



St. John Rigby Parish NEWSLETTER.

Incorporating the Former Parishes of Sacred Heart, Hindley Green, St. Richard's, Atherton & Sacred Heart, Hindsford.

Priests: Fr. Paul Seddon. (Tel: 883395)

Deacon: Ken Holding (Tel: 255834)

14th March 2021

Church Closure.

Following the long-awaited plan to ease down the Lockdown last week, the churches in the Deanery will re-open in time for **Palm Sunday, March 27th & 28th**. Whilst the situation seems to be getting more hopeful, we still have to monitor the Rate of infection after the schools re-open next week and as other parts of society gradually reopen. If there is an increase in the R Rate before that time, then sadly we may have to remain closed. But let us hope and pray that we will enjoy Easter in our churches this year.

Just a Reminder.

Please remember, if you or someone you live with has Covid-19 symptoms, then please stay at home and help us to protect everyone. You should stay at home if you are unwell or awaiting a test result. People who are vulnerable or who feel unsure about returning to Mass need to consider the wisdom of doing so. Remember the Sunday obligation has not been reinstated.

Pray for our sick

Joan Baines.
Eileen McAlister.
Joyce Gorton.
Nora Smith.
Jed Bamber.
John Atkins.
Eileen Watkinson.
Shelia Ratcliffe.
Maureen Blears.

Jean Culkin.
Martin Culkin.
Bernadette
Boardman.

Teresa Weatherhead.
Neil Gunson.
Frank Vose.

Lately Dead

Bro. Michael Winstanley.
David Urmston.

Anniversaries

Evelyn Silcock.
Peter Baldwin.
Anthony Crank.
Stan Simpson.
Molly Hooton.
David O'Halloran.
Sean Grainey.
Elsie Needham.

Collection Last Week.

Envelopes:
Loose Plate:
CAFOD Box:

READINGS FOR THE WEEKEND.

Fourth Sunday of Lent.(B)

First Reading – 2 Chronicles 36:14-16,19-23.

Because of their sins God allowed his people to be exiled to Babylon. But his mercy is seen in their home-coming.

Second Reading – St. Paul to the Ephesians 2:4-10.

It is not through our own efforts that we are saved, but through the love and mercy of God.

Gospel Reading – John 3:14-21.

In his love for us, God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn us, but to save us.

If anyone would like to add any items for the Newsletter each week then please let Deacon Ken or Fr. Paul know by Wednesday evening at the latest.

Deacon Ken – ka.holding1@gmail.com
Fr. Paul – stjohrnigby@rcaol.org.uk

GOSPEL REFLECTION.

In the Gospel Jesus refers to an ancient story that would be well known to his Jewish audience. It tells how the people of Israel, while trudging through the desert on their way to the Promised Land, were beset by poisonous snakes that caused many deaths. Moses was inspired to fashion a snake in bronze and set it on a standard, promising that whoever looked upon it with faith would be healed. Today Jesus declares that he himself, the “Son of Man”, must be lifted up just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert. As Christians, it’s hard for us to hear those words without our thoughts immediately turning to Calvary and to the Cross of the Crucifixion. Upon it lies not a lifeless symbol, like the bronze snake, but the living and tortured body of God’s only Son, and there is the promised that whoever looks towards him with faith will enjoy eternal life. The Calvary scene speaks very powerfully of God’s great love for us. In the simple words of John, “God loved the world so much that he gave us his only Son.”

Today’s Second Reading reminds us that Jesus came not simply to save us from sin, but to remind us that we are all daughters and sons of God. Through the mercy, the goodness and the graciousness of God we are transformed: we become, in the words of St. Paul, “God’s work of art”. Perhaps we tend to think of ourselves as more of a disaster than a work of art. But today we are being asked to think again. We are assured by God’s Word that we are “God’s work of art”. If this is God’s vision, then can it inspire us, in our own small way, to live up to God’s expectations? Again when we see goodness, not in terms of keeping the commandments, but rather in terms of making a return of love to a God who first loved us, then what could give us greater joy than trying to live “the good life” as God has always meant it to be? As we continue our journey of faith in these very difficult times, let us remember that we ARE God’s work of art, and are called to reflect his great love for us in the way we love and care for those around us.

CAFOD LENTEN REFLECTIONS 2021.

Usually at this time of year we hold a series of Lenten Reflections based on the Gospel Readings and some of the writings of Pope Francis. They are always really good meetings and it is always good to hear what people have to share. The meetings are meant to inspire us to take a few moments out of our busy lives and think what we can do to make our planet a better place. So why not read today’s Gospel, the story of Jesus’ prediction of his Passion and Death in John’s Gospel, and reflect on the following questions:-

- How does Scripture help us to “come out into the light”?
- Where does the darkness seem to be triumphing in our world today?
- How can we transform ourselves so that we can tell the darkness from the light?

To read some of the other reflections please visit the CAFOD notice on the Deanery website.

SYNOD 2021.

As many of you will know the Synod was meant to take place last year but due to Covid regulations it had to be postponed. There is still lots of hope that it will be concluded this year, depending on how everything goes. On Friday and Saturday next week, Synod members are asked to take part in the next step of the journey as we think about the proposals to be voted on in June so that we can take our next step on our Synod journey. We hope that all Synod members have already booked in. If not please contact the Synod Office at synod2020@rcaol.co.uk

CHURCH RE-OPENING.

After consultation and following guidance from the Archdiocese, we are looking to cautiously reopen our churches on the weekend of March 26th & 27th, which is Palm Sunday weekend, the beginning of Holy Week. The reason for being so cautious is to simply wait for two more weeks after the schools have reopened fully so that we can check to see if the rate of coronavirus infections have begun to rise or if they continue to fall. This is for everyone's safety. When churches do re-open we will still have to adhere to the safeguarding rules and regulations as before, that is, facemasks must be worn in church, safe distancing must be maintained, and the liturgy itself will continue to be much shorter than before the pandemic began.

EASTER SERVICES.

Please remember that St. John Rigby is a very new Parish, the newest in the whole of the Archdiocese in fact. With this in mind, please remember that this is our **FIRST** Easter together. It will, therefore, be very different this year, not just because of social distancing regulations, but simply because we are **ONE** Parish and are called to come together to celebrate as one Parish family. Therefore, we plan to have the Easter Triduum spread out over the two churches and alternate venues each year:-

Thursday April 1st – Mass of the Lord's Supper.
Sacred Heart Church, Hindley Green, at 7.00pm.

Friday April 2nd – Celebration of the Lord's Passion.
Sacred Heart Church, Hindley Green, at 3.00pm.
St. Richard's Church, Atherton, at 3.00pm.

Saturday April 3rd – The Easter Vigil.
St. Richard's Church, Atherton, at 7.00pm.

Please note that these times and dates are subject to any new rules or changes in the regulations concerning the Covid. Please keep an eye on the Newsletter and the website every week to check if the services are going ahead. In the meantime, stay safe, look after each other, and pray for one another. It will be great to get together at Easter this year and celebrate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord.