

Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the Fifth Sunday of Lent



I am writing this on Thursday 18th March. It is my 70th birthday. "Oh no"! I hear you saying, "You've had that already." Well, yes and no... You see you are right. I have had the 70th anniversary of my physical birth, but today is the 70th anniversary of my spiritual birth since today is the 70th celebration of my Baptism. I know who my Godparents were but I don't remember ever meeting them at an age that I would have remembered them. I still have the silver napkin ring with my initials on it that one of my late aunts gave me. Alas the silver rosary beads given me by my Godparents were stolen from our baggage on the way to Australia in 1955. But I do know that I was baptised by Canon Cristall in St Joseph's Church at Epsom. When I was young I thought I must have been very important to have been baptized by a Canon!

Now, the question I find myself asking myself this year as you may well have done too, is, if I have been a Christian now for 70 years, what have I done about it? It's a bald and quite tough question. I suppose I can let myself off for the first few years but as I grew older I knew what I was doing and was responsible for my actions, so, once again, what have I done about being a Christian? Some might say, "...well, you are a priest so look at how much you have by being a priest". That is very kind, but it doesn't really let me off the hook. You see the truth lies in how much and how strongly have I tried or have I just let it all happen, and has my heart and soul been in it?

The answer for me, this year I think, lies in the lenten Mass readings. Again and again the writers of the Old Testament Scriptures that we have listened to remind us of all the mess ups that the people of Israel made – and there were some very big ones. Yet, despite all this God kept faith with them and drew them back, reminding them all the time of his love and forgiveness. That has to be the key to it all. There is a real danger that we can, and sometimes do, drift along without really focusing. But then comes an event like today is for me and suddenly everything comes into focus and, recognizing how blessed and loved we are, we can make a firm promise of amendment and hear the good Lord saying something like, "Well done Peter, my boy, now, on we go, together!"

Fr Peter

Parish Note Friday 19th March 2021 and the Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the Fifth Sunday of Lent

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

Fri 3/19/2021 5:20 PM

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

 1 attachments (45 KB)

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

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Sunday Message from Fr Peter along with the most adorable photograph which can also be found on the news section of our website.

This week I experienced a few issues on the communication front, receiving a fraudulent phishing text from the Royal mail which seems to be doing the rounds, my sent emails went astray ending up in junk bins and then I received post through my letter box only to find out that it was for someone else in a completely different road. One of the envelopes looked like a birthday card, so, adorned with my mask and gloves, I dutifully walked and delivered it to the rightful owner which I was very happy to do.

On the way back home, 'Big pigeon' and 'Chum' the resident birds in my garden were wandering around waiting to be fed. It got me thinking about 'Carrier pigeons' for some strange reason and how on earth you would go about training them to deliver important messages. Not that I see myself as any type of 'Pigeon fancier' or wishing to saddle up my feathered friends, to save on the price of a stamp, far from it, (although tempting!) but where would you start?

The Royal Pigeon Racing Association (yes i did Google it!) gives an interesting history and guidance on how to do it. Racing pigeons are descended from the Rock Dove, and the earliest recorded reference to the use of messenger pigeons comes from Ramses III (c1200 BC) when they were used to convey news between cities regarding the flood state of the Nile.

The Romans used pigeons to convey messages throughout the empire, for example Olympic games results for betting syndicates, and ships warning their home port of their imminent arrival.

Carrier pigeons were held in very high esteem in the Middle East and were called "The Kings Angels", and in medieval times pigeons were brought back to Europe by the Crusaders.

In the 1800's there was an official pigeon postal service throughout France, and this was expanded between capitals so that a postal service by carrier pigeon between London and Paris was advertised in 1870.

Pigeons were used extensively as message carriers by armies on both sides during World War 1 and World War 2. Over a quarter of a million pigeons were used in the last war alone. British pigeon fanciers donated thousands of their best birds to help in the war effort and all three of the Armed Services plus the Civil Defence, used them.

