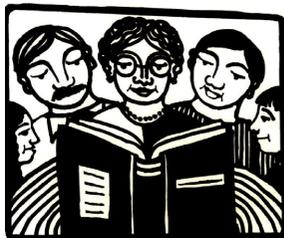


Current government requirements are changing from Thursday of this coming week when face coverings will no longer be mandatory during public services. However, there may well be people who are still concerned about social distancing etc and we should remain sensitive to each other's requirement for personal space and protection. Hand gel will continue to be provided at the doors.

Before couples are married in a Catholic church they are required to attend a **marriage course**. We have usually offered a course on a Saturday in February and we had hoped to be able to do so again this year but, even with the lessening of restrictions, the advice is that it would not be right to encourage the interaction of thirty or more couples over several hours in the limited space of the social centre, so – regretfully – we are commending couples to sign up for an online course, details of which can be obtained through the parish office.

We continue to stream the Solemn Mass with the choir each Sunday at 10.30am. In addition, the 6pm Mass (Monday-Saturday) is also streamed. As is the Holy Hour on Saturday (4.45-5.45pm).

A prayers before reading the Bible: “Lord as I read your word, please help me to know, love and understand You better. Help me to recognise how you want me to apply Your Word to my life. Holy Spirit, may you enlighten my mind, and enkindle in my heart a greater love for You and for others in my family and the in the world as I read your Word”.



If you can help the parish by a one-off donation or by a commitment to regular giving, it would be greatly appreciated. More information from the parish office or use the bank details set out below:-

HSBC 69 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5EY

Sort code: 40-05-20 Acc no: 91094394 WRCDT Spanish Place

..... **Other ways to give**

Since installing the 3 “**digital collection plates**” in March 2021 over £41,000 has been given using this method. They can be used to make donations of any amount using contact-less or

chip and pin (and directed to specific areas of choice). The provider suggests those who intend to use the facility regularly **should go online in advance to DONA** and register their chosen card.

The option is also there to enable Gift Aid for that and future donations.

St James's Roman Catholic Church

- Spanish Place - 22 George Street, W1U 3QY



Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
23rd January 2022

Latin texts for the 10.30am Mass on pages 77/78 of the Parish Mass Book

[online] Click [here](#) for live stream and **Universalis** for readings.
In Church - The Parish Mass Book page 129 or in foreign languages (6) - all available at the back.

TODAY'S LITURGY

Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10

Ezra read from the law of God and the people understood what was read.

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

1 Corinthians 12:12-30

You together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it.

St Luke 1:1-4, 4:14-21

This text is being fulfilled today.

The Week Ahead

Masses at 12.30pm and 6.00pm

M 24th St Francis de Sales
T 25th CONVERSION OF St PAUL
W 26th Ss Timothy & Titus
T 27th St Angela Merici
F 28th St Thomas Aquinas
S 29th BVM on Saturday
10am and 6pm (*Vigil of Sunday*)

Sunday 30th January

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

8am, 9am [EF]

10.30am [Solemn Latin]

Midday, 4pm & 7pm.

The Reverend Christopher G. Colven (*Rector*)

Monsignor Philip Whitmore

The Reverend Mark Elliott Smith (*in residence*)

Telephone: 020 7935 0943 [Parish Office *d/l* 3475 9097]

Email: spanishplace@sjrcc.org.uk

Web: www.sjrcc.org.uk

The Rector writes

The green vestments and hangings in church remind us that we are now in what is termed “*Ordinary Time*”, but that does not stop some of the “*Ordinary*” Sundays from taking on specific themes. One of Pope Francis’ most recent initiatives is to designate this Sunday as being “*of the Word of God*” when all Catholics are invited to reflect on the place that Scripture should have in their own lives. As Saint John makes clear in the prologue to his Gospel, the Word is primarily a Person (“*the Word was made flesh, he lived among us and we saw his glory*”) through whom the Father says everything he has to say to his creation. Scripture is of fundamental importance as a unique witness to all that led to the incarnation of the Word and all that flows consequentially from his birth in time. The Catechism expresses it beautifully: “*In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength, for she welcomes it not as a human word but as what it really ‘the word’ of God’. In the sacred books the Father who is in heaven comes lovingly to meet his children and talks with them*”.

Just as our faith is centred in the mystery of Easter when everything that Jesus had been was vindicated and given an eternal context so it is the living Christ we meet in the Scriptures, either in our personal reading or, corporately, in the Church’s liturgical celebrations where the Word is celebrated and proclaimed. The Jesus who taught the crowds gathered around him 2,000 years ago continues to inspire those open to receive his Word so that whenever the Scriptures are read there is always something fresh being communicated from the mind of the Saviour. No wonder a German theologian of the 19th century (Johann Mohler) could describe the Bible as: “*the Church’s heart-blood, her very breath, her mind, her soul, her all*”. On the one hand, we are committed to a belief in the inerrancy of Scripture as it reveals the truth about the Divine nature while accepting that: “*it is not meant to convey precise historical information or scientific findings. Moreover, the authors were children of their time. Their forms of expression are influenced by the sometimes inadequate cultural images of the world around them. Nevertheless, everything that we need to know about God and the way of his salvation is found in Sacred Scripture*” (YouCat).

Catholics are not fundamentalists in their approach to Scripture. While accepting Saint Paul’s view that every part is “*inspired by God and can profitably be used for teaching*” (2 Timothy 3:16) we understand that the Bible should be read with a respect for its various genres – some books are poetic, some narrative, some admonitory. While finding the high point of revelation in the four Gospels we see the whole Old Testament as the necessary building blocks leading into the life, death and glorification of Christ, while the other books of the New Testament are a precious commentary on the Father’s Word expressed uniquely in Jesus. We need to

reflect on the Scriptures as we have received them with great reverence asking that the Holy Spirit will help us to interpret what we read and bring it to life so that the sacred texts provide a pattern for our own present living. “*Only when we meet the living God in Christ do we know what life is. There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ*” (Benedict XVI).

I once attended a seminar on preaching at which we were chided by a well-known Evangelical scholar. “*Sermonettes*”, he declared, “*make Christianettes!*”. We laughed but a serious point was being made. Preaching is not about adding an extra five or ten minutes to the celebration of Mass: it is an integral part of the liturgy where the Scriptures should come alive and find personal relevance. This does not depend on the eloquence or erudition of the one preaching – nor, more often than not, on the exact opposite. The Church’s faculty to preach means that, poor as the words chosen or the insights on offer the Word is still there to be heard by those whose minds and hearts are open to the living Christ whom the Holy Spirit is communicating. A sermon might be badly constructed and even worse in its delivery, but Jesus’s injunction that those who want to hear should open their ears to listen does mean that on every occasion – whatever its human limitations – there is an opportunity to grow in faith. “*The Bible is God’s love letter to us*” (Soren Kierkegaard).

Christopher Colven

- *NOTICES* -

It is almost exactly a year since **Virginia Gorna** died (**RIP**). With her long background in social work, Virginia was our initial safeguarding officer and we remain grateful for all that she did to put in place measures to protect the young and the vulnerable. During the interregnum, the safeguarding officer from a neighbouring parish has kept us under her wing, but we are now able to announce that **DENISE HINES** has been authorised by the diocesan safeguarding authorities to take over this crucial role at Saint James’s. We are very grateful to Denise whose wide experience in education brings the necessary skills to what we hope and pray will not be too onerous a task.

Last weekend’s “*White Flower*” collection for the **Society for Protection of Unborn Children** raised **£745**. If there are further contributions please forward them directly to the parish office.

The **Confirmandi** meet this Sunday at 5pm in the social centre (face to face - rather than on Zoom) while the **Adult Instruction** meets in the rectory at 7pm on Tuesdays: The young ones preparing for **First Holy Communion** (nearly forty of them in the current cohort) are well underway in their programme – they meet every Saturday on Zoom.