

### Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the First Sunday of Lent

"Cadbury's Cream Eggs are in the shops..... in fact they have been there for a few weeks now, but it is only with the coming of Ash Wednesday that I have really noticed them. They sit on the shelf in the shop, gently 'smiling' at you as you pass by; do they remind you of Easter, probably not, more likely the taste and texture of the sweet filling as you chew and swallow. They are an example of something that has become divorced from its real meaning – a pleasant, and to some a very sickly, taste rather than anything to do with our own spiritual new birth through the death and resurrection of Christ!

Sometimes we just forget what things are really about and the exceptional becomes the everyday. That is a shame, since it involves a 'deadening' of our senses which is self-inflicted, 'though often in a very slow and subtle way.

I mentioned at Mass on Ash Wednesday that I had been set thinking by a comment I had heard on the radio a few days before where someone had said that the opposite of love is not hatred but, rather, fear. I am sure they are right. So many things we attribute to hatred are actually the result of people's fear. When we stop and really think, we can see it in ourselves, especially when we hit out at others for no apparent reason: it just seems to explode in us – the gossip, the anonymous letter writer, the slanderer. Who would have ever thought we could do such things? But, we do.... And we need to face up to it and set about 'coming home' to whom we really are, not what our bad actions seem to show us to be, for that is what Lent can be about – rediscovering that the real us is not the person who does those things; on the contrary, they are the sins that disturb us in our inner self, and thus, they are the things that we need to ask God to free us from in such times as Lent. So, be of good heart and ask the Lord to send His grace to purify us, once again, to be able to see the true glories of Easter."

*Fr Peter*

## Parish Note Friday 19 February 2021 and the Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the First Sunday of Lent

Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

Fri 2/19/2021 4:16 PM

To: Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

 1 attachments (15 KB)

Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the First Sunday of Lent.docx;

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Sunday Message on this the First Sunday of Lent from Fr Peter which can also be found on the news section of our website.

Well, another busy week has passed by, with several special birthdays, balloons and pancakes arriving just before Lent. There is not much to report in my world at the current time, apart from a small domestic incident involving a 20+ year old swish curtain rail and my slightly heavy-handed husband upon energetically closing the drapes. The result being a completely sheared off rail leaving a bare wall, broken brackets and no curtains in the sitting room. It just happened to be at 'my end' of the room, where each evening I recline (now in a chocolate free zone) to either read, watch whatever happens to be on the telly (which isn't much at the moment) or fiddle with my laptop researching the family tree ancestry sites which I seem to be addicted to. The loss of the curtains left quite a draught and a slight feeling of being rather exposed to anyone passing by. My Great grandmother would never have the lights on in the house without the curtains being closed first, a feeling understandably left over from the war times and positively endorsed by a very energetic Great Uncle Ernie, a former air raid warden, who even well after the war and in his later years would always yell, 'Put that light out!'

According to my Google research, when trying to buy the correctly sized curtain brackets, I learned that the first curtains were made from animal hides placed over the doorways and affixed by hooks. Early textiles were made of linen and flax, first spun in ancient Egypt, followed by wool and later cotton and silk. There are so many different types and designs of curtains for all sorts of different uses today. There are references to curtains in the Bible, the phrase 'sheets' and 'veil' are actually used, particularly in the book of Exodus with strict instructions on the size, design and fine embroidery of the fabric and hangings used to make the Tabernacle veil.

The measurement used for such was a 'Cubit' (Latin for elbow) an ancient unit of length based on the forearm length from the tip of the middle finger to the bottom of the elbow and was divided as 6 palms x 4 fingers = 24 digits. Interestingly God instructed Noah to construct his Ark, using a length of 300 cubits, its width 50 cubits, and its height 30 cubits. The Temple of Solomon and even Pyramids were built and measured using the Cubit. Because of the difference in size of the individual hands and arms, cubits for obvious reasons are not used today, although we still do use other historical measurements, including hands, when measuring horses, feet (12" being the length of the average man's foot), an Inch (King Edward II of England ruled that 1 inch equalled 3 grains of barley placed end to end lengthwise) and also a Pace (The ancient Roman soldiers marched in paces, which were the length of a double step, about 5 feet; 1,000 paces were a mile. Today, a pace is the length of one step, 2 1/2 to 3 feet). Luckily my new curtain rail and hooks were all easily ordered in metric- thank you Amazon!

