

Sunday Message on the Third Sunday of Lent from Fr Peter

“Thank you” is a great pair of words! So often one hears a parent saying to their *child* “...and what do you say”, as a gentle reminder to say those two important words.

So, it is time for me now to say ‘thank you’ to all of you for your great kindness and generosity for my recent 70th birthday.

I received more cards than I think I have ever received, either at Christmas or birthday... how wonderful is that ! You’ll see some of the ones that children in the Parish especially made for me, individuals and also classes at St Joseph’s School – they were all very special, thank you.

And then there were presents – an awful lot of them have resulted in waistline problems, but, really, you will understand, they all had to be tasted, and one has to taste more than once to fully appreciate the gift, don’t you ? – they were lovely, thank you.

And then there were video messages, such kindness and kind words, and also much humour – they were ‘tickling’, thank you.

And then there was a Parish gift, about which I knew absolutely nothing – an incredibly well kept secret, and now I have lots of time to decide what to spend it on, thank you.

And then there was the Birthday Cake – finely wrought by one of our parishioners – what a challenge to demolish (there is still some left carefully sealed against the air and crying out ‘eat me, eat me’ (and...I will...) – thank you.

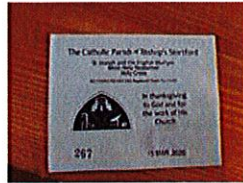
And then there were BALLOONS – LOTS of them, everywhere I looked – around the front door, in the Church, in the Sacristy, inside the Vestment cupboards..... wonderful, thank you.

And then there were the secret little fairy elves that swooped down on No 3 in the depths of the night, it seems, and decorated around the front door so that NO ONE in the whole town did not know that it was Fr Peter’s birthday... amazing, thank you.

SO – all in all a dirty great big “**THANK YOU**” to all of you. Amen.

Financial Matters

Planned Giving Envelopes for Tax Year starting 6th April 2021



The new Planned Giving Envelopes will be available towards the end of March. Due to the current restrictions on attending mass, this year we will deliver the envelopes, which will have the same number as last year, to your home address. The new envelopes must NOT be used until the weekend of 10/11 April. ***If your circumstances have changed and either you no longer wish to make your donation using envelopes, or if you would like to start using envelopes, or if you have changed your address, please let us know*** – see below for contact details.

Gift Aid



The Tax Year ends on 5th April and we will be submitting our Gift Aid Claim for 2020/21 soon after that. If you are registered for Gift Aid but are no longer eligible because you will have stopped paying sufficient UK Income Tax before 5th April 2021 it is important that you let us know immediately, using one of the methods mentioned below, with the date that you stopped paying tax. If you have changed your address, would you also please forward your new contact details to the Parish Office.

Other ways of donating to the Offertory Collection



With the limited opening of our churches likely to continue for some time yet, you might like to consider switching your Planned Giving Donations from Envelopes to Standing Order, which will

ensure you can make your donation even if you are unable to attend mass in person, avoids the need for you to search for cash, and helps the parish as it saves us having to count and bank the cash. If you are able to switch to Standing Order, please contact the Parish Office as below. You can also make an On-Line Donation to the parish at any time from the Parish Web-site (www.rcstortford.org.uk) using either Virgin Money Giving, which has links in the right hand sidebar of many of the pages, or via the direct link www.rcstortford.org.uk/donate.

Planned Giving



If you are new to the parish, or your circumstances have changed and you would like to join our Planned Giving scheme, application forms can be requested from the Parish Office.

Contributions can be made using weekly envelopes or by Standing Order – which is more efficient for both the donor and the parish. Standing Order Forms are also available from the Parish Office. If you are a UK Tax Payer and not already registered for Gift Aid, we would urge you to do so. This will enable the parish to obtain an additional 25p for every £1 that you contribute – with no cost to yourself. Last year the parish claimed back over £37,000 in Gift Aid, which helps us to meet the running costs of the parish and to continue with the various repair and decoration schemes needed to maintain the fabric of our buildings. To register you will need to complete a Gift Aid Declaration form, available from the Parish Office.

Contact Details

To make any changes to your offertory arrangements, please contact the Parish Office by email at bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk, a note to No 3, or by phoning 01279 654063 (9am to 3pm) and leaving a message.

