

News from the Parishes of Holy Family, Pensby and Our Lady & St. John, Heswall

Important - Coronavirus Update

Following on from the Prime Minister's and as advised by the Council of Bishops, regrettably, both Holy Family and Our Lady & St John's churches will be closed until further notice.

Gospel Reading for Lent Week 5

John 11: 1- 45 - *I am the resurrection and the life*

Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill. So the sisters sent word to him saying, "Master, the one you love is ill." When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it." Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea." The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?" Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." He said this, and then told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him." So the disciples said to him, "Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved." But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus has died. And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him."

So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go to die with him." When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away. And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise." Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day." Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world." When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you." As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him. For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him. So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see." And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?" So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days." Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?"

So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me." And when he had said this, He cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go." Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.



Reflection on the Sunday Gospel *By Father Stephen*

Martha meets Jesus and greets him with simple faith: “If you had been here, my brother would not have died,” yet with a deep trust that God will grant Jesus’ request. “Your brother,” says Jesus, “will rise again.” Martha misunderstands and expresses faith in the general resurrection of the dead. Jesus reacts by saying: “I am the resurrection and the life. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the one who was to come into this world.” To experience Jesus as the true life that conquers death, we must first accept that he is God’s anointed Son. After seeing Mary, Jesus goes to the tomb and bursts into tears at the loss of his friend. After praying to his Father, Jesus cries out, “Lazarus, here! Come out,” and the dead man emerges totally wrapped up in the burial shrouds. Lazarus will die again, but Jesus, whose burial clothes are left in the tomb, is the giver of life, who will never die.

Stage 5 of Our Journey Together through Lent

Our Environment

Could we walk to the local shops rather than drive? Use a bus rather than the car?. Or share a car? Cutting down our heating costs, switching off lights, our use of plastic etc. even eating less meat, these are all familiar to us as ways of reducing energy costs and helping our environment – regardless of our views on Global Warming. No doubt there are many other ways we can think of to help our environment, positively as well as by energy saving.

Why are we doing this? Everything we have on Earth is a gift of God entrusted to us. We have the choice to use these gifts in a good or bad way. As the parable of the talents taught us, neglecting our gifts is not an option. We have an obligation to do something when we see our environment being spoiled or neglected. Pope Francis warns in *Laudatio Si*, ‘There is a real danger that we will leave future generations only rubble, deserts and refuse’. LIVE SIMPLY that others may SIMPLY LIVE.

What do Cafod do with this money? There is little doubt that, in many cases, pollution and of the environmental disasters are largely man-made. And where these things are happening in poor and impoverished parts of the world, you are likely to find Cafod giving help. Not only that, Cafod looks to the future to provide education and new skills to promote sustainability.

Put the money aside in an envelope or a box. All monies can be handed in, once churches are allowed to reopen.

For prayers for Lent visit

cafod.org.uk/News/UK-news/Lent-prayers

Parishioners who need our Prayers

Please remember in your prayers all those in both parishes who are sick at home or in hospital, including:

Catherine Maschke,
Gerry Smith,
Joe Lucas,
John Moroney,
Ken Davies,
Madge McGrath,
David Gorman, Norman Corish, Carol Ross,
Jillie Huntingford, Imelda Atherton, Eileen Millard, Pauline Pritchard, Deacon Philip White, Sara Bull, Lil Skinner, Margaret C. Hiepko, William Kerin



Please get in touch if there are any alterations.

☞ May They Rest in Peace ☞

Please pray for the repose of the souls of **Anne Clark, Hayley Roberts and James McDermott** who have recently died. May their souls Rest in Peace.

Please remember to pray for their families at this difficult time.



A Message from Richard Roberts, the General Manager at the Wirral Foodbank.

We recognise the unprecedented situation we all face. Over the years, we have been encouraged and blessed by the support from the churches of Wirral. Churches account for nearly 40% of annual donations. Due to the current restrictions in place we realise it is difficult to donate food items.

