



NEWSLETTER

AN EXTENDED EASTER NEWSLETTER!! PREPARING FOR THE RESURRECTION!!

As we approach Palm Sunday and Holy Week, journeying towards the Easter Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and The Easter Vigil, there is an air of unreality around us in our Parish Area, around our fellow Christians locally and throughout the world. A sense of ‘this is not how it should be’!

Yet this, in a different way, is how it was during the time leading to the first Easter. So we should seize this moment of uncertainty, of fear, of confusion and walk with it alongside Christ in His journey to Death and Resurrection. And allowing our Brother and Saviour to become part of this unreal situation, as he was uncertain, fearful and confused in those final days leading to Resurrection.

One of the things that I have found is a time of grace in the present emergency resulting in a greater opportunity to pray and reflect upon Sacred Scripture in this Year of the Word, feeding on it as one chews the Bread of Eucharist in preparation for Resurrection.

The Psalms seem to speak more clearly in the silence and lack of rush given to us in this strange time. Psalms which remind us of the shortness of life, of our sinfulness, but also of God’s calming presence – ‘BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD’ – and of His enduring love for us

The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures – the Bible – draw us into a companionship with the Saviour who has experienced even more deeply than any of us that which we are struggling with at present. We walk with the King who is gradually becoming isolated in His journey, who fears the death to come, but accepts that it will lead to Glory, not only for Him, but for all who trust in Him and love Him. A King who is broken emotionally even before being physically crushed – ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’ A King who knows that even at the Last Supper, his closest followers seem to have little idea of that which is about to happen.

So, in the coming days, read the Scriptures which lead us into Holy Week and carry us through the Triduum. Make this time, one of being with Our Saviour, entering spiritually and emotionally into His journey into Glory. To all a Holy and Happy Easter!

A PRAYER LIST FOR HOLY WEEK AND THE TRIDUUM

For all the Baptised – that they may grow in a greater understanding of the Presence of God during this Holy Time.

For those who will not be Baptised this Easter – that they may look forward to being washed clean of sin at a future time.

For Governments and World Leaders – that they will work together to destroy this virus which afflicts our nations.

For all the those in whatever way are working to keep all alive and safe – that they may be protected themselves and given inner strength in love of their neighbours.

For ourselves – that through the Power of Christ, we shall look forward, without fear to a hopeful future for the world.

For those who are unwell for any reason – that this may be a time of Grace through the Presence of our Glorified Lord.

For all who die in the coming days – that they may enjoy Easter in the Heavenly Kingdom and that their loved ones may experience Easter Peace.

THANK YOU

Father Patrick expresses his sincere thanks to all, Parishioners and non-Parishioners, who have offered their help and support to him during this challenging time. He is greatly impressed and very proud of his parishioners in how they have worked so well together, offering many different forms of support and care within and outside the Parish Community. He expresses his thanks to Bishop Philip for telephoning to check that he is well and to Father Chris Rutledge, our Pastoral Area Coordinator, for frequently making contact to see that he is well; to Father Jim Keenan who maintains his sense of humour and trust in God, whilst himself in isolation and also to his CTAT colleagues in ministry for their fellowship, and also to our part time secretary, Barbara Davis for her professional support and kindness.

COVENANT TO THE PEOPLE

This Parish Group may be able to assist you at this time.

Contact Details: Gerry Penfold : 01189 811247

Bill Reilly: 01189 813784

FINALLY:

All who are unwell and who have died will be remembered by Father Patrick in Mass during this holy time.

He takes this opportunity of wishing Deacon Tony and his wife, Pam, a Happy Easter. An unfortunate consequence of the Coronavirus is that Deacon Tony will be not be assisting this Holy Week, at our Palm Sunday Morning Masses, due to Church closures, as had been agreed with Father Chris some time back.

After Easter Sunday, although Father Patrick will be available, like many he will be trying to have a break from the frenetic pace of the last few weeks. He hopes Parishioners will find helpful the CTAT Conference Call Report, which looks forward to a better future.

In respect of celebrating Holy Week and Easter, please refer to the section marked Easter for ideas.

For all other news, including Sunday offerings/Standing Orders, the new Prayer and Listening Service and links to live Masses being streamed, please see the News page of the parish website -

<http://stmandsto.org.uk/index.php/news>

CTAT CONFERENCE CALL 1st April 2020

Our Church Leaders in Churches Together Around Tadley, are keeping in contact each Wednesday from 2.00 – 3.00 pm through the use of modern technology. This is the result of the technical expertise of Pastor Greg Whittick of The Community Church, providing us with an important time to grow closer in our Christian Fellowship during the present emergency, and enabling us to work together to address local issues and to plan for the future.

