

ST AUGUSTINE'S DATCHET

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NEWSLETTER

Sunday 10th January 2021

The Baptism of the Lord

Members of the Parish Council and I have decided that I will stop holding Masses in St. Augustine's Hall for a period, whilst the Coronavirus is at such high levels in our area.

We will continue to hold an online Mass every Sunday at 11am. For details of how to join the Mass, please email office@staugustines.org.uk

St. Augustine's Church remains open for **private prayer**. As the days and evenings are distinctly chilly now, rest assured that the Church is being heated. Times are:

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 12 noon and 12.30pm, and
Tuesdays and Thursdays between 5.30pm and 6.15pm.

I would like to remind those who don't already know, that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been suspended during this pandemic. We are really lucky that, through the hard work of Anthony and Pamela, we will still continue with our online Mass and I would urge you to log in to it if you are able. It is a very good substitute at this time in helping us keep together as a Parish.

MASS INTENTIONS

Sat. 9th Jan.	Private Intention	Wed. 13th Jan.	Carolyn Ansell R.I.P.
Sun. 10th Jan. 11am	People of the Parish	Thu. 14th Jan.	Srs. Lorenzo Meincro and Sr. Catherine R.I.P.
Mon. 11th Jan.	Fr. Anthony Donohue R.I.P.		
Tue. 12th Jan.	Vomm and Catherine Grout R.I.P.	Fri. 15th Jan.	Families of Pauline Sisters

SICK OF THE PARISH: Please pray for the sick in the Parish, especially James Ansell, Dorrie Keating, David Mendes, Walter Stanley and Michael Torpey. Please pray also for those who are caring for them.

CORONAVIRUS: We remember those in our parish who may be suffering acutely from the effects of Covid. We think especially for those who are ill, those living alone - far from relatives, those whose jobs are at risk, those in Care Homes, those in difficult home environments.

And let's not forget to thank God for the progress being made towards a vaccination programme for COVID. We pray for the scientists and the medical personnel who have worked so hard towards its discovery, and we pray that it will be very soon available to all.

PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM FR. FRANK

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU ALL MOST SINCERELY, FOR THE EXTREMELY GENEROUS CONTRIBUTION YOU MADE TO THE CHRISTMAS COLLECTION. I APPRECIATE IT VERY MUCH INDEED. I PRAY THAT WE ALL WILL EXPERIENCE THE POWERFUL PRESENCE OF THE LORD WITH US AND WITH OUR LOVED ONES IN THESE VERY DIFFICULT TIMES.

STELLA MARIS (Apostleship of the Sea)

Stella Maris (Apostleship of the Sea) is the official Catholic charity supporting seafarers, fishers and their families worldwide. Seafarers face difficult challenges daily, which include stress, isolation and loneliness, and separation from their families and loved ones due to the nature of their work. There may also be violent storms and bad weather situations at sea and the threat of piracy. With Covid-19 restrictions in place in many ports, contracts have been extended and seafarers face extra stress and anxiety not knowing when they will be able to go home. Each year there is a Sunday dedicated to Sea Sunday, when the Church prays for all those who live and work at sea. We were unable to mark this day last year but wish to do so this weekend.

Donations may be made to Stella Maris by:

- Placing your donation in an envelope marked STELLA MARIS and posting it through the letterbox of the Presbytery;
- Donating online via the website www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate
- Text SEA to 70460 to donate £5;
- Posting a cheque made payable to STELLA MARIS to Stella Maris (AoSea), General Secretariat, 39 Eccleston Square, London SW1V 1BX.

THE UNIVERSE: A COMPELLING INVITATION TO ADORATION

This is the first in a series of Reflections on God's Presence in Creation

God has not left it to Faith alone to reveal his Love and his Power. In his Creation, he gives us very compelling evidence of his Presence. We find this evidence not only in the grandeur and beauty of Creation but also in the way that the different elements in our enormously complex Universe harmoniously interact with one another. As the Psalmist tells us: 'the heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of his hands'. (Ps. 19)

If we reflect on the universe in even the most rudimentary way, we see ourselves immersed in a Reality that is infinitely more immense and complex than we could ever imagine or dream of. In contrast, we see our own littleness and dependence.

Let's think firstly of the immensity of the universe. In terms of light years (light traveling at 186,000 miles per second), the sun is a mere 8 minutes away (93 million miles). The next nearest star is 4.5 light years away – when I look at it in the sky, I see it not as it is now but as it was 4.5 light years ago. And the furthest known star is over 13 billion years away! And one further revealing statistic - our tiny Earth, which seems to us so majestic and immovable, is rotating round the sun at the speed of 18 miles per second!

And then we look at how wonderfully *friendly* is our next-door neighbor, the sun. We see how deeply it cares for us and how dependent we are on it. Without the sun there would be no heat or light, no water or growth – all of which we take for granted, and without which there could be no life on earth. Yet, who has given us the sun - the nearest star to us, but just one among billions of stars in our galaxy, in the billions of galaxies in the universe? And who has put the sun at just the right distance from the earth to make life possible. Who has invented the marvelous law of gravity and who keeps it so fixed and stable as to ensure that the sun remains constant in its distance from the earth?

Then there is the air we breathe, and the complex arrangement of its component elements and gases. Scientists tell us that the likelihood of these randomly arranging themselves in a way that makes the atmosphere friendly for human survival is 'one chance in 10⁹⁹'. (cf. Hugh Ross, *Creator and the Cosmos*). What human mind could fine-tune the arrangement of these gases, and who is maintaining the delicate balance among them?

Of course, no amount of scientific facts can offer a rational *proof* of God's existence – if proof were possible there would be no need for Faith. But they do point to the Power and Wisdom of a Supreme Being, and many of the greatest scientists acknowledge this. Even a man of Einstein's stature will say: 'the man who has lost his power to be in wonder and struck with awe [at the mystery of the Universe] is as if he were dead'.