



A WARM WELCOME TO THE PARISH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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Easter Week 7

Sunday Cycle Year A, Weekday Cycle Year 2, Psalter Week 3

Date	Celebration	Readings
Sunday 24th May	SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER	Acts 1:12-14; Ps 26; 1Pt 4:13-16; Jn 17:1-11
Monday 25th May	Saint Bede the Venerable	Acts 19:1-8; Ps 67; Jn 16:29-33
Tuesday 26th May	Saint Philip Neri	Acts 20:17-27; Ps 67; Jn 17:1-11
Wednesday 27th May	Feast of St Augustine of Canterbury	1Thes 2:2-8; Ps 116; Lk 10:1-9
Thursday 28th May	Weekday of Easter	Acts 22:30,23:6-11; Ps 15; Jn 21:7-26
Friday 29th May	Weekday of Easter	Acts 25:13-21; Ps 102; Jn 21:15-19
Saturday 30th May	Weekday of Easter	Acts 28:16-20,30-31; Ps 10; Jn 21:20-25
Sunday 31st May	SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST	Acts 2:1-11; Ps 103; 1Cor 12:3-7,12-13; Sequence <i>Veni Sancte Spiritus</i> ; Jn 20:19-23

Diocesan Prayer Link: We pray for: **St Dominic**, Dursley and **St Joseph**, Nympsfield

**Public Mass is currently suspended at the churches of
The Immaculate Conception, Stroud and
Our Lady and Saint Thérèse, Painswick.**

(Please see the final page of this newsletter for more details)

We pray for all those within our parish and their intentions including: the communities at the Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Bernard, Brownshill and More Hall, Randwick; and all those connected with our schools.

SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Today's Gospel is part of the priestly prayer of Jesus. Jesus speaks directly to his Father. He prays for those who belong to him. In other words, he is praying for us, asking God to protect us. Jesus is speaking from the depths of his heart and this is the perfect model for our own prayer. Prayer has been and continues to be central to the life of our communities. When we have not been able to gather physically, we have found innovative ways to come together virtually. What has mattered has been our desire to bring to God our heartfelt needs. In these difficult months we may not have been able to comprehend what is going on, but we have been able to pray. Even when that has been hard for us personally, others have been able to hold us in their prayer. The prayer of Jesus is not for himself. ***While we may pray that we will respond to whatever God asks of us, we are also encouraged to grow in our relationship with God by our prayer for others. The fruit of our prayer can be seen in our reaching out and our tender love for others.***

YOUR PRAYERS: *are asked for those who are housebound, residing in nursing homes, ill in hospital or sick:*

Antonietta Lazdans, Colin Keegan, Vivienne Tarn, Sarah Williams, Jean Barber, Helen Hursthouse, Christopher Browne, Gerardo Capaldo, Michael Flint, Clare McDermott, Margot Williams, Gisele Smart, June & John Privett, Olivia Bouzyk, Raphael Moore, Brian O'Donoghue, Mary Grant, Finley, Nicky Golder, Ursula & Desmond Kyne, Imelda Kucharzyszyn, Kitty McCoy, Lisa Knight, Pat King, Francis Kerrigan, Rebecca Frazier, Lucia Mirkovic, Monika Smit, Joan O'Donoghue, Sr Quentin, Peter Ollis, Peter McCombie, Anne Allen, Sr. Catherine, Daryl Jackson, Lola Long, Grace Harper, Jamie Watt, Maggie, Thea Gregson, Gwen Kimpton, Peter Tay, Woody, Ann Enright, Jill Chapman, Janie Wilmot, Kevin Sivell, Rian Harvey, Theresa Finneran, Niall Walker, Cecilia Redgrave, Christopher & Clifford Browne, Victor Vincent, Bevan, Stephen Carden, Murray Dolan, John Stephens, Phyllis Bruton, Marilyn Anderson, Chris Strong, Kate Thorley, Amanda Mullins, Pilar, Paul O'Keith, Simon Terry, John Cibulskas, Anna Dowdeswell, Stephen & Paul Coupe, Anthea Van Venroy, Maisie McGinley & all their carers.

***To add a name to this list please contact the office or email/phone the Editor –
please ensure you have the agreement of the sick person***

Saints this Week

On Monday this week we have the celebration of **Saint Bede the Venerable** (673-735), a monk of Jarrow who is seen as the Father of English History. His *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* gives an account of the history of England up until his own time.

