. And a promise that God is working towards that vision.

Isaiah’s words in the first reading are directed to the Israelites living in exile from Jerusalem, from their homes, their way of life, their Temple. Lamentations describes this time: How lonely sits the city that once was full of people! Jerusalem weeps bitterly in the night, with tears on her cheeks, among all her lovers she has no one to comfort her”. This lamentation is also the cry of both the Jews who has suffered extreme terrorism but also the Palestinians who are being forced to move out of their land.

Advent is a special time of year. We sing hymns reminding us of God’s story: “O Come, O Come Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, that mourns in lonely exile here until the Son of God appear”. We also recall the fiery words of John the Baptist in the first chapter of Mark preaching “Repent and prepare the way!”

Even Isaiah wonders how to preach God’s message of hope when the reality is that people are “like grass, their constancy is

like the flower of the field. People are unfaithful and all that is good and beautiful withers and fades in a life of exile, violence and sin. How can we keep our faith from withering and fading in the dice of daily dire news? The prophet Isaiah speaks for all of us when, in response to the voice who calls upon him to cry out, proclaiming the good news, he moans, “But what shall I cry?”

Fortunately the voice in this text is not put off by doubt or despair. Instead, he responds to Isaiah: “Yes the grass withers, and the flower fades; but the word of our God stand forever.” In other words, there are eternal truths, given to us by God embodied by Jesus Christ, that will never fade, wither or die. Even in the heart and heat of despair, we can light each Advent candle, bearing witness to the hope, peace, joy and love of God’s promises.

We can take comfort this Second Sunday of Advent in the Word of God, the idea that a kingdom is being built, not by fallible human hands but with eternal truths. As we are going through our deepest fears, grief and anxieties we light our Advent candles as we are reminded by each bright flame that God is imagining our deliverance, our redemption, our return to God’s peaceful kingdom even when we are too exhausted, too depleted to imagine it for ourselves. This advent with Christians around the world, let us proclaim the good news and bear witness to the unfailing, unfading hope, peace, joy and love of God’s promises.

When despair for yourself, your family and the world threatens to overwhelm you, where do you find hope? What world does God imagine for us, for you? Can you describe what you think it will look or feel like?

As a Parish, we are still going through our Advent programme which is proving to be very informative and interesting. The next session is on the “True Self”. This will be held in the Community Centre on Wednesday the 13th December from 7.30pm – 9.00pm. We also have the Advent Carol Service on Sunday the 17th December at 3.00pm and the Advent reconciliation Service on Monday the 18th December at 7.30pm. We then have a Christmas meditation on Thursday the 21st December from 7.30pm – 9.00pm. This weekend of course we have the Christmas Fair on Sunday the 10th December after the 9.15am and 11.00am Masses. Come and celebrate together the Christmas season.

God bless you all and thank you for taking the time to read my reflection for the week.



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<b>Second Sunday Of Advent</b> <b>Saturday 9th December</b>  <b>Sunday 10th December</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Relative & Friends of Fyson Family ( <b>Foundation Mass</b> )  <b>09:15am</b> St Clair Family - Frank & Amy (J Villalta)  <b>11:00am</b> Bertha Da Cunha RIP (Da Cunha Family) James Mulroy RIP & Health of Geraldine Mulroy (A Mulroy)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 11th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> For the Soul of Armando Francisco Dias (K Antao)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 12th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Mrs Rosa Inzani RIP (D Suzzara)
<b>Saint Lucy</b> <b>Wednesday 13th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Anita Rowland RIP (P Rowland) Jean Rawlings RIP (Foundation Mass)  <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration - In Church
<b>Saint John of the Cross</b> <b>Thursday 14th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Welfare of Jonathan Head (G Head)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 15th December</b>	<b>No Mass from St James'</b> <b>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</b> <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b> <a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a>
<b>Third Sunday Of Advent</b> <b>Saturday 16th December</b>  <b>Sunday 17th December</b>	<b>06.00pm</b> Mary Simons (Simon Family)  <b>09:15am</b> Wellbeing of David & Natalie Winn (Simon Family)  <b>11:00am</b> Cole & Kitty Keane RIP (L Keane) Majorie Farrell RIP (Foundation Mass) Reg Griffin RIP (Wedderspoon Family)