What we do need is your prayer:

Please pray for the following:

- Our staff and volunteers at the Warehouse/Office and Salvation Army Distribution Centre for their safety and welfare
- Trustees and Managers of Wirral Foodbank for their wisdom in making the right decisions
- Our communities
 - Those, who under normal circumstances find it had to manage, and will find the current situation particularly concerning.
 - Those who are now self-isolating
- Wirral Council - give wisdom to the officers and elected officials who are responsible for coordinating the response to Covid-19.

May God bless you all and keep you safe.

We remember that God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46 v1)

Latest information on how you can support us can be found at www.wirral.foodbank.org.uk

Saturday Morning Rosary



We encourage all parishioners to pray the Rosary every Saturday morning at 9.30 in their



homes or whenever they are able to, for an end to the Coronavirus as well as for all in the parish who are suffering from the affects of it.

“Where Two or Three are Gathered in My Name, I Am in Their Midst”

+ + Staying At Home + +

Adapting to a new way of practising our religion

Just because our churches are closed for the time being, doesn't mean that our religious life has to be put on hold!

Mass

Did you know that you can watch Mass over the internet on your laptop, tablet or phone? Simply go the website www.churchservices.tv You can watch Mass live from parishes all over the UK and Ireland. Alternatively, you can visit our Diocesan website to view weekday and Sunday Mass live from Shrewsbury cathedral www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/about-us/live-masses

Free Catholic Newspapers

During this period, many of your usual Catholic newspapers are available to read online, free of charge. Visit www.ChurchPaper.co.uk, The website contains over 600 editions of the country-wide newspapers, including:

- Catholic Pic (Archdiocese of Liverpool)
- UCM News (Union of Catholic Mothers)
- Reach - Catholic Schools Paper

With many more being added weekly. They are free to download and view on your tablet or phone.

Daily Prayer

Our Diocesan website has suggestions for daily Morning and Evening Prayers, as well as a Meditation for the Week and an interesting read about the Saint of the Week. Visit www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/

Looking After Our Neighbours

This is a time when we should come together to look after each other. If you are in need of help or would like a friendly voice on the phone to speak to, please do let Father Stephen or Jeff Telford know.

Or are you willing to help elderly, self-solating or vulnerable parishioners in our community? If you are, please either give your details to Father Stephen, Deacon Jeff or send an email to the Parish Secretary, Victoria Hanlon at contact@ourladyandstjohn.org.uk



A Poem of Hope by Laura Kelly Fanucci

When this is over
 May we never again
 Take for granted
 A handshake with a stranger
 Full shelves at the store
 Conversations with neighbours
 A crowded theatre
 Friday night out
 The taste of communion
 A routine check-up
 The school rush each morning
 Coffee with a friend
 The stadium roaring
 Each deep breath
 A boring Tuesday
 Life itself.

When this ends,
 May we find
 That we have become
 More like the people
 We wanted to be
 We were called to be
 We hoped to be
 And may we stay
 That way - better
 For each other
 Because of the worst.

Church Offertory Giving



A number of parishioners have contacted Father Stephen to ask how they can give their weekly Offertory envelopes or the envelopes for the CAFOD collection whilst the churches are closed.

Obviously, the safety of everyone concerned is our overriding concern and it would not be safe to pass these directly from one person to another or to put them through the presbytery letterbox.

One way would be to simply retain the envelopes until the churches reopen and Mass is once again celebrated in public. However, the 2019/2020 envelopes will soon run out and with the churches closed it is neither practical nor safe to distribute the 2020/2021 boxes of envelopes and we do not yet know when this might be allowed.

There is a possible solution to this conundrum which you may wish to consider; switching to Standing Order payments, either permanently or for the duration of this emergency. Many of your fellow parishioners already make their donations to the Church using this method and they find it very convenient.

If you wish to explore this option please ring Bernard Larkin on 342-5517 and he can explain what is involved.

Do you have an item for the newsletter?



If you do please send it to Victoria Hanlon at contact@ourladyandstjohn.org.uk by 4pm on a Thursday afternoon.