The Germans, who also used pigeons as message carriers, were so concerned about intelligence getting back to the Allied Forces on mainland Europe and England that they employed hawk handlers to release birds of prey to attack the pigeons. The British Government ordered a cull of these birds along the south coast of England where they were most prevalent in order that the message carriers had every opportunity to get home. Probably the most telling and significant acknowledgement of the pigeons' contribution to the war effort was when Maria Dickin, founder of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals (PDSA) instituted the Dickin Medal, widely called the 'Animal Victoria Cross' with 32 medals awarded to homing pigeons.

The British Royal family began to keep pigeons in the late nineteenth century, and pigeon racing became a sport of the masses in the early 1900's. Interestingly there has been a Royal loft at Sandringham since and Her Majesty the Queen is still patron of the Royal Pigeon Association today....

ARRANGEMENTS FOR HOLY WEEK - The final arrangements for Holy week will be announced very soon. Thank you for your continued patience.

PLANNED GIVING ENVELOPES - The Planned Giving Envelopes have arrived and will be labelled up and start to be distributed by hand (not carrier pigeon!) next week all being well.

ZOOM - BIG Thanks to John and our 9am Sunday Mass Musicians who have continued to join together each week for the past year (!) 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: Mar 21, 2021 08:30 AM London

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

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-GogT8rHdIH0V5EvYx0CrmCXM8IRh-5/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqzsiGtORsR6BRpx5GYigWfTwtlclgqd0tE_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

CENSUS -This year, the Census takes place on Sunday 21st March. To complete the survey, please visit www.census.gov.uk and enter the unique access code received by your household at the beginning of March. For more information, visit www.census.gov.uk or call 0800 141 2021. Please be aware that scammers have been cold calling some individuals to advise that their forms have been completed incorrectly issuing a 'fine' in an effort to extort money and information. The Office for National Statistics will never call you to ask you for your national insurance number, passwords, bank account details, or your credit or debit card numbers.

MARRIAGE CARE COUNSELLING SERVICES -Marriage Care offers support from trained counsellors to couples and families who need help in coping with the pressures of lockdown. Find out more at <https://rcdow.org.uk/diocese/marriage-andfamily-life/news/marriage-care-at-75---we-are-here-for-you/>

HONG KONG BNO VISA ROUTE- At the end of January, the government opened a new visa route for people from Hong Kong with British National Overseas Status to resettle in the UK with their close family members. It is expected that at least 130,000 people could enter the UK during the first year. There will be a need to welcome people and help them integrate into their new communities. An ecumenical 'Hong Kong Ready Churches' initiative has been launched. Details can be found at www.ukhk.org/church.

SETTLEMENT SCHEME FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENS- EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who were living in the UK by 31st December 2020 have until 30th June 2021 to apply for the Settlement Scheme. Those who do not apply are at risk of losing their rights to live and work here or access important services such as healthcare. There is a need to continue drawing this to people's attention as we approach the deadline. Older and vulnerable people may require assistance with the online application or not even know that their status is at risk. In many cases their main point of contact with society will be through the Church. Relevant information can be found on the official government website (www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families), from the European Commission (www.eurights.uk/what-you-need-to-know) or from the charity Settled (www.settled.org.uk). Please note, Irish citizens do not need to apply.

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 2

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

Course 3

Monday 10th May and Monday 24th May 2021 at 8pm - 9.15pm

If you would like to attend one of the courses, please contact the parish office as soon as possible, so that we can send you an invitation in plenty of time. You are requested to attend the course prior to your Child being baptised.

At the current time, **depending on the success of the Government COVID-19 road map steps**, we hope to be able to start to celebrate the sacrament of Baptism again at St Joseph and the English Martyrs, sometime after 29 May **if all is well**, with 30 persons being permitted to attend.

As you will appreciate, we have a large number of Children still to be baptised since the first lockdown in 2020 and will do our best to prioritise those who had their Baptism date cancelled at that time to start with when able to do so.

