

PARISH CLERGY:

Fr. Craig Davies
(Parish Priest)

Rev. John Higgins
(Parish Deacon)

PARISH REPS:

SAFEGUARDING:

Mr Gerry Wintrip
(01922 457471)

HEALTH & SAFETY:

Mr Phil Probert
(01922 458406)

ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS



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This Parish is
part of the
Archdiocese of
Birmingham

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Charity
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THE YEAR OF THE WORD



DATE

Sunday 26th April 2020

SUNDAY

**Third Sunday of Easter
Year A**

DIVINE OFFICE

Week 3

In response to COVID-19 all public Masses and liturgies have been suspended until further notice. We are, however, live-streaming all of our Services.

Please Note That All Masses Will Be Said In Private

Sunday 26th April Third Sunday of Easter	9.30am	Mary Borg RIP ^(YD)
Monday 27th April Easter Feria	9.15am	Int. of Barbara Wood ^(Sr. A)
Tuesday 28th April St. Louis Marie de Montfort, Priest, Memorial	9.15am	Tom O'Brien RIP ^(BO'B)
Wednesday 29th April St. Catherine of Siena Virgin, Doctor of the Church, Patron of Europe, Feast	9.15am	No Services Today
Thursday 30th April St. Pius V, Pope, Religious, Memorial	7.30pm	James Flynn RIP ^(SVP)
Friday 1st May St. Joseph the Worker, Memorial	9.15am	Canon Gerry Breen RIP ^(KW&Family)
Saturday 2nd May St. Athanasius Bishop, Doctor of the Church, Memorial	9.30am	Jack Crehan RIP ^(CM&Family)
Sunday 3rd May Fourth Sunday of Easter (World Day of Prayer for Vocations)	9.30am	People of the Parish

Pope Francis

As we look forward to a slow and arduous recovery from the pandemic, the risk is that an even worse virus may strike us: that of a selfish indifference that forgets those who are left behind.

Thank You

Thank you to all parishioners who have, in any way shape of form, been keeping themselves busy by tidying and weeding the church grounds. Over the past few weeks the grounds around the church and Presbytery have slowly been transformed, and are now beginning to look better than ever. Whilst ensuring that we are following the rules with regards to 'Social Distancing', if you would like to help in any way please contact Fr. Craig who will pass your number to Dawn.

Devotions for use at home

I have added a page to our Website called 'Devotions' where you will find a selection of prayers to help you during these strange times we are living in.

Walsall Life



Please remember in your prayers the pregnant women, new mothers and babies in our Walsall house, and all those we are trying to help.

Recently Deceased

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of **Brian Joseph Hornblower, Bp. Leo McCartie** and **Chris Scott**, on whose souls Sweet Jesus have mercy. We pray also for all who have lost their lives due to Coronavirus. May they Rest in Peace.

Sick in the Parish

Please pray for all the sick in the parish, that God will bless and comfort them. Please remember especially:

Nancy Levell, Antonio Bigongiari, Olivia (Dotty) Cutler, Ann & Keith Allford, Deacon John, Joan Hart, Emma Jones, Anna Morgan ^{nee Meehan}, Margaret Cooper, Holly Brady, Mike Mander, Jo Cooke, Anne Humphreys, Pat Gray, Paul Mott, Theresa Chandler, Evelyn Hawkey, Fr. Paul Chamberlain, Cath & Paddy Breen, Max Lewis, Marguerite Baxendale, David Piggott, Mary Ellis, Clare Cooksey & Aine McDonagh.

Prayers for the Unborn

Whilst we cannot gather in church to pray the Rosary for the unborn before the Blessed Sacrament, we can still pray the Rosary at home. The Intention for May is: **For women and families struggling with infertility.**

Live Simply Prayer – Week 22

CAF+D

Catholic Agency for
Overseas Development

Lord Jesus, may we, by our daily lives and through our words to others, bear witness each day to the meaning of your resurrection for all humankind.

Vocations Sunday

Next Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Easter is traditionally 'Vocations Sunday'. On this day we, as the Catholic Community, are asked to pray in a very particular way for the gift of Vocations in the church. In preparation for this day I am including in this weekend's Newsletter:

A MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 2020 WORLD DAY OF VOCATIONS - (3rd May 2020)

Words of Vocation

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On 4 August last year, the 160th anniversary of the death of the Curé of Ars, I chose to write a letter to all those priests who daily devote their lives to the service of God's people in response to the Lord's call.

On that occasion, I chose four key words *pain*, *gratitude*, *encouragement* and *praise* as a way of thanking priests and supporting their ministry. I believe that today, on this 57th World Day of Prayer for Vocations, those words can be addressed to the whole people of God, against the backdrop of the Gospel passage that recounts for us the remarkable experience of Jesus and Peter during a stormy night on the Sea of Galilee (cf. *Mt 14:22-33*).

After the multiplication of the loaves, which had astonished the crowds, Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and precede him to the other shore, while he took leave of the people. The image of the disciples crossing the lake can evoke our own life's journey. Indeed, the boat of our lives slowly advances, restlessly looking for a safe haven and prepared to face the perils and promises of the sea, yet at the same time trusting that the helmsman will ultimately keep us on the right course. At times, though, the boat can drift off course, misled by mirages, not the lighthouse that leads it home, and be tossed by the tempests of difficulty, doubt and fear.

Something similar takes place in the hearts of those who, called to follow the Teacher of Nazareth, have to undertake a crossing and abandon their own security to become the Lord's disciples. The risk involved is real: the night falls, the headwinds howl, the boat is tossed by the waves, and fear of failure, of not being up to the call, can threaten to overwhelm them.