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH** - to everyone who very kindly contributed towards Fr Peter's 70th surprise weekend birthday celebration and sent cards, prayers, Zoom recorded messages, cake and good wishes. We were able to present Father with a very nice cheque which we hope he will use to treat himself when able to do so.



**PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS-** the family and friends of Una Hopcroft RIP ( Garry Thaddeus Mother), Patrick Joseph Bregan ( Holy Cross Parishioner and Father of Lynn Bregan-Love) and Anthony Knight ( former Teacher of English at St Mary's Catholic School) who sadly died recently.

*Eternal rest grant unto Una, Anthony and Patrick O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace Amen.*

Please also remember all those that are currently sick or in hospital, the children and residents at St Elizabeth's Centre, all those currently isolated in care homes, our housebound, elderly and frail and all those who care for them.

**ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL NURSERY ADMISSIONS 2021- 2022** -Applications are now welcome from families whose child reaches their third birthday between 1st September 2020 and 31st August 2021 for our new nursery class starting in September 2021.

We offer three forms of provision each day- a core offer of 15 hours, extended offer of 30 hours and extended plus offer of 34 hours per week.

Unfortunately, due to COVID19 restrictions, we will not be offering any live visits to the school at this moment. However, we will be offering remote sessions to meet with Mr Coldwell, Headteacher, and hear more about our amazing school.

For more details and to access a copy of the application form, please see the school website

<https://www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk/page/?title=Nursery+Admissions+2021%2D2022&pid=1165>

On-time applications close on Friday 12th March 2021

**CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE-** Applicants for St Joseph's School for NURSERY places in 2021/22 should download an application for a Certificate of Catholic Practice which can be found on our parish website. Once completed it should then be posted through the letter box of No 3 Windhill marked for Fr Peter's attention **with a stamped addressed envelope please**. The Certificate will then be posted to you. No personal collection of the certificate is permitted. The School deadline is 12/03/2021

**ZOOM** - Thank you to John and our 9am Sunday Mass Musicians who join together each week to celebrate the livestreaming of the Mass via Zoom, followed by a virtual tea/coffee afterwards. Everyone is welcome to join, please click on the link below.

Topic: Family Mass via Zoom during lock-down (music starting at 8:45am)

Time: Feb 21, 2021 08:30 AM London

Every week on Sun, until Apr 4, 2021, 13 occurrence(s)

Feb 21, 2021 08:30 AM

Feb 28, 2021 08:30 AM

Mar 7, 2021 08:30 AM

Mar 14, 2021 08:30 AM

Mar 21, 2021 08:30 AM

Mar 28, 2021 08:30 AM

Apr 4, 2021 08:30 AM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: [https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZ0od-GoqT8rHdIH0V5EvYx0CrmCXM8IRh-5/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqzsiGtORsR6BRpx5GYigWfTwtilcgqd0tE\\_TVgVFWxumFfBPEYpSSNTi](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZ0od-GoqT8rHdIH0V5EvYx0CrmCXM8IRh-5/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqzsiGtORsR6BRpx5GYigWfTwtilcgqd0tE_TVgVFWxumFfBPEYpSSNTi)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89508074176?pwd=TE9YWjQzb01hdmhXbVZibGpuY1hDZz09>

Meeting ID: 895 0807 4176

Passcode: 2021

One tap mobile

+442039017895,,89508074176#,,,,\*2021# United Kingdom

Dial by your location

+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom

Meeting ID: 895 0807 4176

Passcode: 2021

**THE DAD'S GROUP** - are currently meeting on the second Tuesday of the month via Zoom.

The Zoom Meeting details are:

Topic: Dad's Group

Every month on the Second Tue, 7 occurrence(s)

Mar 9, 2021 08:00 PM

Apr 13, 2021 08:00 PM

May 11, 2021 08:00 PM

Jun 8, 2021 08:00 PM

Jul 13, 2021 08:00 PM

Aug 10, 2021 08:00 PM

Sep 14, 2021 08:00 PM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89665153775?pwd=YUgyV0Qyd2pnS3htNTJGTzJkNzIDQT09>

Meeting ID: 896 6515 3775

Passcode: 001205

## **LENT COURSES**

**A CATHOLIC FORMATION' LENT COURSE'** - During Advent, the Dad's Group ran an exciting new Catholic formation course, Sycamore. We are now looking ahead to Lent and planning on running a six-week course on Zoom with all new content!