### Second Collections

This weeks second collection will be for the Maintenance Fund



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Desserts/Puddings/Jelly/
- Cold Tinned Meat
- Fruit Juice
- Angel Delight
- Washing Up Liquid
- Toilet Roll
- Longlife Milk
- Women's & Mens Deodorant

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

17th December 2023

Third Sunday Of Advent



Fr David says....

As many of you, for my O level English, I had to study the book "To Kill a Mockingbird" which I had the pleasure to see on the West End a couple of years ago too. It is the story about prejudice and the courage to do what is right. In the play/book,

Atticus Finch – a lawyer agrees to defend a young black man (Tom Robinson) when he is unjustly accused of a crime he did not commit. Racial bigotry is stirred up and Atticus and his family are persecuted for seeking justice for the young man. Despite the persecution Atticus does fight for justice for Tom but by the end of the trial, bigotry and the need to scapegoat, win out and the young man is condemned for a crime he did not commit. After the verdict as Atticus leaves the courtroom and passes his two children, a black minister who is aware of all the factors at play tells the girl and boy to stand because their father is passing, "a good and just man". Is not Atticus in many ways, a figure of John the Baptist? Atticus can be seen as a man proclaiming the truth even in the face of persecution, misunderstanding and ridicule. Like John the Baptist, he proclaimed and held to the light even in the very midst of darkness. Both men faced the same temptations – the temptation to remain quiet, to keep one's head down, to not make waves. Both also faced the temptation to proclaim oneself. Throughout the play, Atticus is soft spoken, humble man even as others talk about all his achievements and abilities. In his final speech in the courtroom Atticus does not proclaim his own skill as a lawyer nor his gift of rhetoric, rather he proclaims and points to truth and justice for Tom Robinson. It was a proclamation to those gathered in the courtroom just as pointed as the cry of the Baptist in the wilderness.

John the Baptist also faced this temptation to proclaim self. The people were streaming toward John from all the countryside, there was a deep yearning for the messiah – John knew this and he could have seized all that energy and power. But he didn't. "I am not the Christ" said John. "I am the voice of one crying in the desert, makes straight the way of the Lord..... I am not worthy to untie his sandals".

John the Baptist was easily the most famous preacher of his generation. The historian Josephus once wrote that in his estimation, this man John was a vastly more important and impressive figure than his cousin Jesus. Even years after Jesus's death and resurrection, when the apostles visited the city of Ephesus to proclaim the Gospel, they ran across a large building that called itself "The First Church of John the Baptist". The members of this congregation had all been baptised in the name of John. When the apostles inquired if they had been baptised in the name of Jesus, the people replied, "who is that? Never heard of him". Years earlier it was John not Jesus who got King Herod's attention and was consequently arrested and eventually executed by that monarch. Once Jesus began to make a bit of a stir himself, Herod's first reaction was to say, "That must be John again" he is back from the dead. Most scholars believe that the Gospel of John, as written by John the Apostle, places Jesus in the correct perspective, assigning to John the Baptist the role of a witness and forerunner.

John the Baptist was able to do two things extremely well: He was able to look away from himself and he was able to look towards God. In this he was able to recognise the truth of who he was – a man in need of a Savior – and therefore he was able to recognise the true Savior when he came (in contrast to the Pharisees). "I baptise with water, but there is one among you whom you do not recognise, the one who is coming after me, who sandals I am not worthy to untie."

