

ST MICHAEL'S NEWSLETTER



Vol. 59 No 28
6th / 7th June 2020

St Michael's Parish Office,
The Marld, Ashtead KT21 1RS
Email: smichaeloffice@gmail.com
Parish Priest: Rev. Provost Anthony Churchill
Priest's House – 01372 270842
Deacon: Rev David Pattinson Tel: 07788 916910
Website: www.stmichaelashtead.org.uk
To book the Parish Hall please email the office.
Hall wi-fi: [Netgear41](#) (password) [grandcomet148](#)
The office is CLOSED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE
Please ring Fr Tony on the number above in an emergency.

This week's newsletter is 3 pages

The Most Holy Trinity NO MASS

The bishops of England and Wales have decided that Mass and other liturgies will not be celebrated in public until further notice.

**Priests will celebrate Mass in private only.
Churches will be closed until further notice.**

St Michael's Online Prayer and Worship during the pandemic. Thursday at 7pm – 7.30pm

Thursday online prayer services are proving popular. We have another one this Thursday 11th June (with gathering from 6.55pm). This gives us a lovely opportunity to meet and see one another; and to share our worship and prayers during this difficult time. Do look out for the emailed link - and then it's easy - you just click on the link and wave to everyone before the meeting begins. *If you don't regularly receive these emails, do please let Bill know (at smichaelweb@gmail.com) and he'll add you to the Parish circulation list.*

Please pray for the souls of those whose anniversaries occur at about this time.

Rev. John Brockman, Donald Cameron,
Tony O'Brian, John Lea,
Cathy Waters, Kathy Lee,
Myra Moonie, Kenneth Clinnick and
François Menjou
May they Rest in Peace

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Margaret McArdle, Myra Vanner, Sylvia Crampin, Clare Derry,
Peggy Brogan, Leonard Anderson, Vincent Smyth,
Emily Scarborough, George Stuart Baxter,
Bart Gruzalski, Sheila Hanks, Sarah Bishop,
Michael Roche, Pauline Hooper, Elizabeth Samson,
Fr Alan Sharpe, Bill Danson, Jean Rawlinson, Kay Fry,
Margaret Beeby, Anne Burman, Alfredo Sheffield,
Nina Grant, Barbara Long, Johanna Rainsbury,
Stephen Sullivan, Rachel Fulton and Michael Machese

and all who need our prayers.

Going back to Church

My Dear Friends,

Whenever I meet parishioners in the street or talk on the phone the question arises: "When can we get back to Mass? The short answer is that I just don't know. The Government set up a task force of the leaders of the different faiths to look at the questions involved in re opening churches and other places of worship. The Cardinal is a member of that group along with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Chief Rabbi and representatives of other faiths.

The Catholic Bishops submitted a detailed plan for re-opening our churches following the existing guidelines on social distancing etc. This plan was drawn up following the advice of doctors and other health professionals. It is now three weeks since that plan was submitted, and we are waiting for a response.

Last weekend Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop John Wilson of Southwark spoke publicly about the urgent need, as we see it, for first steps to be taken.

The members of the Task Force recognise that different groups have different needs. For Christians the first issue is the possibility of going privately to pray in our churches. The Bishops took the view at the outset of the crisis, that we should take every step we could to minimise the risk of spreading the virus, even it meant closing our churches. We have kept to this for the best part of ten weeks now. As we see the gradual easing of the Lockdown the time has surely come to look again at what is reasonable.

I hope that the Government will take a serious look at this question and, at least, indicate a timetable for the gradual re opening of our churches.

The question of public Masses is more complicated, but again detailed proposals have been submitted. I don't want to take time here speculating about what will be allowed, or about how we might manage it here in Ashtead.

I can say now that it will not be possible simply to return to what we were doing before the Lockdown. It will require quite a lot of patience on all our parts. I will say more about this when we have more information.

There is a very positive aspect to all this. I suspect, and I certainly hope that we shall appreciate the Mass and Holy Communion much more after this enforced absence. I hope that our sense of belonging to Christ, and in Christ to each other, will bring us to Mass with a deeper faith and a renewed sense of community.

