

Dear all,

This weekend we enter into Holy Week, journeying liturgically with Christ into the Glory of His Death and Resurrection. The Church encourages us to move from the Solemn Entry into Jerusalem of Our Lord and Saviour towards The Sacred Triduum, which encapsulates as one event His journey from Death to Resurrection. We are encouraged to attend, if possible, the entire Triduum, beginning on Holy Thursday with The Mass of The Last Supper and the agony of Gethsemane, dying spiritually with our Brother and Saviour on Good Friday and rising with Him in The Easter Vigil Mass. This we do, not merely as spectators, but as a people who enter into the reality of these sacred events, walking alongside our Saviour, thirsting for Eternal Life, proclaiming it as One Body to our sinful, broken world. Details of all our Services are listed in this News, so keep it close to you!

Palm Sunday

Those attending the 9:00am Tadley Mass on Sunday are asked to be at the church by 8:45am to gather for the Blessing of the Palms. The weather forecast is good, but it is expected to be a chilly morning. Wrap up well!

Easter Sunday Lift

I am still awaiting an offer of lifts to St Oswald's Church after the Easter Sunday 9:00am Mass and back to Tadley afterwards. Having celebrated the Easter Vigil, starting at 9:00pm on Saturday evening and being up early Sunday morning to check the church heating in Tadley and prepare for the Sacred Liturgy, I shall be somewhat tired by midday. Driving whilst tired is not wise nor safe.

St Oswald's Church Re-Opens

As was advised to parishioners early this week, there will be Mass at St Oswald's Church on Palm Sunday morning at 11:00am. I appreciate the emails of some who attend the church expressing their joy that they shall be able to celebrate Easter there.

St Oswald, Where Have You Gone?

I often comment that The Lord has a sense of humour. He certainly needed it in respect of those He chose to be priests and I don't think times have changed. Since the development of the Ten Year Mission Plan, St Oswald appears to have joined in the fun! When the first draft of 'You Will Be My Witnesses' was issued in July 2022, his church appeared to have vanished. This was one of a number of mistakes in the document which the Diocesan Team rectified, having told priests to let the Diocese know if they found inaccuracies.

In early 2023 the Diocesan Ad Clerum (letter to priests) published feedback concerning proposals for reorganisation of Pastoral Areas to become single Parishes in a few years from now and all were listed, excepting my report that parishioners in both Tadley and Burghfield Common were of the opinion that St Oswald's Church should be moved to the Reading area. Understandably, I contacted the Diocese requesting why this opinion was not listed. I am grateful to both Bishop Philip and Heather Hauschild (Diocesan Chief Operating Officer) for responding to my concern. Heather's response follows, and will be of interest to you all:

"I am writing to let you know that the Bishop and the Bishop's Council members thanks you for your feedback and the proposal that St Oswald's Church, Burghfield Common, should be included within the Reading Pastoral area. However, after much discussion, it was concluded that St Oswald's should not be split from Tadley at this time. The Reading Pastoral area is already large, and the conclusion was that the current should be retained.

In future, there will need to be decisions about the future of individual churches within pastoral areas. As the plan is implemented over the coming years, there will be further opportunities to consider what is best for each local community.

I am sorry that this was missed from the schedule of feedback when *Ad clerum* was published, and this will be rectified to make it clear that we did indeed receive your feedback and that the question had been considered. I believe the Bishop will be publishing the final version of the Pastoral area proposals shortly. I have copied him into this correspondence so he is aware that I have written to you".

However, St Oswald has the last laugh! Perusing 'You Will Be My Witnesses: Future Parish Structure' in the recent e-News, I noted that Burghfield Common had again disappeared from the list which outlines, at present, the new Parish of Basingstoke to be established in time. I have let Heather know so that St Oswald's area may return. No doubt St Michael and himself are having a hearty laugh in the Heavenly Kingdom - and putting a good word in to the Lord for your priest - which he needs!

No Successor To Kathryn At Present

On a more sober note, it was necessary to cancel the proposed interviews for a new part-time Administrator arranged for Thursday 30th March. In spite of several applications, in the last couple of days we received cancellations because of new jobs having been accepted. Late Wednesday afternoon, after Kathryn and I had a telephone and Zoom discussion with Karena Fulford, Head of the Diocese's HR, who was going to join Barry Rockhill (Burghfield Common) and Denis Murtagh (Tadley) for the interviews, it was decided to reconsider the appointment with a further request for applications. A new application process begins today until 19th April. Once again, I express the deep gratitude of the Parish to Kathryn for her outstanding commitment in providing limited hours whilst working full-time as Administrator at Douai Abbey. However, this cannot continue indefinitely for both of us.

Holy Week and Easter Service Times

Palm Sunday - 2nd April

6:00pm Vigil Mass - Saturday 1st April - St Michael's Church, Tadley

9:00am Mass - St Michael's Church, Tadley

11:00am Mass - St Oswald's Church, Burghfield Common

Chrism Mass - Tuesday 4th April

This is celebrated at Portsmouth Cathedral at 11:00am on Tuesday 4th April and is open to all who wish to attend. Priests and deacons renew their Ordination commitments and the Sacred Oils are blessed for the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Anointing of the Sick. I will not be available in the parish that day.

The Sacred Triduum

All are encouraged to attend this as one single liturgical celebration:

Maundy Thursday - 6th April: Evening Mass of The Lord's Supper at 7:30pm, followed by Watching before the Blessed Sacrament at St Michael's Church, Tadley, until 10:30pm.

Good Friday - 7th April: Celebration of The Lord's Passion at 3:00pm in St Michael's Church, Tadley. This is a day of Fast and Abstinence.

The Easter Vigil - Saturday 8th April: At 9:00pm-The lighting of the Easter Candle and other ceremonies leading into the First Mass of Easter at St Michael's Church, Tadley.

Easter Day - Sunday 9th April

9:00am Mass - St Michael's Church, Tadley

11:00am Mass - St Oswald's Church, Burghfield Common

Silchester Palm Sunday Service

On Sunday 2nd April, gather in the Village Hall car park for a 9.30 departure to walk to and enter the Roman City with stops at stations along the way for readings, hymns and prayers. The procession will be led as usual by a donkey although unfortunately we will not have an escort of Roman soldiers this year. The aim is to gather in the amphitheatre for an open-air service which should start at 10.30am, so we pray for kind weather! Please join us for the walk and/or the service, dogs and children welcome!

CTAT Good Friday Service

This will take place at St Mary's Church at 10:30am on Friday 7th April. I hope to see many of you there.

Good Friday Witness - Silchester

Also on Good Friday, 7th April, the Silchester Act of Witness with the Three Crosses will be at 9.30am outside the Methodist Church and everybody is invited to join.

Second Collections

There is an obligatory Collection at the 3:00pm Good Friday Service for the Holy Places. This supports the preservation of the Sacred Places in the Holy Land and promotes our Christian presence there. You can give online HERE<<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/holy-land-second-collection-2023>>.

The Easter Collection

Your Offerings at the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday Masses are traditionally the opportunity for you to give Fr Patrick a personal gift to him as your priest. Our parish's online giving page can be found HERE<<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/tadley-st-michael-and-st-oswald-catholic-parish-easter-collection-2023>>. He is greatly appreciative of your generosity.

Finally, we keep in prayer Pope Francis, that he will recover from his hospital treatment for respiratory problems and that he will not overtax his health if he returns to Ministry before the Triduum.

To all a deeply spiritual Holy Week and celebration of the Sacred Triduum, which officially concludes on the evening of Easter Sunday.

Father Patrick