The idea that John the Baptist came as a witness to testify the light (Jesus) is found only in the Gospel of John. According to John, Jesus is the Light of the World. Just as the dawn of each day brings joy, the coming of Jesus, the Light of the world causes us to rejoice. We, the church are called to bear witness to Christ by word and deed, in good times and bad, when it suits us and when it does not. The witness of the Church ironically, has often been more faithful under persecution than under prosperity. We need to be messengers who point out Christ to others, just as John did. John's role as a joyful witness prepared the way for Jesus.

What John the Baptist and the figure of Atticus proclaim to us is that truth and justice do not lie inherently within ourselves as if there were our possessions. They are not part of our constitutional makeup that we can either summon or dispose of at will. Rather truth and justice are acquired by us only insofar as we place ourselves in relation to truth and justice itself – whom we proclaim to have a name and a face – Jesus.

As we place ourselves in relation to Christ, we both learn to see anew with eyes enlightened by faith – judging rightly and our own dignity is found. The words spoken by the black preacher to the children of Atticus might then be applied to any one of us, "Stand, your father/mother is passing, a good and just man/woman. Whether victorious or not in the realm of worldly success and opinion could there be any higher compliment?"

Here we are in the darkest time of year and the Church is reminding us that God created us to be joyful. Joy is a gift from God, but joy is also a choice and sometimes a defiant one grounded on hope, on the hope only Jesus can give us. We can ask this week – what is it about Jesus that can offer me hope right now in the future and give me a reason to rejoice in the face of everything that is weighing me down? With all the reasons not to be merry this year, what are the areas in my life I simply need to choose joy right now based on my faith and hope in Jesus Christ?

I wish to thank all those who helped to organise the beautiful Christmas Fayre last Sunday especially thank you to Lolly and husband Mike and Cheryl. Thank you so much.

A gentle reminder, that on Sunday the 17th December at 3.00pm, we have the Advent Carol Service and the blessing of the Memorial Tree. On Monday the 18th December at 7.30pm we have the Advent Reconciliation Service, Wednesday the 20th we are invited to sing Christmas Carols with the Petts Wood Churches together at 5.00pm at Petts Wood Station and Thursday the 21st December at 7.30pm we are invited to attend a Pre- Christmas Mediation evening

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



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<https://www.churchservices.tv/pettswood>  
**For the protection of all attend St James we request that you do not video live Masses using your phone during services.**  
 You can also take part in Adoration and Benediction by live stream.  
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 davidcamilleri@rcaos.org.uk  
 Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,  
 or by appointment.

<b>Third Sunday Of Advent</b> <b>Saturday 16th December</b>	<b>06:00pm</b> Mary Simons (Simon Family) Jane Blake (Blake Family)
<b>Sunday 17th December</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Wellbeing of David & Natalie Winn (Simon Family)  <b>11:00am</b> Cole & Kitty Keane RIP (L Keane) Majorie Farrell RIP (Foundation Mass) Reg Griffin RIP (Wedderspoon Family)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Monday 18th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> World Peace (CWL)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Tuesday 19th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Will Ryan RIP (G&B Ford)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Wednesday 20th December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Neil Morgan RIP & Deceased members of Burke Family (H Morgan) Mr Italo Ferretti RIP (Ferretti Family) <b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration - In Church
<b>Feria</b> <b>Thursday 21st December</b>	<b>10:00am</b> Thanksgiving (K&A Evans) Margaret Claridge (G Mulroy)
<b>Feria</b> <b>Friday 22nd December</b>	<b><u>No Mass from St James'</u></b>
<b>Fourth Sunday Of Advent</b> <b>Saturday 23rd December</b>	<b>06.00pm</b> Liana Levoir - Birthday Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)
<b>Sunday 24th December</b>	<b>09:15am</b> Monsignor Elliott RIP (F Simon)  <b>11:00am</b> Pat O'Sullivan RIP (L O'Sullivan)  <b>06.00pm</b> People Of The Parish  <b>11.30pm</b> Carols and Midnight Mass

### Christmas Offerings

The collection at the Masses over the Christmas period are your personal offerings for your Parish Priest.