Last Monday was the Feast of Our Lady, Mother of the Church. We ask Her to pray for us at this time, and for all those in government and in the Church who have to make these important decisions.

There's an old prayer which I like:
"Lord give me patience. - But Hurry."

With my love and prayers for each of you
Fr Tony

Parish Finances in the time of Coronavirus

It is hard to believe that our church has already been locked for over 70 days, including the Feasts of Easter and Pentecost. One day soon, the church will be open again. However, there is a reality that all churches now face, including us. This is financial reality. Since the lockdown began, there have been no Masses and therefore no church collection baskets. Income has decreased dramatically. St Michael's is better off than many others. The level of our decrease is around 45%. The situation would have been worse if we had not had the number of standing orders that parishioners have kept going. This has been an income lifeline.

These are trying times for everyone. Some people will have been hit harder than others because they have been furloughed or worse. Money is tight. However, if you are able and would like to contribute, please look at the Just Giving link in the newsletter or on the parish Facebook page. You might have already done this. I must emphasise that you should only consider this if you are able to afford to do so.

Like everyone, I look forward to seeing you all again, face-to-face, in the not-too-distant future. Thank you.

Tom Dore, Chair of Parish Finance

Dear All,



As you know the Kagera region in Tanzania has been affected by the Corona virus for some time. Unfortunately, Father Vitalis has now confirmed that Covid 19 has reached Nyaishozi village - the hub of the district. To date, there have been 12 cases with 2 deaths.

The Tanzanian government is providing PPE for clinicians, but there is no support for the local community. Social distancing and self-isolation is impossible in such a poor area, where families live in one room shacks. We have previously sent funds for two local educational radio campaigns and equipment to set up wash stations. We are now sending further funds for the large scale purchase of gloves and masks to be distributed to the general public. We are so grateful that some Ashtead residents have already generously donated to this campaign. If ever there was a time that our friends in Nyaishozi needed our help, it is now. Please visit our website to donate if you can, Many thanks for your support, Very Best wishes, Tina Rayburn – Action in Africa

'Lunchbox' and 'The Meeting Room'

These two local organisations normally provide drop-in centres and mobile food banks for those in need. Because of the Coronavirus pandemic, each is currently unable to provide its normal drop-in centres but is continuing to function but in a different way. 'Lunchbox' is operating its mobile food bank. If you would like to donate money, non-perishable food or toiletries, 'Lunchbox' is open to receive donations every Wednesday from 10.30am to 12.30pm at the Methodist Church Hall, Church Road, Leatherhead, KT22 8AY. Last week two parishioners donated £200.

'The Meeting Room' is providing a similar service. On Mondays and Fridays, it is delivering hot meals and sandwiches plus other essentials to its clients. It has established arrangements with supermarkets for basic food donations but would welcome financial donations to enable it to purchase little treats, etc., for its clients. Cheques should be made payable to 'The Meeting Room' and dropped off to Phil Ward at 49 Ottways Lane, Ashtead.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO:

Zac Hanlon 7 and Sam Warburton 5 on Sunday
Arianna Keun 10 on Monday
Harrison Neal 9 and Tara Boyle 11 on Thursday
Ciara Langmead 6 on Friday
Ivan Villaruz 10 on Saturday

Children's Liturgy

Following a successful pilot last week, we will be running a regular **Children's Liturgy** via Zoom during lockdown on Sunday mornings at 9.30. The Zoom link will be posted on the Facebook page or you can email emmalangbridge@btinternet.com if you would like it sent to you.

Parish Communications

Do keep an eye on the media while we're in lockdown! Visit the **Parish website** <http://www.stmichaelashtead.org.uk/> Our **Face Book Group** now has **200+** members. To join us, search for **St. Michael's Ashtead on Face Book**. We'll be expecting you!
Alison, Steve & Bill

This Week's Readings:

Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9; Daniel 3:52-56 r. 52,
2 Corinthians 13:11-13; John 3:16-18

You can see these readings at:

<https://www.universalis.com/20200607/mass.htm>

Online Giving – Coronavirus Lockdown

With the closure of our Church, the Coronavirus is affecting us materially as well as spiritually. Bills keep coming, but income is significantly down.

A good many parishioners give via standing order. If you can do this, it simplifies the admin and is great for self-distancing!