Thank you for your continued support.

Parish Note Friday 5th March 2021 and the Sunday Message on the third Sunday of Lent

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

Fri 3/5/2021 5:12 PM

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

 2 attachments (10 MB)

Newsletter - Planned Giving 2021.doc; Sunday message from Fr Peter on the Third Sunday of Lent.docx;

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Sunday message from Fr Peter for the Third Sunday of Lent. A copy can also be found on the news section of our website along with a lovely collection of photographs taken of Father's 70th birthday cards. Also attached is a 'Financial matters' newsletter on 'Planned Giving and Gift Aid', courtesy of Mike Carroll, our Parish Finance Chair. This is important and we would kindly ask you to read it please.

Well, it's been a week of Royal family revelations and all sorts of accusations, with private matters being aired on talk shows. Depending on which side of the fence you sit, and whatever your personal view may be, should you even be interested(!) it's all a little bit sad and rather stressful and unfortunate. Hopefully peace, harmony and kindness might once again be restored.

Families can be a rather odd breed, my own included! I'm sure we all have our 'interesting' relatives, who sometimes make life 'challenging' without purposefully trying to do so, but we love them and are blessed to have them in our lives all the same. For the last 35+ years I have been tracing my family tree. As a teenager I would take the train to St Catherine's house in London before it closed in 1997, armed with a pencil and note pad researching a variety of records and tracking down ancestors. I did uncover a few skeletons in the cupboard along the way, but it added to the intrigue. In later years I joined the online Ancestry sites with the use of DNA which has proved very fruitful in finding over 200+ cousins of varying degrees. But very recently, I discovered something rather wonderful, whilst standing at the back of St Joseph's re-viewing the names of the English Martyrs which I have looked at and read for years, but never having investigated them properly.

The name 'Philip Howard', Earl of Arundle who died in 1595 came to my attention. He was one of the forty martyrs, found guilty of Roman Catholic conspiracies against Elizabeth I and was beatified in 1929 and canonised in 1970. He was imprisoned in the Tower of London for ten years spending the first two years in solitary confinement in the Beauchamp Tower. The Queen refused permission for his wife and children (he had never seen his infant son) to visit him. When dying, he appealed to the Queen again to allow him to see his family. The Queen replied, 'If Philip would go but once to their church, not only would she grant his request, but he would be restored to his estates and honours with as much favour as she could show'. To this, Howard is said to have replied: "Tell Her Majesty if my religion be the cause for which I suffer, sorry I am that I have but one life to lose." He remained in the Tower, never seeing his family again, and died alone on Sunday 19 October 1595. On the walls of his cell in the tower he is believed to have inscribed, "Quanto plus afflictionis pro Christo in saeculo, tanto plus gloriae cum Christo in futuro" which translates as "The more affliction we endure for Christ in this world, the more glory we shall obtain with Christ in the next."

It transpires that St Philip Howard, one of the Patron Saints of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton is rather surprisingly one of my very distant relatives, being the 'great grandnephew of the wife of a 1st cousin 15x removed' nevertheless (!) so whilst we don't exactly share the closest genetic link, and whilst I probably wouldn't have been on any family Christmas card list, I feel very humbled indeed to just have that teeny, tiniest of connections...

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=YUgyV0Q0yd2pnS3htNTJGTzJkNzIDQT09>

Meeting ID: 896 6515 3775

Passcode: 001205

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION - Last year's confirmation group (2019-2020) are still awaiting reception of this sacrament, in some cases, due to delays caused by the pandemic. We thank them for their patience!

A new confirmation programme has yet to commence this year, having obviously been on hold for some time. The decision has been made to pause any confirmation preparation for this year, in order to allow covid restrictions to subside and to re-envision our current confirmation provision. We will open up applications again in the autumn term for Confirmations to next take place in 2022.