This includes the mission of **Saint Augustine of Canterbury** who is seen as the Apostle of the English, and whose Feast is celebrated on Wednesday. He was Italian by birth. He became a monk and later prior of a monastery in Rome. In 596 he was chosen by Pope Saint Gregory the Great to head the mission of thirty monks whom he sent to evangelise the Anglo-Saxons. In Gaul they wished to turn back, but Saint Gregory gave them fresh encouragement, defined Saint Augustine's authority more clearly, and had him consecrated bishop. The party landed at Ebbsfleet (Kent) in 597. They were received cautiously by Ethelbert, king of Kent and overlord to the other tribes south of the Humber, who gave them a house in Canterbury, allowed them to preach, but required time to consider their message before committing himself to becoming a Christian. By 601 Ethelbert and many of his people were baptised, and more clergy were sent from Rome. Saint Augustine built the first cathedral at Canterbury. Later he established a see at London. He helped Ethelbert draft the earliest Anglo-Saxon written laws to survive. He also founded a school at Canterbury, which both received and produced books. He died in 604.

Between these two feasts we celebrate **Saint Philip Neri** (1515-1595) on Tuesday. Renowned for his prayerfulness and sense of fun and humour, Saint Philip was born in Florence. He arrived in Rome and formed a community of friends to look after the sick, which became the Oratory. He was known by many of the earliest students at the English College, Rome, whom he would greet with the words: 'Salvete flores martyrum!' – 'Hail flowers of martyrdom!'.

World Communications Day is this Sunday and is a day of prayer for right use of the media. Please visit the website http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/communications/documents/papa-francesco_20200124_messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html for the message of Pope Francis for this day. The second collection for the Catholic Communications Network has been postponed.

Next Sunday is the Solemnity of Pentecost. This feast of the descent of the Holy Spirit can be seen as the birthday of the Church. It also marks the end of the Easter Season. The days between the solemnities of the Ascension and Pentecost are seen as a particular time to ask for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we remember the Blessed Virgin Mary gathered with other disciples of Jesus between these two events in the Upper Room. This is often seen as being the first Novena.

*Come Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful,
and kindle in them
the fire of your love.*

*Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created;
and you shall renew the face of the earth.*

National Rosary Rally on Pentecost Sunday, 31st May, from 9:00am until 9:00pm. As a Diocese we have had a request from Monsignor John Armitage, from the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, to participate in this event. Each diocese in England, Wales and Scotland has been allotted an hour. At some time during this hour we are encouraged, whether as individuals or in family groups to pray the rosary. Our diocese has been allocated from 1:00pm until 2:00pm. There will be a celebration in our Cathedral at 1:00pm which can be viewed at www.cliftondiocese.com. For more details about this event please visit <https://www.walsingham.org.uk/2020/05/20/pentecost-sunday-national-rosary-rally/>.

Thank you to all those who have continued to support our parish financially during this time when we have not had the normal weekly collections at Mass. In addition to a number of cheques and monies sent directly to the parish office we have also received £175 in new standing orders and £412 in PayPal donations made through the parish website. There are details about ways to contribute to the parish on the next page of this newsletter.

We remember in our prayers Linda Pickford (Sister Teresa's sister) who died recently. Linda's funeral is next week and we also pray for her family and friends.

Supporting those in Need : While we are mindful of financial changes we may be facing as individuals and families and also our parish finances (see below), it is also important that we consider how to support others who may be in need. There are many organisations, both church-based and otherwise, who can merit our support. Both prayer and financial support are required. Church organisations to consider include:

Saint Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) : This does important work in many parishes around our diocese and country, offering support to those who need it. More details, and how to donate, can be found at: <https://www.svp.org.uk/covid-19-crisis-appeal>.

Missio: In many areas of the world, it will be the Church that responds to the medical and pastoral needs of people who are suffering. Pope Francis has established an emergency fund to help people and communities tragically impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic. He asks us to consider what each should contribute to help the Church overseas, through Missio. More details, and how to donate, can be found at: <https://missio.org.uk/donate/covid-19-emergency-fund/>.

Cafod: Our agency for overseas development is also seeking to respond to the needs of those overseas where conditions include: fragile health care systems; less developed infrastructure; less state welfare support; inferior housing and sanitation; as well as general poverty. More details, and how to donate, can be found at: <https://cafod.org.uk/News/International-news/Coronavirus-response>.

Support Services Map: Community groups, charities and other organisations are doing a lot to support Stroud residents during this time. The community support map shows what support is available in each area should you or anyone you know need any help. Please visit <https://www.stroud.gov.uk/health-wellbeing/coronavirus/find-support-services-map>, where there is also a link to Gloucestershire's Community Help Hub, where more sources of help can be found, and individuals and organisations can offer help.