For more details email smichaelweb@gmail.com

About half the week's income usually arrives via the collection baskets so we are missing that. The Diocese has set up a web page for online giving. The web link for this donation page is:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/parishoffertory>

The money will come in to the Diocese and then be sent to the parishes accordingly. **So don't forget to name the parish, area or priest when donating.**

For more info, contact Laura Maydew-Gale E:

communications@abdiocese.org.uk T: 07552 249 829

These are difficult times. Many of us here in the UK have suffered terribly because of coronavirus, coping with grief, anxiety and hardship. In the world's poorest countries, health care systems are not coping with the coronavirus and families are going hungry because people cannot go out to earn money. **CAFOD** is helping protect and improve the lives of our sisters and brothers during this global emergency. If you are in a position to support our Coronavirus Appeal, you can donate at cafod.org.uk/coronavirus. Thank you.

To access Mass online visit the following websites:

St Dunstan's, Woking <https://www.churchservices.tv/woking>
Sacred Heart, Hove <http://sacredheartrove.org.uk/videos.html>
Sacred Heart, Caterham-Mass (live and recorded), Adoration and the Rosary. <https://www.churchservices.tv/caterham>
St Paul's, Haywards Heath will be streaming via Facebook.
The Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham offers a 12 noon online Pilgrim Mass each day
<https://www.churchservices.tv/churches/> provides live streaming and recordings from churches around the country and Ireland.
Try Also: Vatican TV Live, Angelus news, EWTN

You can e-mail contributions to the Newsletter to newsletter@stmichaelashtead.org.uk
to arrive by 9.30am on Friday morning

Father Tony gave this reflection on Thursday evening at the weekly service on "Zoom"

Ten weeks down the line

Tomorrow it will be 10 weeks since the last public Mass here in St. Michael's. It is already the longest period without public Masses since the days of persecution. It has been a strange time.

Each morning I celebrate Mass in an empty and locked church.

But I am not on my own. As at every Mass, I am surrounded by Our Lady and the Saints in Heaven.

That includes so many of our loved ones who have gone before us.

I like to imagine Teresa Grogan, and Monica McAllister and Michael Hanks, to name but three.

Nonetheless it is still a bit strange. No one arrives late or leaves early.

There's no rustling of Mass leaflets, and no noises off from small children.

But that is what I miss. We are not a crowd of disembodied spirits.

We come together at Mass as human beings with all our human qualities, and funny ways.

For you too I think, it has been a strange time. Many of you have been following Mass live-streamed from churches all over the place.

It's great that we can do that, but it's not quite the same as being in church. You miss the human interaction with other parishioners. Above all you miss being able to receive Christ Himself in Holy Communion.

I am hoping that before much longer we will be allowed to come together for Mass. The Bishops are pushing the government on this. You may have heard the Cardinal speaking on radio last Sunday about the need to open our churches for private prayers in the first place, and then for Mass.

Inevitably there will be problems with public Masses.

I will say more about that when we have a clearer idea about the timetable for re-opening and the restrictions we will face.

Clearly a number of things we normally enjoy won't be possible.

I am not sure if we will be allowed to sing, for example. I am not sure how the Children's Liturgy will work. We will do what we can.

These weeks of lockdown give us a chance to think about what really matters.

In these coming weeks it will be "Mass as best we can", - an opportunity to remind ourselves of what the Mass is all about.

At its heart is the Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. The central actor is Christ himself. The Sacrifice of his life, given for us on the Cross two thousand years ago, is made present on the altar. Through our Baptism we are able to share with Jesus as He offers Himself to the Father. And we offer ourselves with him

In Holy Communion he comes to us to share His life with us.

Until things get better, Mass will have to be pared back to the essentials.

During the days of persecution in this country our Catholic ancestors had to do the same. They couldn't have Mass with all the ceremony and the music they remembered, but at huge risk and in great secrecy they persevered.

Nothing we shall be asked to give up for a while can compare with what they went through.

Let's pray that, both the opening up of our churches for private prayer, and the resumption of public Mass will come soon.

Meanwhile let's remind ourselves of WHY the Mass matters so much.

Fr. Tony