

The Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

This Sunday is the last Sunday before Ash Wednesday. Lent begins this week, and so do our Lenten traditions, including asking each other the question, "What are you giving up for Lent?"

St Paul's words in our second reading this Sunday tell us why penance matters. He instructed the Corinthian Christians: "Never give in then, my dear brothers, never admit defeat; keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain." He issues three commands — "never give in", "never admit defeat", and "keep on working at the Lord's work always".

Paul's three instructions to the Corinthians are no less relevant to us today than they were when he first wrote them in his letter. They give us a nifty itinerary for our Lenten journey: be firm, be steadfast, and be devoted. In our present world of excess — excess food, drink, entertainment, news, social media, and everything else that consumes our time and dulls our senses—we need to take a step back, to hit the mute button on it all, to hear God's voice so that we can respond firmly, steadfastly, and devotedly. We hear our Lord in the Gospel this Sunday speak about good trees having to bear good fruit, but if we are to bear good fruit, we have to first receive proper spiritual nutrition by hearing God's word. And Lent is the time to do it.

As Ash Wednesday approaches, the Lord invites us to prepare for this annual forty-day spiritual journey. What needs to come with us, and what needs to stay behind? During these final days before Ash Wednesday, let us accept the Lord's invitation to leave all the excess behind and journey forward with faith, knowing that the Lord — who comes to us in this Eucharist as our Bread for the journey — has something greater to offer us: eternal life. St Paul says it so beautifully in today's second reading: "Death is swallowed up in victory." It was the Lord's own death that swallowed death up in the victory of his empty tomb. Let us hasten to meet him there.

Fr Antonio Pineda

ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,
WESTMINSTER, LONDON, SW1P 1QJ



Pastoral Letter for the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
26/27 February 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

Today I want to take a moment, first of all, to thank you for your faithfulness and for your presence here at Mass. These last two years have been very difficult and I thank God for the gift of faith which you have received, which you have nurtured and from which, I know, you receive great grace and strength. I know this to be true because it is true for me too.

Now I would like to ask your assistance.

During these last two years there were times when our way of life was severely curtailed. We were in 'lockdown'. At one time, for three months, even the doors of our churches were firmly closed. Being unable to enter the House of God and to take part fully in the celebration of the Mass was, for many, an experience of real dismay and pain.

But that is no longer the case. We are again able to fashion the way of life that we choose. The doors of our churches can stay wide open. Yet, as you know, many have not resumed the pattern of coming to church, week by week. Other activities have filled that space. For some, the thirst for being at Mass, for celebrating life-giving sacraments, has diminished.

This is where I ask for your help. I would like you to be ready to approach those whom you know, and who are not present here today, with a word of invitation for them to join us. I know this is not easy. You may well feel it is an intrusive thing to do. Also, taking the step across the threshold of the church can be daunting for someone who has been away for a long time. So I ask you to exercise great deference and kindness when approaching them, perhaps offering to accompany them on this return journey.

I make this request now not simply because fear and restrictions are eased, but because we are approaching Lent, the traditional and powerful season of our renewal in faith. Beginning on Ash Wednesday, this coming week, we respond to the Lord's invitation to come forward and meet him afresh. He invites us to come through the doors of the church to stand before him and receive his blessing, his mark of mercy.

Lent is the time to reset our patterns so that there is time for God in our hearts and in our weekly routines. You know well that the highest form of prayer is the celebration of the Eucharist. It is here, above all other places, that the Lord wishes to fill us with his gifts, so that we, in turn, can offer those gifts to others. And then, when we give that which we have received, we bring this precious light of Christ into our world. He is the best antidote to the darkness of the pandemic, to the loneliness it has brought, to the lack of clear hope for the future, to the deep weariness and unexpressed resentment that has entered into the souls of so many.

So, please, do what you can to invite those who are missing to come with you to be part of this great family of faith at prayer. If each of you can give a word of encouragement to one other person, to one other family, then the reward will be great. Then we can journey together to Easter. There we proclaim again that Jesus alone has mastered death, that he alone is the Lord of life, that he is now among us and calling us to come to meet him here, in this House of God, in this Gate of Heaven.

I thank you again for your presence here today. I thank you for all that you will do in response to this request and I ask God's blessing on the words that you will speak. Remember the words of St Paul that we have just heard: 'Keep on working at the Lord's work always, knowing that, in the Lord, you cannot be labouring in vain' (1Cor. 15:58).

Please continue in your prayer for peace in Ukraine. We cry out: No more war, no more violence!

And remember me in your prayers as I will remember you, the faithful people of God!