The course is structured to provide parishioners with the opportunity to share and grow in their faith together as a community. Each week we will come together, sharing our news and a prayer, before we watch a short video about the week's topic, breaking briefly during the video to reflect as small groups on the topic.

The Lent Course will run every Wednesday for 6 weeks, starting on Wednesday February 24th at 7:30pm.

Please feel free to invite your friends/family from both inside and outside the parish. We are looking forward to sharing this exciting new course with you all!

If you want to know more about Sycamore before the course, all the Sycamore resources are freely available on-line at: <https://www.sycamore.fm/>

### **Session 1: THE EXISTENCE OF GOD**

Why bother thinking about religion? Five reasons not to believe in God. Arguments for the existence of God?



## **Session 2: WHO IS JESUS?**

He came to bring life to the world. The Saving Death of Jesus. The light of the Resurrection.

## **Session 3: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH**

How the Holy Spirit can change your life. No one gets into heaven alone. Why we need signs, symbols and sacraments.

## **Session 4: THE GIFT OF FAITH**

What is faith? Are there good reasons to believe? How to take a step of faith.

## **Session 5: FINDING TRUE FREEDOM**

Is there such a thing as right and wrong? Where can we find moral guidance? How do you discover your true identity?

## **Session 6: THE MEANING OF LOVE**

What is love? How to love your neighbour. Knowing the love of God.

If you are interested in attending the course, please contact: John Wright ([johncharles.wright70@gmail.com](mailto:johncharles.wright70@gmail.com)) or David Wilkinson ([wilkinsondavid@mac.com](mailto:wilkinsondavid@mac.com)) or the Parish Office to register and get the Zoom login details.

**NO GREATER LOVE: A BIBLICAL WALK-THROUGH CHRIST'S PASSION-** Filmed on location in the Holy Land, No Greater Love is a five-part bible study video series that reveals Christ's amazing love for us. Best-selling author and theologian, Edward Sri, guides you through the last hours of Christ's life in this biblical pilgrimage. While taking this study, you will walk step-by-step with Jesus from the Garden of Gethsemane to the Mount of Calvary. In the videos, biblical experts make connections with these well-known events and also make links between the bible and our Catholic Faith.

**This Lenten Bible Study will be held online every Saturday at 11am, starting on Saturday 27 February and the five following Saturdays, finishing on the Saturday of Palm Sunday weekend (Saturday 27 March).**

The Saturday online meeting itself will generally last 1 1/4 hours. After the first meeting, participants will be encouraged to do some personal bible reading and reflection during the week - taking about 1 hour - in preparation for the following Saturday's online gathering. This will help everyone to get the most out of the meeting, which will typically involve going over the week's reading, some group discussion time, as well as watching the accompanying video.

**If you are interested in taking part in this journey through Christ's passion, please do email Sophie Sullivan, at [bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk) or email or call Debbie at the parish office for details of the Saturday zoom meeting.** Registering in advance helps us to know numbers and ensure that we can be well prepared to welcome all those wanting to participate. Once you are registered, we will be able to email you with all the details you will need to access the course, including bible passages and reflection questions.

All are welcome, though it might especially suit those not able to attend our evening Sycamore Lent Course or those who want to go a little deeper into the biblical story of Christ's journey to the cross.

**WESTMINSTER YOUTH MINISTRY: SYCAMORE COURSE** - We are encouraging our young people this Lent to join the Westminster Youth Ministry team by forming a group and taking part in Sycamore – an informal

course about the Christian faith and its relevance for life today – and we would like our students to join to learn more as they grow on their spiritual journey as young adults.

Sycamore gives you space to meet other people, share ideas, explore your beliefs, and think about questions that really matter. Each session involves a short, thought-provoking film about the big questions of life and the central beliefs of the Christian faith. The films are beautifully produced in locations around the UK.

The main presentation is by Fr Stephen Wang, a Catholic priest and popular speaker. There are street interviews with people from very different backgrounds, giving a fresh perspective on the big questions. There are guest speakers sharing their experiences. And every few minutes a question pops up on the screen to get the discussion going.

