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NEWSLETTER

Sunday 14th February 2021

Sixth Sunday of Ordinary Time

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 will be open for Private Prayer each day Monday to Friday from 12.00 noon to 12.30pm. It will **NOT** be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays in the evening.

Obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been suspended during this pandemic. Through the hard work of Anthony and Pamela, we have our online Mass and I would urge you to log in to it if you are able. It is a particularly good substitute at this time in helping us keep together as a Parish.

ASH WEDNESDAY: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17th is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. We will NOT have live Mass on that day but will have online Mass at 7pm. After the homily, we will have a short, improvised ceremony that will reflect the meaning of the distribution of the ashes. We would ask that you log in for this Mass if it is at all possible for you to do so. We would ask you read carefully the 'Thought for the Week' which gives a clear outline of the purpose and meaning of Lent. (Invitations to attend the online Ash Wednesday Mass will be emailed on the evening of Sunday 14th February).

MASS INTENTIONS

Sat 13 th Feb	Private Intention	Wed 17 th Feb	Carolyn Ansell RIP
Sun 14 th Feb 11 am online	People of the Parish	Thurs 18 th Feb	Frank Stack RIP
Mon 15 th Feb	Fr Emilio Lobo RIP	Fri 19 th Feb	Corrie O'Connell RIP
Tues 16 th Feb	Michael Cadwallader RIP		

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

REOPENING FOR LIVE MASS: We had hoped to open the Hall for live masses as from Ash Wednesday. However, after discussing the matter with the Parish Council, I have decided that in light of the prevalence of the pandemic in this general area, it would be unwise to open for the present. We would hope we will be able to open safely in the not-too-distant future.

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 us 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 its distribution throughout the country will be speedy and efficient.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: Please keep the children in your prayers.

FOODBANK: We have been advised that the Foodbank still welcomes items where the sell-by date is in the not-too near future – e.g., toiletries, tinned fruit and meat, long-life milk. The need is still great but because of COVID restrictions – especially social distancing – the dedicated volunteer staff are unable to work as quickly as in normal times’

LENT - THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Next Wednesday is the first day of Lent – the forty days before Easter when we are asked to step outside our normal way of living and take stock of how centrally God is in the way we live our lives. It is a time for redirecting our energies towards eliminating those areas of sinfulness that weaken our desire that God be the ruling influence in the way we live. Probably the main area of sinfulness – the one that underpins all others - is selfishness or self-centeredness. Martin Luther shows great insight in saying the sin is a ‘curving in on self’. Self-centeredness is not so much an action as an attitude – the attitude that makes me look at people and at all God’s creatures as *mine* – as things to be used and exploited for my own advantage and enjoyment. It urges me to look out at the world and say, ‘what can the world do for me’, rather than ‘what can I do for the world’.

Spiritual writers tell us that the attitude that curbs this selfish instinct is ‘*detachment*’. Detachment does not mean that I treat pleasures and luxuries as sinful (as do the heresies of Jansenism and Manicheanism). But it does mean that I moderate my use of them, and not let them control me. I need to control the ego-instinct which inclines us to an immoderate – and often sinful – use of things. Detachment helps me live in the world in a way that reverences and enjoys the things that God has given me, rather than manipulate or exploit it for my own selfish ends.

During our weekly Lenten reflections, we will consider some of the more common areas of detachment we need to cultivate if we are to live in a truly Christ-like way. It is in doing this that we prepare ourselves for a true celebration of Easter.

Have a good week, Fr Frank.