

BAPTISMS IN THE PARISH: If you have a child due for Baptism please let me know as soon as possible. To avoid any disappointment with dates contact the Presbytery to book your date. If you are first-time parents, you need to contact Sharon Chalk, who will organise a Baptismal Preparation of two sessions, and then I will come and visit you in your homes. Please don't forget to collect your Baptismal Information Form.



WEDDINGS IN 2018: If you're planning on getting married this year, the parish needs approximately 6 months' notice! If you're getting married abroad, we need at least nine months' notice please Tel No: 020 8508 3492. Documentation and *Marriage Instruction need s to take place.*



PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK: Last few Seats - Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, Ireland, 28th May 2018. Led by Bishop Alan Williams. £699 per person sharing. Price includes flights from London Stansted with 15kg checked in bag, all taxes, transfers, 5 nights' in newly refurbished Knock House Hotel, in the grounds of the shrine, with full Irish Breakfast each morning, light lunch and 4 Course Dinner each evening. All entertainment and guided tours included. Wheelchair accessible rooms in the hotel. Limited single rooms available. Groups and Individual bookings welcome. Excellent programme of prayer time, masses, liturgies, excursions and evening activities. We will also visit Ballintubber Abbey, Croagh Patrick, Westport and other famous sights in Co. Mayo. Contact 01 268 762278 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com. Knock Pilgrimages is a member of the Travel Trust Association and is fully protected by ATOL T7613.

UTILITY BILLS: As you can appreciate, during the winter months and especially during the recent cold snap, keeping all our buildings heated and warm is an expensive task. February's Gas bill alone was £870.00, I do try to keep the Church and Parish Hall as warm as possible, when people are using them. Please consider these bills when making your weekly Offertory Contributions. With grateful thanks for your continued generosity.

IN CASES OF EMERGENCY: Tuesday is usually Fr. John's Day Off. In cases of emergency please call one of the local parishes, either in Epping – Tel: 01992 572516, or the St. Thomas of Canterbury Friary at Woodford Green – Tel: 020 8504 1688. This would also apply if Fr. John is away for a few days break or on Retreat. All the local funeral directors have a contact number for Fr. John if a funeral needs to be arranged in his absence.

Dear Friends in Christ

Fourth Sunday of Lent 2018

In the course of his late-night conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus makes reference to a highly symbolic story from the Old Testament. When Edom denied God's people permission to pass through his land on the way back to Canaan, the Promised Land, and God instructed Moses not to fight him. The Israelites were far from being impressed at being forced to undertake a long and arduous journey going in the opposite direction to their destination and grumbled bitterly. As punishment for their rebellion God sent venomous serpents among them and many died. Repenting of their rebellious hearts, they begged Moses to help them. In response to his prayer, God told him to make a bronze serpent and raise it high on a pole, promising that if those who had been bitten looked up at the serpent raised on the pole, they would live. This incident was a prophetic reference to the cross of Jesus Christ. In the same way that Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so the Son of Man was lifted up on the cross, and everyone who believes in him will live.



St. Paul and John taught that the One who had no sin became for us a worm, a serpent and sin so that we might be reconciled to God and become the righteousness of God. Underpinning and overarching this revelation is the simple but profound truth that 'God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life'. This is the Good News. This is the *kerygma*, the basic proclamation of the gospel.

The simple message that God is love and showed his love by sending his Son has the power both to transform our own lives as part of our on-going conversion and also to transform our world. This is the message of eternal life to which we bear witness. The greatest symbol of love isn't the heart but the cross, because while every heart will one day stop beating. The cross of Christ is an eternal, infinite testimony that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.



Dear Friends in Christ,
2018

Laetare Sunday

Rejoice

Today is 'Laetare Sunday', the word 'Laetare' means to 'rejoice'. It marks the mid-way point of our Holy Lenten Season. This gives us all a wonderful opportunity to review our Lenten resolutions. If we have been remiss in our resolve to renew and improve our lives of faith, it's still not too late to make an extra special effort over the next few weeks of Lent. Obviously, this is a very personal journey that we make during this Lenten season. There is no one looking over our shoulder telling us what we should, or shouldn't do. But personal self-discipline is very much at the heart of this Holy Season. Our Prayer, our fasting, our works of charity, our personal penance, all of these areas certainly help us on our spiritual journey to the Joy of Resurrection faith on Easter Day. To look forward in Rejoicing in the Lord Jesus is at the heart of our Liturgy today. Let us all really look forward to the remaining weeks of Lent as we anticipate the Joy of Easter!



Our First Holy Communion children on Sunday will participate in the celebration of Holy Mass. As part of their preparation for the Holy Eucharist the children have been systematically learning about each part of the Mass, this is their opportunity to participate in a tangible way by reading at mass, praying the prayers of Intercession, joining in the Offertory Procession. My sincere thanks to our Catechist Kathryn Poulter, and her great team of helpers who are doing the most wonderful job in preparing the children for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist.

Today is also Mothering Sunday: We thank God for the gift of our mothers and motherhood. Let us make an extra special effort today to do something special for our mothers. For all those whose mothers are no longer with us, but are with God in heaven, we ask them to continue to pray for us, and we remember them with great love and respect, and think of all the wonderful things they were able to teach and share with us.

Happy
Mothering
Sunday

May God Bless You All,

ALTAR SOCIETY: We are always in need of new members for the parish Altar Society. The Altar Society in this parish has been in existence for many years; they have done such sterling work through the years, and I'm truly grateful to all the members for keeping our churches in such a beautiful condition. If you are able to give an hour or so once a month, please see Veronica Short or any member of the Altar Society. Thank you!