If you have not yet completed a Baptism application form, please contact the office so that we have your details on file.

LENT COURSES

It's not too late to discover all the wonderful resources we have made available to parishioners during Lent to mark this special season in your homes and with your families. If you haven't already, do check out our Resources for Lent and Easter: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/lent-and-easter-resources-2021>. You can also view everything that's on offer during Lent by looking at the purple strip on our homepage. There will be a number of updates for Holy Week – so keep an eye out for them.

A CATHOLIC FORMATION' LENT COURSE' - 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 and started 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 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 am. 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

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.cardinalslentenappeal.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 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](#)

CAFOD LENT APPEAL- Please donate online at www.cafod.org.uk/give or by using one of our envelopes.

You can also easily give via text.

Text LENT 5 to 70460 to give £5

Text LENT 10 to 70460 to give £10

Text LENT 20 to 70460 to give £20

Or Telephone: 0303 303 3030 to donate over the phone *Texts cost £10 plus one standard rate message and you'll be opting in to hear more about our work and fundraising via telephone and SMS. If you'd like to give £10 but do not wish to receive marketing communications, text LENTNOINFO to 70460.

For more information, please see our Privacy Policy: cafod.org.uk/Legal-information/Privacy-notice

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.

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 bsmoneyadviceservice@ntlworld.com
www.bs-money-advice-service.org.uk

STORT VALLEY SCHOOL TRUST - are seeking a chaplain, working in the Bishop's Stortford area, whose primary role will be to offer a pastoral and listening service in school. This will involve building relationships with young people who may be facing all kinds of challenges and will create opportunities to influence young lives for good. It will also lead to opportunities to share the Christian faith in lunch clubs, in collective worship, in prayer spaces, and in conversations with school staff.

The position is for 7.5 hours per week in term time only.

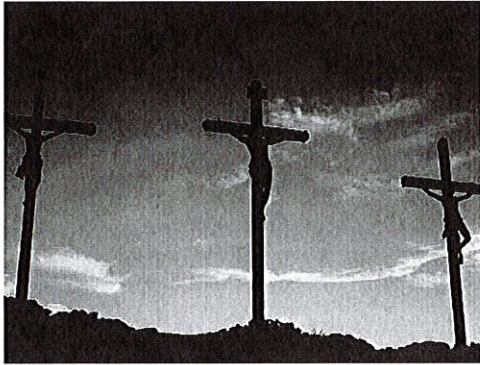
CLOSING DATE: Monday 5th April 2021

If this sounds like you, please get in touch. You can find out more, download the full job description and application form or apply online by clicking the button below.

<https://www.svst.org.uk/job-vacancies>

STATIONS OF THE CROSS - There will be another Stations of the Cross video posted on our website, Twitter and our Youtube channel presented by Marie Rhodes, assisted by Yvonne Fordyce and Alison Jones and filmed by Sophie (thank you Ladies!) Please visit our website for more information.

<https://t.co/eP6VXEgHTZ?amp=1>



Women's Way of the Cross

t.co

CHORISTER OPPORTUNITIES AT WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL CHOIR SCHOOL - Every September Westminster Cathedral Choir School welcomes up to six choristers into Year 4. Becoming a chorister at Westminster Cathedral offers boys the opportunity to sing in central London and on tour internationally. Boys also receive an outstanding education with bursaries up to 100% of fees. Contact Lucy Auger to arrange a visit on 020 7798 9081 or email: lauger@choirschool.com www.choirschool.com

PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK - This week a huge thank you to Ishara, Juan and Martin at Holy Cross and also Alison, Gregory and Tessa who have helped me to clean and sanitise our Churches after several Requiem Masses (as well as after Mass during the week). Special credit also to Ann Wocjik who has given so much of her time and talent recently to sing solo for the families, accompanied by Duncan. It has meant a great deal and is much appreciated. Thank you very much!

To finish this week, with today being the Solemnity of St Joseph...

Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.

I 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*

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Telephone: 01279 654063