Yours devotedly,

+ Vincent Nichols

✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

Parish Note Friday 25th February 2022 and the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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

Fri 2/25/2022 4:02 PM

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

 2 attachments (169 KB)

220227 Pastoral Letter - pre-Lent.pdf; The Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time.docx;

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time which can also be found on our website. Please also find attached a Pastoral letter from Cardinal Vincent Nichols.

Well, it's been another busy week in the parish with some exciting news to announce.. this will be the last full newsletter in this format as we embark upon a new A4 version which shall be printed on the back of the Mass sheet, starting next weekend (5/6th March), courtesy of Fr Antonio who has done a lovely job in creating 'The Carpenter'. It will contain up to date news items, in addition to our website and will continue to be emailed out as usual each Friday. Also, next weekend, we shall be launching a new contactless way to donate, using our card reader machine and QR code which can be used for offertory donations, Mass stipends, Repository payments and more! Mike Carroll, our Finance Chair will be telling you all about it at each Mass. It is very easy to use and is an additional way to donate when you don't have any cash on your person. Now that many people are coming back to Mass and with lots of lovely new parishioners being welcomed into the area, it is also the time to revise our parish census, so that we have a more accurate and up to date record of who our Parishioners are, where they live, which Mass they attend and how best we can support them. We will therefore, in due course, be asking every parishioner from St Joseph's, Most Holy Redeemer and Holy Cross to complete a new census form either online or using a paper copy. This will apply whether you be a longstanding member of the parish or are completely brand new to the area. So, a few changes and announcements in the coming weeks ahead....

ASH WEDNESDAY - Next Wednesday 2 March is Ash Wednesday. Do try and get to Mass and to receive the ashes. We will have two Masses that day at St Joseph and the English Martyrs Church, 9:30 am and 7:30 pm. The 9:30am Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Paul McAleenan. Ash Wednesday marks the start of Lent, a season of personal and communal conversion and renewal. The whole Church undertakes Lent in order to accompany Jesus on his journey to Jerusalem and to his Death and Resurrection. In Him, we die to sin; in Him we rise to life. Lent reminds us that the Christian life is an unending combat in which the weapons of prayer, fasting and penance are used. Fighting against evil in ourselves and against every form of selfishness, hate and injustice, dying to self in order to live in God is the ascetic journey every Christian disciple is called to make with humility, generosity and perseverance.

Ash Wednesday is a Day of Fasting and Abstinence. Fasting means reducing considerably the amount of food we eat (e.g. having just one meal) and abstinence means abstaining from eating meat. The law of fasting applies to anyone aged 18-60. The law of abstinence applies to those who are over 14 (cf. CIC 1252).

Perhaps you could offer your fasting and abstinence this Ash Wednesday as a prayer for justice, peace and reconciliation in our world, especially in Cameroon and in Ukraine.

KIND GIFT FROM A FORMER PARISHIONER - Yesterday an unexpected package arrived at No.3 containing a quantity of ' My Day by Day' Lent and Easter booklets for children and adults which was a wonderful surprise! Inside the box was a compliment slip which simply said, ' A gift from a former parishioner'. We called the company who despatched the box to see if we could find out who our generous donor was in order to send our sincere gratitude and thanks to them, but was told that they wished to remain anonymous. What an amazingly kind gesture and one that will continue to spread joy and the word of the Lord to many. The books will be available at the back of the Church.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - FRIDAY MARCH 4TH 2022 10.30am - 11.30am at MOST HOLY REDEEMER Catholic Church in Sawbridgeworth. Homemade cakes , tea / coffee served afterwards . ALL WELCOME. Colleen Lindley and Jean Roxby are "in charge " of organising the service this year. After 2 years of this service NOT happening , it would be fantastic if YOU could make it . They would really appreciate your support .

CARDINAL'S LENTEN APPEAL - HEAT or EAT? Help those facing this choice. This year, we celebrate 10 years of Caritas Westminster, the social action agency of the Diocese, working with parishes to restore hope, and enable people to lead a life of dignity. Funds raised in this year's Cardinal's Lenten Appeal will be shared between parishes and Caritas Westminster. The effects of the pandemic are making daily life harder for all. Price rises mean many families face an impossible choice: HEAT or EAT? The Church is responding, with thousands of people putting their faith into action by serving those in need. Cardinal Nichols has expressed his gratitude to everyone who supports the Appeal, with whatever they can afford. Please take an envelope or use the QR code to make your donation online. Thank you for your generosity.

REGULAR CONFESSION TIMES AND ADORATION RETURN TO ST JOSEPH'S - We are happy to announce that the sacrament of Reconciliation will be available in St Joseph's Church every Saturday from 5 March. Either Fr Peter or Fr Antonio will be available to hear Confessions between 3:00 and 4:00 pm. At the same time, there will be the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Adoration which is a precious opportunity for peace and reflection, and to pray before the Real Presence.