THE CATHOLIC VISION OF MARRIAGE: The next study day at Christ the Eternal High Priest, Gidea Park, will be led by Dr Clare Watkins, Catholic theologian and Reader at the University of Roehampton. The topic will be 'The Catholic Vision of Marriage' and particular attention will be given to Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation Amoris Laetitia. The study day will take place on Saturday 17th March, with coffee available from 10.30 and ending at 3.00 p.m. Please make your booking by email to gpstudydays@gmail.com.

WALSINGHAM SPIRITUALITY RETREAT 1: (16th-18th March). Join us for the first of a series of 4 weekends on Walsingham Spirituality. Accompaniment and talks will be given by the sisters of the Community of Our Lady of Walsingham, enabling retreatants to enter more deeply into the spirituality of Walsingham and, in particular, what it means to accept God's Will in one's life. For more information, please visit: www.dowryhouse.org.uk.

MAISONETTE FOR SALE: With very close proximity to the Church and the High Street. If there are any parishioners who may be interested in this property please Telephone: 01424 224952

NEW PARISH WEBSITE: The New Parish Website was set up recently. My grateful thanks to Stephen Richardson for doing this for us. You can now access the Weekly Newsletter through the website. The more people who use the website the greater publicity it will give to our parish and the Catholic Church. Please have a look at the Website



SCIENCE TUITION: The Secondary science learning centre is running GCSE and A level science classes at St Teresa's Hall (Chingford) and the Beckett Centre (Woodford) in small groups at just £15 a session. Contact us

for more information and to book your child a place: Tel: [07940056928](tel:07940056928) or Email: Secondaryscience@outlook.com

PARISH CHOIR: As you know we are very fortunate to have a new Parish Choir Director and Organist, Susan Farrow, and it really does make a difference to our Parish Liturgies. Susan now has two Choir rehearsals a week, Wednesday evening 7pm till 8.00pm and Saturday morning 10.30am till 11.30am. We are looking for new choir members. There are a number of the members from the Contemporary Music Group who also sing in the Parish Choir, everyone is welcome! If you enjoy singing and music, and you want to enrich our Parish Liturgical Celebrations please come along to the rehearsals and Sunday 11.00am Mass. At present the Choir is rehearsing for Holy Week & Easter.



NOTE TO EVERYONE IN THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC GROUP: As the first Sunday in April is Easter Sunday (1st April), Susan will be leading the Parish Choir for this special feast day, so the next Mass for our group will be the first Sunday of May (6th May); this doesn't however mean that our singers can have a rest until then! Between now and then, we have Bishop Alan's visit for our Confirmation Mass on Wednesday, 21st March, our Holy Week services and our Easter Vigil and Easter Day Masses.

Fr. John and Susan would be very grateful if as many of our singers as possible could sing at these services with the Parish Choir to add voice to these special occasions. Some of you already do sing with the Parish Choir and all our singers who can join them would be made very welcome. Please look out for the practises that Susan will be holding over the next few weeks and try to attend them if you can. Thanks very much.

VOLUNTEERS FOR PLAYGROUP:

Parents, Grandparents, Carers, members of the parish. We are in urgent need of more volunteers to help at our Parent & Toddler group which meets every Thursday morning term-time 9.45am – 11.30am in the Church Hall. This is a really lovely friendly group which is invaluable to the young children of our parish. If you can help in any way please get in touch. We appreciate that volunteers cannot be there every week. You can pop into the Parish Hall one Thursday to register or e.mail Andy on andrew.godsave@ntlworld.com



LENTEN PARISH PENITENTIAL SERVICE: Tuesday 27th March at 8.00pm with visiting Priests to hear confessions. Please make a very special effort to attend the Sacrament of Reconciliation

PARISH VISITATION & CONFIRMATION: As the triennial Parish Visitation by our Bishop Alan Williams rapidly approaches, I would like to commend to your thoughts and prayers over the next couple of weeks our Confirmandi. There are 40 Candidates for the Sacrament of Confirmation. Obviously over the past several months they have been meeting monthly with various guest speakers and their Catechists to explore all aspects of this great commitment in faith they are about to receive. As older teenagers they now have that personal responsibility of assuming for themselves the practice of their faith.



The Sacrament of Confirmation is very much the 'Sacrament of Mission'. When you reflect on the first Pentecost, you see the gift of the Spirit, promised by the Lord Jesus, filling the lives of the Apostle, and empowering them to 'go out and proclaim the Gospel'. Our young people are at a very exciting time in their lives, there are all sorts of decisions being made about their futures, their various options for examinations, the decisions they make about going to College and University, exploring various careers options. All of these coupled with their decision to be Confirmed, which gives them a personal responsibility for their lives of faith, help to build character, and also deepen their commitment to God and their Roman Catholic Faith.

To have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is fundamental to the Christian life. Our faith isn't just something we tag along to the rest of our lives, it's central and key to whom we are, and who we are striving to become. So please pray for these young people!

CONFIRMATION MASS: Wednesday 21st March at 7.00pm. There will be a rehearsal on Monday 19th March at 7.30pm, followed immediately by a Penitential Service for all our Candidates. There will be some visiting priests to hear confessions. Candidates, please ensure that you have submitted a copy of your Baptismal Certificate, and your Confirmation name.

JOURNEY OF FAITH PROGRAMME – RCIA: Will continue next Thursday 15th March, with our final formal session of instruction. This will be a guided tour of the Church. Please pray for our Candidates for the Easter Sacraments, Samantha Gell & Lorraine Leith. This is a really important time in their faith journey. If you know of anyone who may be interested in the Roman Catholic Faith, and who would like to know more

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