The Gospel, however, tells us that in the midst of this challenging journey we are not alone. Like the first ray of dawn in the heart of the night, the Lord comes walking on the troubled waters to join the disciples; he invites Peter to come to him on the waves, saves him when he sees him sinking and, once in the boat, makes the winds die down.

The first word of vocation, then, is *gratitude*. Taking the right course is not something we do on our own, nor does it depend solely on the road we choose to travel. How we find fulfilment in life is more than a decision we

make as isolated individuals; above all else, it is a response to a call from on high. The Lord points out our destination on the opposite shore and he grants us the courage to board the boat. In calling us, he becomes our helmsman; he accompanies and guides us; he prevents us from running aground on the shoals of indecision and even enables us to walk on surging waters.

Every vocation is born of that gaze of love with which the Lord came to meet us, perhaps even at a time when our boat was being battered by the storm. "Vocation, more than our own choice, is a response to the Lord's unmerited call" (*Letter to Priests*, 4 August 2019). We will succeed in discovering and embracing our vocation once we open our hearts in gratitude and perceive the passage of God in our lives.

When the disciples see Jesus walking towards them on the sea, they first think that he is a ghost and are filled with fear. Jesus immediately reassures them with words that should constantly accompany our lives and our vocational journey: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear" (*Mt 14:27*). This, then, is the second word I wish to offer you: *encouragement*.

What frequently hinders our journey, our growth, our choosing the road the Lord is marking out for us, are certain "ghosts" that trouble our hearts. When we are called to leave safe shores and embrace a state of life like marriage, ministerial priesthood, consecrated life our first reaction is often from the "ghost of disbelief". Surely, this vocation is not for me! Can this really be the right path? Is the Lord really asking me to do this?

Those thoughts can keep growing justifications and calculations that sap our determination and leave us hesitant and powerless on the shore where we started. We think we might be wrong, not up to the challenge, or simply glimpsing a ghost to be exorcised.

The Lord knows that a fundamental life choice like marriage or special consecration to his service calls for *courage*. He knows the questions, doubts and difficulties that toss the boat of our heart, and so he reassures us: "Take heart, it is I; have no fear!" We know in faith that he is present and comes to meet us, that he is ever at our side even amid stormy seas. This knowledge sets us free from that lethargy which I have called "sweet sorrow" (*Letter to Priests*, 4 August 2019), the interior discouragement that

hold us back from experiencing the beauty of our vocation.

In the *Letter to Priests*, I also spoke about pain, but here I would like to translate the word differently, as *fatigue*. Every vocation brings with it a responsibility. The Lord calls us because he wants to enable us, like Peter, to “walk on water”, in other words, to take charge of our lives and place them at the service of the Gospel, in the concrete and everyday ways that he shows us, and specifically in the different forms of lay, priestly and consecrated vocation. Yet, like Saint Peter, our desire and enthusiasm coexist with our failings and fears.

If we let ourselves be daunted by the responsibilities that await us whether in married life or priestly ministry or by the hardships in store for us, then we will soon turn away from the gaze of Jesus and, like Peter, we will begin to sink. On the other hand, despite our frailty and poverty, faith enables us to walk towards the Risen Lord and to weather every storm. Whenever fatigue or fear make us start to sink, Jesus holds out his hand to us. He gives us the enthusiasm we need to live our vocation with joy and fervour.

When Jesus at last boards the boat, the winds die down and the waves are calmed. Here we have a beautiful image of what the Lord can do at times of turbulence and tempest in our lives. He stills those winds, so that the forces of evil, fear and resignation no longer have power over us.

As we live out our specific vocation, those headwinds can wear us down. Here I think of all those who have important responsibilities in civil society, spouses whom I like to refer to not

without reason as “courageous”, and in a particular way those who have embraced the consecrated life or the priesthood. I am conscious of your hard work, the sense of isolation that can at times weigh upon your hearts, the risk of falling into a rut that can gradually make the ardent flame of our vocation die down, the burden of the uncertainty and insecurity of the times, and worry about the future. Take heart, do not be afraid! Jesus is at our side, and if we acknowledge him as the one Lord of our lives, he will stretch out his hand, take hold of us and save us.

Even amid the storm-tossed waters, then, our lives become open to *praise*. This is the last of our vocation words, and it is an invitation to cultivate the interior disposition of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Grateful that Lord gazed upon her, faithful amid fear and turmoil, she courageously embraced her vocation and made of her life an eternal song of praise to the Lord.

Dear friends, on this day in particular, but also in the ordinary pastoral life of our communities, I ask the Church to continue to promote vocations. May she touch the hearts of the faithful and enable each of them to discover with gratitude God’s call in their lives, to find courage to say “yes” to God, to overcome all weariness through faith in Christ, and to make of their lives a song of praise for God, for their brothers and sisters, and for the whole world. May the Virgin Mary accompany us and intercede for us.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 8 March 2020, the Second Sunday of Lent

And finally: Following the recent announcement by the Government and the Bishops' of England and Wales, we realise that for many this time could be a difficult and trying time for those who may have to self-isolate. Here at St Mary of the Angels we are putting into place a system where we can offer assistance to those who are most in need. If, for any reason, you as one of our parishioners, are in any kind of need, whether it be the need for some shopping to be delivered, or simply the sound of a friendly voice at the end of the phone, please do not hesitate to contact Fr. Craig on the Presbytery phone number (01922 452316) and he will pass your details onto a wider support team who will do all that they can to help. If you know of anybody who might be in need of this support please pass on the above phone number.

May God bless you all. Fr. Craig