The weekly slots for Confessions and Adoration have been missing from our weekly church diary since the start of the pandemic. Since then, the sacrament of Reconciliation has been available by appointment only. The return of regular Confession times is particularly welcome during Lent when all Catholics are strongly encouraged to receive the sacrament as part of their preparation for Easter.

For more information on the sacrament of Reconciliation, including a guide on how to make a Confession, please visit our website: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/sacraments/reconciliation/>

SCRUTINIES MASSES - This year we have the joy of journeying alongside a number of adults in our RCIA programme who are taking the big step to either be baptised as a Catholic (either from another Christian group or no religion at all) or be Confirmed as adults at the Easter Vigil Mass on 16 April.

Over the last few months, these individuals—known as Catechumens (not yet Catholics) and Candidates (Catholics but not Confirmed)—were introduced to many aspects of the Catholic faith. They will now spend the weeks of Lent preparing prayerfully for the Easter Vigil, by reflecting on the Word of God—steps known as the Scrutinies. The word scrutinise means to “examine or observe with great care”. That is exactly what is being done here, as each person takes time to reflect more deeply on the mystery of God's love, through the proclamation of his Word.

This year, the group will meet to reflect on the key Gospel readings of Lent, before gathering for the three Scrutinies Masses, celebrated by Fr Antonio - on **Tuesday 15th, 22nd and 29th March at 8.30pm** in the Church. Any parishioner who wishes to attend the Masses to support the Catechumens and Candidates is most welcome to do so. We know the Catechumens and Candidates gain much from meeting other parishioners, and being made to feel increasingly part of our parish family. Maybe this could form part of a special commitment that you might choose to make this Lent, as part of a deepening of your own prayer life, which characterises this solemn season in our liturgical calendar. In this way, we will all benefit from readying ourselves for the coming of Jesus at Easter.

RESONATE - 'Resonate' with Ben Plimmer, on the theme of "finding and speaking truth in our generation" - this is for all 18-35 year olds and takes place in central London, at Vaughan House, near Westminster Cathedral on 3rd March 2022 at 7pm - snacks and drinks to be provided. (46 Francis St, London, SW1P 1QN)

VOLUNTEERING FAIR- Saturday 5 March, 12-2pm Westminster Cathedral Hall. Whether you want to try volunteering for the first time or are looking for a new role, come and find out what volunteering opportunities are out there at the moment. Find out more here www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/caritas-volunteering-fair-tickets-250053004267

VOLUNTEERING ONE TO ONE CONSULTATIONS - Mondays and Wednesdays throughout Lent. To help you 'spring into action' this Lent, the Caritas Volunteer Service offers a series of appointments for individual guidance for anyone interested in volunteering in London or Hertfordshire. You can choose between a 30 min meeting in person, a phone call or a 'Zoom' online meeting, and slots are available on Monday mornings and Wednesday evenings throughout Lent.

Find out more and register here www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/volunteering-1-2-1-tickets-254712601247 or by calling 07738183833 or emailing cvs@rcdow.org.uk.

ANNUAL MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY - Westminster Cathedral, Saturday 14th May 2022 at 3pm.

The Cardinal is inviting to this Mass all couples in the Diocese, who are celebrating their 5th 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th (and every year over 60) Wedding Anniversary of Catholic Marriage in 2022. If you are celebrating an anniversary and would like to attend the Mass, please give the parish office the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and email (or telephone number, if no email) **before 31st March 2022 please.**

ACCOMPANIMENT FOR THE SEPARATED AND DIVORCED -Beginning Experience Weekend - a residential weekend to help you to heal will be held from 8th to 10th April 2022 at the Sion Community, Brentwood, Essex. Contact Freda 01322-838415; Maura 07795-498445 or email besouthofengland@gmail.com.

RESTORED LIVES - provide workshops to support for teenagers & young adults: 13-18 yrs Wednesday 2nd March 5:30 pm – 6:30 pm; 18 – 30 yrs Wednesday 2nd March 7:30 pm – 9:00 pm, go to <https://www.restoredlives.org/yourdirection>

WALK AGAINST HUNGER THIS LENT FOR CAFOD - Challenge yourself to walk 5K a day this Lent and help stamp out hunger, one step at a time. Sign up at www.walk.cafod.org.uk

LONDON CATHOLIC HISTORY WALKS -www.catholichistorywalks.com . The walks are led by Joanna Bogle, historian and author. No need to book, just turn up! We suggest a donation of £5. Children should be accompanied by an adult with responsibility for them. Each Walk lasts 1-2 hours, but of course people can leave at any time, and we are always within reach of a bus, Tube or railway station. Wear suitable clothing and shoes – we walk whatever the weather! We are happy to organise specific walks for groups or schools. Contact us on catholichistorywalks@gmail.com