#### The current needs for this week are for:

- Desserts/Puddings/Jelly/
- Cold Tinned Meat
- Fruit Juice
- Angel Delight
- Washing Up Liquid
- Toilet Roll
- Razors
- Women's & Mens Deodorant

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*St James – A shining light in Petts Wood*



# ST JAMES THE GREAT

## Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

24th December 2023

Fourth Sunday Of Advent



Fr David says....

As a family, we are going through the stage of proposals. Once the house is bought, the girls start thinking of whether their boyfriend are ever going to propose to them. Even more so the parents. For Luca my nephew it was another

story. Because HE had to do the proposing. Two years ago, Luca, was working in London and came to visit me in Petts Wood. I took him out for a nice meal and during the meal he started telling me about his plans of how he was going to propose to his girlfriend Raquel. He told me that he knew what kind of ring she liked and that he had taken his mother to choose and buy the ring for Rachel. He looked visibly excited. I had no idea how romantic my nephew was and so concealing my amazement, I complimented him about his ideas and his love for Raquel. Then he looked at me and said – “I hope that after all this planning, she will say yes”. I detected a little hesitation and anxiety in him. And at that point I also realised that through a proposal, one is putting oneself under the control of the other. One must feel vulnerable. But without the risk of asking – you will never experience the beauty and happiness of acceptance. It is good for you to know that Luca proposed to Raquel and she accepted. He sent me a clip of the moment of the proposal which I found very moving. When asking another person to spend the rest of your life with you, she/he need to buy into the idea. Those of you who have been married know what I am talking about. The person being asked must give their consent to everything that commitment entails: “in sickness and in health, for better or worse”. Because the stakes are high, a person needs to be able to say “no” if they are going to be unable to follow through. Any relationship, not just a romantic relationship, requires the full participation of those involved to realise the full effectiveness and beauty of life lived together rather than separately.

Today's gospel reading takes us back before Jesus was born, back to that moment when the angel Gabriel proposed the incarnation to Mary and asked her to participate in it. The organisation of Mary's story can be compared to other Old Testament stories about special births, such as Ismael and Isaac in Genesis and Samson in Judges in the Old Testament. In these instances, the focus was not necessarily on the person who was hearing the announcement, but on the child to be born. In the case of Mary, Mary and her response are the focus of this passage. Mary is not honoured because her womb carried Jesus, but she is honoured with all the other prophets because she believed God would accomplish what was promised and wanted to be a part of it. God proposed through Gabriel to Mary and God had to wait for her consent. God's heart must have trembled with anxiety awaiting the answer to his proposal by Mary.

First Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel and told her she is favoured by God – twice. Everyone wants to know that they matter that they are seen and noticed. Mary is no different than you and me. God also conveys that God is with her. A promise that we are also given through the birth of Jesus – Emmanuel - God is with us. Gabriel assures Mary of God's regard for her and presence before asking her to participate in the incarnation. Notice that Mary does not passively say “OK” right away. She asks for clarification or at least a little more information: “How can this be, since I am a virgin?”.

Gabriel offers a little explanation and then tells Mary about another miracle conception that of her relative Elizabeth, ending with the affirmation that “nothing will be impossible with God. If there is one message the world needs right now in a moment of high anxiety and seemingly unending wars, we can find it in this same statement by Gabriel. The enduring annunciation here is the annunciation of hope.

You find there, at the end of the proclamation of an angel, who declares this news with the gusto and enthusiasm of someone who knows he is making history. This figure, Gabriel stands before a young girl whose life is being rewritten and redirected right before her eyes and what does he do? he leaves her with this message “Nothing will be impossible for God”. Our God is a God without limits. He is the God of possibility. That possibility can even bring about something as elusive and as consoling as peace. In times of distress we need to shut out the anxious noise of the world and trust enough to listen to angels.