The length of the course will be 6 weeks and each session will be from 7:30-9pm. A typical Sycamore session involves:

- some online conversation to get things started;
- a short film;
- some informal discussion in small groups

Students will need to register for the sessions on the Westminster Youth website– the link is here: <https://dowym.com/events/sycamore-lent-course/>

**KNOWING JESUS:** Lent Online Retreat - The Jesuits in Britain are running a Lent online retreat from Ash Wednesday to the 2nd Sunday of Easter, looking at getting to know the person of Jesus better. Follow the retreat online and sign up to an online group (places limited) at <https://www.onlineprayer.net/>. Sign up to receive daily emails during Lent and additional resources at <http://eepurl.com/hnlXAn>

**CARDINAL'S LENTEN APPEAL** -This Lent, please support the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal and help provide food for children and families in our communities who are facing hunger. You could also support work to help our brothers and sisters come through the global pandemic stronger and better able to cope. [www.cardinalsledenappeal.org.uk](http://www.cardinalsledenappeal.org.uk)

**MARRIED SINGLES LIFESTYLE** –The Married Singles Lifestyle describes couples that may have lost a sense of closeness they once had as marriage partners and are living more like roommates. 'Retrouvaille' teaches couples how to survive times like these in their marriages. This programme has helped 10s of thousands of couples experiencing difficulty at all levels of marital distress from disillusionment to deep misery. There is no group therapy or group work

For confidential information about 'Retrouvaille' or to register the next programme commencing with a Virtual weekend on 25th – 28th February 2021, Call or text 0788 7296983 or 0797 3380443 or Email [retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com](mailto:retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com) - or visit [www.retrouvaille.org.uk](http://www.retrouvaille.org.uk)

**DAILY WALK? DO SOMETHING POSITIVE FOR CAFOD THIS LENT** - Could you walk 10000 Steps either on one day or everyday this Lent? The walk could be a sign of your solidarity with all those who do not have access to a safe water source and who have to walk for water each day. Find out more or sign up online at [cafod.org.uk/walk](http://cafod.org.uk/walk) and go the distance this Lent and help to end water poverty.

One minute film also available here:

Walk for Water video:

[Walk for Water: Abdella's journey | CAFOD - YouTube](#)

**PERMANENT DIACONATE COME AND SEE** - Men interested in finding out more about the permanent diaconate are invited to come to a two-hour session on a Saturday from 10am to 12pm on one of the following dates: 17th April at St Edward the Confessor, Golders Green, 22nd May at St Anthony of Padua,



Radlett or 19th June at Vaughan House, Victoria. Prior booking is required as it isn't known whether the event venue is open or the session is online via zoom. Wives welcome. For further details and booking, contact Deacon Adrian Cullen on 07961 594725 or [adriancullen@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:adriancullen@rcdow.org.uk).

**'LET US DREAM' Lenten Retreat** - Young Caritas Westminster have organised a retreat for young people aged 18-35 to break open the themes discussed in Pope Francis' 'Let Us Dream' this Lent. Retreatants will attend three online sessions and receive a pack including a copy of the book and a notebook for their reflections.. There is also an opportunity for 1:1 accompaniment. Sessions take place between 18.30 and 19.45 on 23rd February, 9th and 23rd March. Please book at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/young-caritas-let-usdream-lenten-retreat-tickets-138923194013>

**COMMUNITY MONEY ADVICE CONNECT BISHOP'S STORTFORD-** is a voluntary organisation run by a trained team of Christian money mentors. We offer non-judgemental advice and are supported by local churches. We are a member of Community Money Advice, a national debt advice charity. We are an associate member of Churches Together Bishop's Stortford. We work in association with Community Money Advice. To make an appointment or for more information about how we can help, please contact us on: 01279 652523 [bsmoneyadvice@ntlworld.com](mailto:bsmoneyadvice@ntlworld.com)  
[www.bs-money-advice-service.org.uk](http://www.bs-money-advice-service.org.uk)

**PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK** - This week, our fabulous parishioners from Most Holy Redeemer who have continued to look after the Church throughout the whole of lockdown, including the Hodgson family, Gary Thaddeus and Robbie Lopez. Thank you very much for everything that you have done and continue to do!

To finish this week, a lovely Lenten message from Pope Francis

*Fast from hurting words and say kind words.*

*Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.*

*Fast from anger and be filled with patience.*

*Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.*

*Fast from worries and trust in God.*

*Fast from complaints and contemplate simplicity.*

*Fast from pressures and be prayerful.*

*Fast from bitterness and fill your heart with joy.*

*Fast from selfishness and be compassionate to others*

*Fast from grudges and be reconciled.*

*Fast from words and be silent so you can listen.*

Hope that you all have a very happy and healthy week  
Best wishes  
Debbie

**Parish Administrator**