VACANCIES AT ST MARY'S CATHOLIC SCHOOL - Assistant Premises Manager – St Mary's Catholic School. Closing Date: 1st March 10 a.m. Interviews w/c 1st March

<https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/assistant-premises-manager-school-estates-salary-h3-5-h4-9-pounds-19-312-pounds-20-903-fringe-pounds-626-depending-on-skills-and-experience-hertfordshire-1564473?preview=1>

Full Time Teacher of English with Drama - Commencing September 2022 - Closing Date 28th February 10 a.m. Interviews w/c 28th February

<https://www.tes.com/jobs/vacancy/full-time-teacher-of-english-with-drama-required-from-september-2022-ect-mps-ups-fringe-pounds-26-948-pounds-42-780-hertfordshire-1568739?preview=1>

VACANCY AT ACROSS - Across are looking for a pilgrimage administrator to be based at Stansted Airport. 3 days per week; £21,500 pro rata. A varied and challenging role, supporting the Office Manager in pilgrimage administration and the day to day operational activity of the charity. A key point of contact with both individual pilgrims and group organisers, ensuring smooth co-ordination of pilgrimages throughout the season. Please include a cover letter with your application and send to Lisa O'Connor, Office Manager, at lisa@across.org.uk. All applications will be treated in confidence.

BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSE - We are pleased to advise you that Sophie Sullivan, our Catechetical Coordinator and her husband Mike shall be running the next two-part Baptism preparation course on the

dates below via Zoom. The places will be limited to a maximum of 10 couples on each.

Monday 25th April and Monday 2nd May 2022 at 8pm - 9.15pm

If you would like to attend this course, 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. If you have not yet completed a Baptism application form, please contact the office so that we can send you one for completion so that we have your details on file.

ART CLASSES - Held in Spring & Autumn terms in a local village hall with tuition by a local artist. Wednesdays from 12.45pm - 3.45pm. Friendly atmosphere, reasonable rates. For more information; contact BS 652060.

THE PASSAGE - a Catholic Charity, working with people who are homeless, is holding a St David's Day concert on Thursday 3 March at 7.30 pm in Holy Trinity Church, Sloane Square with The London Welsh Male Voice Choir and soloist tenor Ryan Vaughan Davies. All tickets are £20. Please support the work of this excellent charity. Tickets at www.passage.org.uk/st-davids-day-concert or telephone 020 75921856

QUIZ WITH AFTERNOON TEA – Saturday 12 March 3.00pm. Come and join the fun at Bishop's Stortford Methodist Church on our Quiz Afternoon! Starting at 3pm, the quiz will include rounds on General Knowledge, Music, Sport, TV, Food & Drink, Geography and Sitcoms, plus a picture round, and we will serve a delicious Afternoon Tea during the interval with tea or coffee. All proceeds to our Redevelopment Project – no set ticket price, just Pay What You Can at the end of the afternoon. Tables of 6 (make up your own table, or we'll team you up with others to make 6). Booking essential – contact fundraising.bsmc@gmail.com or 507138 to book your place(s).

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL - Nursery Admissions 2022-2023

Applications are now welcome from families whose child reaches their third birthday between 1st September 2021 and 31st August 2022 for our new nursery class starting in September 2022. 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. We are offering open mornings to parents who would like to view our nursery. The dates can be found on our website. To book a space please call the office on 01279 652576

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

[St Joseph's Catholic Primary School - Nursery Admissions 2022-2023 \(stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk\)](http://stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk)

On-time applications close on Friday 18th March 2022.

CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE - Applicants for St Joseph's School for **NURSERY** places in 2022/23 should collect a white 'embossed' application form for a certificate from No 3 Windhill, the Sacristy after Mass or the Parish Office in person. Once completed it should then be posted through the letter box of No 3 Windhill marked for Fr Antonio's attention **with a stamped addressed envelope, please**. The Certificate will then be posted to you. The School deadline is 18/3/2022.

ADVANCED NOTICE OF CLOSURE OF THE PARISH OFFICE -The Parish Office will be closed from Monday 7th March to Friday 18th March 2022 inclusive as Debbie goes on her deferred 2020 holiday. If you have an urgent enquiry during this time, please leave a message on the answerphone 01279 654063 as this will be checked daily by Fr Peter and Fr Antonio. All other enquiries and non-urgent requests will be dealt with immediately upon her return. Thank you.

PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK - Thank you to Ann, Carmel and Yvonne who this week restocked the Repository and to our RCIA, First Holy Communion and Confirmation Catechists who continue to support our young people on their faith journey.

Please keep in your prayers the people of Ukraine who are suffering as a result of the current conflict.

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

*St Joseph and the English Martyrs, Bishop's Stortford
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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