It is safe to say that Mary did not understand all the complexities of her decision. She may have understood that she would bear the stigma of an unplanned pregnancy that could jeopardise her relationship with Joseph or worse potentially result in stoning or shunning. She probably did not know that she would have to give birth in less than desirable circumstances and then flee as a refugee to another land to save her baby's life. She wouldn't have known that Jesus would go missing at age 12, bearing that panic only to find him talking with temple leaders about theology that she did not even understand. Mary probably worried about Jesus's antagonism of the temple leadership maybe thinking he was taking foolish risks. And then she might not have guessed that she would have to stand and watch her son die, bearing humiliation and great grief when he was called a criminal and sentenced to a criminals' death. She may have heard the prophet Simeon's words spoken to her at the temple, but she could not have imagined all that she would bear.

Participation in the promise of the incarnation does not mean everyone lives a life free of suffering. As we lean into the divine encounters in our own lives, we may be required to bear others' pain with them and not be able to fix it. Fixing is not our responsibility; holding space and place for others is sometimes all we can do. Our own resources are few, but God provides the love and hope we need to sustain ourselves and encourage others. Mary's call and transformation are offered as examples as we live and move in the world today.

In preparation for Christmas, prayerfully consider areas of your life and relationships that God might be asking for your consent and participation to move within and transform. Remembering that God makes the impossible possible, consider what saying yes might mean for you and others involved and give thanks for the promise of Jesus's presence now and always.

Thank you for taking the time to read my reflection for the 4th Sunday in Advent. I wish you all a Happy and Blessed Christmas. God bless you and your families.



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 or by appointment.

<p><b>Fourth Sunday Of Advent</b>  <b>Saturday 23rd December</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 24th December</b></p> <p><b>Christmas Eve</b></p>	<p><b>06:00pm</b> Liana Levoir - Birthday          Paul Keller RIP (B Keller)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> Monsignor Elliott RIP (F Simon)  <b>11:00am</b> Pat O'Sullivan RIP (L O'Sullivan)</p> <p><b>06.00pm</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>Midnight Mass</b> People Of The Parish</p>
<p><b>The Nativity Of The Lord - Christmas Day</b>  <b>Monday 25th December</b></p>	<p><b>9.15am</b> People of The Parish  <b>11am</b> People Of The Parish</p>
<p><b>Saint Stephen</b>  <b>Tuesday 26th December</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Father David Camilleri (H Marvell &amp; Family)</p>
<p><b>Saint John</b>  <b>Wednesday 27th December</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Mary Cash, Parents Liz &amp; Jim Cash</p> <p><b>10.45am - 11.15am</b> Eucharistic Adoration - In Church</p>
<p><b>The Holy Innocents</b>  <b>Thursday 28th December</b></p>	<p><b>10:00am</b> Will Ryan RIP &amp; Dennis Ackerman (L Henderson)</p>
<p><b>Saint Thomas of Canterbury</b>  <b>Friday 29th December</b></p>	<p><b>No Mass from St James'</b>  <b><u>Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am.</u></b>  <b>Click here for direct link to St Edmund's:</b>  <b><a href="https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham">https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham</a></b></p>
<p><b>The Holy Family Of Jesus, Mary and Joseph</b>  <b>Saturday 30th December</b></p> <p><b>Sunday 31st December</b></p>	<p><b>06.00pm</b> Krysia Patraller RIP (P Murray)</p> <p><b>09:15am</b> People Of The Parish</p> <p><b>11:00am</b> Michael Rafferty RIP (G rafferty)</p> <p><b>6pm</b> People Of The Parish</p>

**Christmas Offerings** - The collection at the Masses over the Christmas period are your personal offerings for your Parish Priest.  
 The Parish office will be closed from Friday 22nd December to Tuesday 2nd January. We hope you all have a wonderful Christmas and New year.