Therefore, any young person who would have been in the cohort for this academic year, 2020-2021 (those born on or before 31st August 2006 – current year 10 or above), or any young person planning to join the confirmation programme for 2021-2022 (those born on or before 31st August 2007 – those who will be in year 10 next academic year) please note that we will open up applications again later this year for a confirmation programme for both groups for 2021-2022. We will keep you informed as to when this will take place. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

In the meantime, if you haven't already, you may like to browse our new parish youth portal on our website: www.rcstortford.org.uk/youth/

For any questions or to register your interest, please feel free to email Sophie at : bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk

BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSES -Thank you very much for your continued patience whilst awaiting to have your Child baptised. If you have not already attended a recent Baptism preparation course, we are pleased to advise you that Sophie Sullivan, our new Catechetical Coordinator and her husband Mike shall be running a series of two-part Baptism preparation course on the dates below via Zoom. The places will be limited to a maximum of 10 couples on each.

Course 1

Monday 8th March and Monday 15th March 2021 at 8pm - 9.15pm

Course 2

Monday 22nd March and Monday 29th March 2021 at 8pm - 9.15pm

Course 3

Monday 17th May and Monday 24th May 2021 at 8pm - 9.15pm

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) or David Wilkinson (wilkinsondavid@mac.com) or the Parish Office to register and get the Zoom login details.

ECUMENICAL LENT REFLECTION -Michael McAdam has kindly prepared an ecumenical series of Lent reflections which will be presented through zoom and to which everyone is invited. These will be short meetings on Zoom at 9 a.m. every day except Sunday, beginning on Ash Wednesday and continuing through Lent.

Each meeting will be very short – just a reading, a brief message, some prayers and a little thought to take with you during the day. The whole thing will not last more than ten minutes.

Topic: Lent Reflections with Michael McAdam

Time: 9 a.m.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73006220841?pwd=SzFkYVU2TjNpSjY1WlZWdjc4b0FmQT09>

Meeting ID: 730 0622 0841

Passcode: DAS5s6

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.

PASSION PLAY -Riding Lights has produced a Passion Play under lockdown conditions which is available for individual households to view via a video link from 15th March. *Breaking Day* centres on the Roman Governor's household on Good Friday, the people and choices that led to Jesus' crucifixion. The play lasts about 45 minutes in 3 acts. Further details of the play including a trailer can be found by following this link: <https://ridinglights.org/breaking-day> where details of how to book and the cost are also available.

THY KINGDOM COME 2021 - Join the virtual launch of Thy Kingdom Come 2021, on Tuesday 9th March @ 2pm GMT, where we will be unveiling this year's new resources as well as exploring various ways churches, families and individuals can be involved.

To join us, sign up here.

https://zoom.us/webinar/register/4916140768343/WN_LiMAeDk-TYeeVh4qSVHy0Q

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.cardinalsntenappeal.org.uk

SPECIAL OFFER 3 MONTHS :- £25.00

SPECIAL OFFER 12 Months:- £99.00

DIGITAL COPY:- 12 Months: £55.00 OR DIGITAL COPY/AND HARD COPY FOR:- £115.00 (EASTER SPECIAL OFFER)

PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK - This week, huge appreciation to the Teachers, Staff, Volunteers, Pupils and Parents at our schools, St Joseph's and St Mary's for the mammoth task and organisation that has and is continuing to take place in order for the schools to safely reopen for all pupils next week. This has involved the planning and implementation for the large number of COVID-19 rapid lateral flow tests to be conducted. We are keeping you all very much in our thoughts and prayers as you start back in the classroom. It will be wonderful to see you all reunited and where you belong!

To finish this week, the words of Pope Francis from the Novena of St Joseph

Joseph teaches us that faith in God includes believing he can work even through our fears, our frailties and our weaknesses. He also teaches us that we must never be afraid to let the Lord steer our course. At times, we want to be in complete control, yet God always sees the bigger picture.'

Hope that you all have a very happy and healthy week

Best wishes

Debbie

Parish Administrator

(Mon- Fri 9am - 3pm)

Catholic Parish of Bishop's Stortford

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Holy Cross, at St Andrew's, Church Lane, Much Hadham
Most Holy Redeemer, Sayesbury Road, Sawbridgeworth*

3 Windhill, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2ND

Telephone: 01279 654063

email: bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk

Parish Website: <https://www.rcstortford.org.uk>

Follow our Live streaming on www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford

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