



Sacred Heart Church, Oxford

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

31st January, 2021

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| Sunday, 31 st January Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>Racial Justice Sunday</i> | 9.00 am 6.00 pm | <i>Edwardo Esteban - RIP</i> <i>Carlos Monteiro - RIP</i> |
| Monday, 1 st February | 7.00 pm Mass | <i>Jean Bradley and Collette</i> |
| Tuesday, 2 nd February <i>Feast of the Presentation of the Lord</i> | No Public Mass Today | |
| Wednesday, 3 rd February <i>Optional Memorials of St. Werburg, or of St. Blaise, or of St. Ansgar</i> | No Public Mass Today | |
| Thursday, 4 th February | <i>6.00 pm Exposition & Benediction</i> 7.00 pm Mass | <i>The People of the Parish</i> |
| Friday, 5 th February <i>Memorial of St. Agatha, Martyr</i> | No Public Mass Today | |
| Saturday, 6 th February <i>Mem. of St. Paul Miki & Comps., Martyrs</i> | No Public Mass Today | |
| Sunday, 7 th February Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time | 9.00 am 6.00 pm | <i>The People of the Parish</i> <i>Gabriela Monteiro - RIP</i> |
| Sacrament of Reconciliation: Thursday, 6.00-6.45 pm | | |

Welcome to Sacred Heart Church for Mass today,

Today is Racial Justice Sunday. This year Racial Justice Sunday is more important than ever. The effects of the pandemic, the killing of George Floyd, and the powerful message on fraternity and equality by Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* speak of the need to actively oppose racism and pursue racial justice with renewed vigour. We are all children of God. The Bishops' Conference has commissioned a series of videos to share the thoughts of Black Catholics about the events of the past year, how we can build a better society and the important role that our Church can play. These are available at: cbcew.org.uk/home/events/racial-justicesunday-2021.

Please pray for Canon Giles Goward, Fr. Pat Joyce, Bernadette Gavin, Mary Lillis, Sean Smith and all who have died recently, and for all those whose anniversaries occur at this time Mgr. Michael Williams, Frs. David Patrick Condron, Denis Clancy, Joseph Connelly and Thomas O'Carroll, and also Florrie Murphy. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. May they rest in peace. Please pray for the families who have been bereaved, especially Liam Gavin who lost his twin sisters, Bernie and Mary, within a single day. I should also like to ask for prayers for Canon Giles Goward, a friend of mine who was only recently appointed as the Rector of the Diocesan Seminary in Birmingham, and Fr. Pat Joyce who was a curate in my home parish many years ago and was influential in my own spiritual development.

Please pray for John Flanagan and all those we know who are sick. If you or family members are ill and you would like to ask for prayers on this newsletter, let me know (in writing, please). Thank you.

Mass at Home. You are still welcome to come to Sacred Heart for Mass, but if you wish to join us for Mass from your home, we can Zoom the Mass to you. Alternatively you could watch the Mass from Our Lady's where we are now live and can be viewed at <https://www.mcnmedia.tv/camera/our-lady-help-of-christians>

Here is a prayer, **an Act of Spiritual Communion**, which you can say as you watch the Mass at home:

"My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You."

Prayer at the end of Mass:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! *Pray for us, O holy Mother of God*, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

Lent. Two weeks on Wednesday will be the start of Lent. It's not too early to start thinking what you can do to make this season of grace fruitful.

Ashes for Ash Wednesday (17th February). Thank you to all the people who have been so generous in bringing their old palms to church so that they can be burned to make ashes. We can always burn some more, so if you have palms from earlier Palm Sundays, please bring them to church over the next few weeks.

Rachel and Phoebe Walk for Water/CAFOD. This Lent Rachel and Phoebe are taking on the Walk for Water Challenge. Rachel will be walking (with a bit of running) 10,000 steps a day for 40 days to raise money for CAFOD's work around the world. Phoebe will be coaching Rachel. Please support us if you can, and follow us. For updates and photos: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/rachel-and-phoebe-walk-for-water>. If you are interested in doing this challenge also, email rachel.breward@gmail.com

COVID-19. We continue to be able to open the churches for communal Worship, but this may change if restrictions are tightened. Please continue to be sensible and to make wise decisions concerning you and your family. For your protection and that of everyone else, when you come to church, please wear a face-covering, sanitise your hands on arrival and departure, check in for the track and trace, and keep your distance from others who are not in your "bubble. Thank you.

Echoes of God: Journeying with the word of God. Last week we began a 7-week course on the Bible, written by David McLoughlin. These weekly reflections are perfect for us to read through and chew over at home during this period of lockdown. Each week takes a fundamental core teaching of Scripture and together the sessions help us get a sense of the Scriptures as a whole. Last week we began with Exodus. This week we move back to the Book of Genesis. The materials are available to take away, but you can access them at <https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/thegod-who-speaks/focus/sunday-of-the-word-of-god/echoes-of-god-journeying-with-the-word-of-god/>

Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas), this Tuesday, 2nd February. I shall be celebrating a Vigil Mass at Sacred Heart on Monday evening at 7.00 pm. (There will be no Mass on Monday morning). Everyone will be in their place with a candle; because of the pandemic we shall not be lighting them in church, but they will be blessed and you can take your candle home and light it there (with all suitable fire precautions, please!).

Annual Guild of St Stephen Mass. It is one of my regrets that because of the pandemic I have not yet been able to meet many of our altar servers. Well, here is something you can get involved in. Altar servers across the Archdiocese are invited to join the live streaming of the Guild of St Stephen Mass at St Chad's Cathedral at 10am on Saturday, 6th March. As part of the celebration servers (young and old, whether at home or in church, vested or not) are encouraged to send a picture of themselves holding their Guild Medal to office@vocations.org.uk so the Vocations team can create a montage poster in lieu of the annual photo at Mass. **Please save the date and get involved!**

First Friday. This Friday is the First of the month. Novena Prayers to the Sacred Heart will be said before Mass on Thursday evening.

Ask your MP to sign a parliamentary motion calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on foetal pain. A new parliamentary motion (EDM 1340) is calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on foetal pain. The evidence that babies can feel pain in the womb, and during many abortions, highlights the humanity of the unborn child and provides another important reason to introduce legislation to protect the unborn child from abortion. Right To Life UK have set up an easy-to-use tool which makes it simple to contact your MP, and ask them to sign this motion calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. It only takes 30 seconds using this easy-to-use tool. This tool can be accessed by visiting this link: www.righttolife.org.uk/FetalPainMotion

Tailpiece: A group of children were asked what they thought about dating and marriage; here are some of their answers.

1. *How Do You Decide Who To Marry?*

No one really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, aged 10

2. *How Can A Stranger Tell If Two People Are Married?*

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids. - Derrick, aged 8

3. *What Do Most People Do On A Date?*

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. - Lynnette, aged 8

4. *When Is It Okay To Kiss Someone?*

When they're rich. - Pam, aged 7

May God bless you and all those dear to you.

Fr. Harry