Resources for the Young: Both Missio and Cafod produce learning and prayer resources for children and young people. For Missio, please visit the schools tab at www.missio.org.uk for resources for those of secondary school age, while the Mission Together website has lots of resources for primary school aged children, including on its home-schooling section <https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/home-and-parish-resources/>. Cafod's resources can be found at <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Education-resources>.

@stroudRCchurch: You can keep up to date with parish news by following the parish on Twitter.

Parish Finances: Some people have enquired regarding parish finances during this period, and how to contribute to the parish without the weekly collection. This is important as although our churches are closed for public worship, our parish continues to function and expenses continue to be incurred. Those who currently do not contribute via standing order and who would like to continue to support the parish financially during this time can use one of the following methods:

- Set up a standing order via online banking. Please contact the parish for the necessary details.
- Donate via the 'Paypal' button on the parish website. Donations can be gift-aided if applicable. You do not need your own paypal account to use this service. We believe that the cost to the parish for donating in this way is 1.4% and 20p per donation.
- Send a cheque to the parish office (although these may not be presented to the bank for some weeks).
- Wait until public Masses resume, although we have no indication of when this may be.

These methods are for donations to the parish. They are not for second collections, which are postponed at present.

Spiritual Communion: Prayer of Saint Alphonsus

*My Jesus, I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.
I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.*

SUSPENSION OF SUNDAY AND WEEKDAY MASSES

In common with the other bishops of England and Wales, Bishop Declan has issued a decree in light of the current Covid-19 situation. Within this decree it is clear that:

- The obligation of the faithful to attend Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation is removed until further notice.
- All churches and chapels, as well as other places where regular Sunday and weekday public Masses are celebrated, are to suspend all public Masses.
- The faithful may choose one of the following alternatives to attending Sunday Mass:
 - Taking part may include watching a Sunday Mass online, or on television, and so receive Holy Communion spiritually; OR
 - Reflecting on the Sunday Liturgical text, reading the Bible or saying the Rosary

Although it was hoped that churches could remain open for private prayer, following the Prime Minister's statement on 23rd March, all churches in the diocese are to remain closed until further notice.

A possible form of prayer for use when Mass cannot be publicly celebrated can be found at <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/03/No-Mass-A4.pdf>.

Sunday and daily Mass readings can be found at <https://www.universalis.com/mass.htm>. Sunday Mass and weekday Mass from Clifton Cathedral is available every day at 9:30am on our diocesan website www.cliftondiocese.com. Other Masses & Celebrations can be found at www.churchservices.tv/. Other Celebrations including some of those from Rome can be viewed at www.cbcew.org.uk. Celebrations from Rome can also be found on 'Vatican Media Live' on YouTube.

Father Gary will be offering Mass privately during this time as 'the continued celebration of Mass ensures that the faithful can join in spiritual communion with the priests of the church.' Requested Mass intentions will continue to be offered, generally on or near to the dates requested

While the parish administration continues, access to the parish office is restricted to appointment only. For those matters normally dealt with by the parish office please use the parish email or telephone 0784 249 5988 (Tuesday to Friday 10:00am – 3:00pm). The normal parish telephone number should be used to contact Father Gary.

All parish groups and programmes are suspended until further notice.

There will continue to be a weekly newsletter available on the parish website. Please make the details of the newsletter known to those who may not access the website.

First Holy Communion and Confirmation: The First Holy Communion programme is suspended until further notice. At this time, it is uncertain whether it will be possible to celebrate the First Holy Communion Mass on 27th June. Similarly, it is uncertain whether the Confirmation Mass planned for Thursday 11th June will be possible. When conditions allow both programmes will be re-planned.

Prayer is always important. Even when we cannot be physically close, prayer unites us. As well as traditional prayers known to us there are also resources online: www.prayasyougo.org offers daily meditative prayer which some may find useful.

Baptisms and Marriages cannot take place in the usual way at this time. In any emergency contact Father Gary or Deacon Steve.

Funerals, according to present regulations, 'should take place at either the graveside or crematorium, subject to the conditions laid down by the cemetery or cremation authorities. Arrangements should be made for a Mass *in memoriam* when congregations are allowed to gather safely'.

Pastoral Visits by clergy or lay people cannot take place in the normal way at present. Father Gary is happy to speak with people by telephone.

Please speak with Father Gary regarding any other aspects of parish life or sacramental celebration.

Editor: Richard McDermott, email: rj3mcd@yahoo.co.uk or by post; NB: To avoid disappointment, items for inclusion in the Bulletin; **MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY MORNING** at the Parish Office.

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