During the Conference Call we discussed a number of issues, concluding with prayer at the end. We thought particularly of the Reverend Ruth Midcalf, grieving the death of her Mother. Please keep Ruth and her husband in prayer especially as she cannot be available to her local Methodist Communities during this time.

Pastor Greg, Father Patrick, the Reverend Kay Blackwell of The United Reformed Church, and the Reverends Richard Harlow and Gill Sakikini of The Anglican Church considered the following areas:

a) FUNERALS

This is a difficult time for the families of those who have died not only from the virus, but very often from natural causes. At one recent funeral, only one person was able to attend. All agreed that we should host as far as possible Memorial Services for those who asked for them once the present crisis ends.

b) EMERGENCY SUPPORT IN TADLEY AND BASINGSTOKE

It is becoming obvious that there will be people and families requiring help of various kinds in the coming weeks as jobs are lost or workers go on furlough under the Government's scheme. We agreed that we should be engaged as far as possible with any initiatives by the local authorities in our areas, and be ready to call for volunteers under the age of 70 to assist in accordance with safeguarding and medical guidelines. We shall update our church communities on any developments.

The Basingstoke Foodbank, with an outreach in Tadley, have good quantities of food at the present moment, but would appreciate financial support. This can be learned about from the Foodbank website: <https://basingstoke.foodbank.org.uk/>

As a matter of interest, the West Berks Foodbank, which Father Patrick had agreed could work free of charge from The Leonard Rooms at St Oswald's Church some time ago, has now transferred to its warehouse on Greenham Common, near Thatcham. Deliveries are being made by volunteers from there, and Father Patrick has already helped one resident in Burghfield Common to volunteer.

c) SPIRITUAL SUPPORT TO OUR CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES

Father Patrick spoke about the streaming of Masses which is advertised on the news page of our Parish Website and which many Parishioners have found valuable, also about the parish evangelising cell groups in Tadley that are now meeting virtually.

Pastor Greg has facilitated a form of Compline (Night Prayer) with his technical skills which between 15 -35 of his community take part in each night, and also has celebrated a Communion service for his members by streaming.

The Reverend Gill has been developing a Stations of the Cross Reflection, which around 50 people engage with.

The Reverend Richard mentioned the Alpha Programme which he is continuing online, which is beneficial to some in isolation.

The Reverend Kay has been engaged in streaming services in her Basingstoke and Tadley Churches.

d) EASTER

There was general agreement that we should ask our Communities to witness, in some way, to our Crucified and Risen Lord in Holy Week and after.

As had already been agreed before the crisis, the Reverend Gill will be arranging a special cross outside St Mary's Church, not far from St Michael's Church, which will enable people to reflect upon as they pass whilst doing their daily exercise allowed by Government regulations. Her fine artistic skills will come into play for this.

We decided to ask our church members to place a small cross or crucifix in their windows during Holy Week and Father Patrick suggested that flowers be placed behind the crosses on the Day of Resurrection and on the days following. Possibly, a specially prepared poster could be placed in window reminding people of Holy Week leading to Easter could be prepared by families. Some might be even able to make an Easter Tomb whilst isolating. So please act on this.

We are a Resurrection People, and filled with the hope of Resurrection should make this Easter a time of Hope, looking forward to Christ leading us out of this crisis to new ways of living. Although we were not together as clergy, there was a palpable sense of union in Christ as we approached the greatest day in the Churches Liturgy.

For members of the Parish Area, Roy Singh, of the Knights of St Columba, has kindly provided the link for the traditional Catholic poster for Holy Week and Easter.

Please feel free to use this resource as soon as it is available. Free Easter Sunday Poster - from KSC website: to <http://www.ksc.org.uk> On the front page scroll down left hand side to find latest news and at the bottom of this

-column you find the link to Holy Week Posters and the free download.

e) LOOKING FORWARD IN HOPE

It was generally agreed that the Tadley Holiday Club, should be cancelled this year, as it seems unlikely that there will be adequate time to prepare for it properly, even if the crisis ends by July. However, we are looking to arrange a celebration for the 50 or more children who normally attend, sometime in August. Sadly, the successful Tadley Arts Festival is also cancelled this year, again because of the uncertainty of the situation and the considerable effort that goes into arranging it by church leaders. So look forward to it in 2021!!

We come together next Wednesday 8th April. Please keep us in your prayers.

A VERY HAPPY, HOLY AND HEALTHY EASTER TO YOU ALL

FATHER PATRICK