



Parish of St. Gerard, Castle Vale

part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham—Registered Charity No. 234216

Parish Priest: **Father Mathew Pinakkattu** : 07788790928 Email: stgerardscv.rc@gmail.com

Presbytery: 2 Renfrew Square, Castle Vale, Birmingham B35 6JT T: 0121 747 7390

W: www.stgerardschurch.co.uk



Seventh Sunday of Easter

24th May 2020 Year A Volume 1 Page 275

World Communications Day

Graciously, hear our applications, O Lord, so that we, who believe that the Saviour of the human race is with you in your glory, may experience, as he promised, until the end of the world, his abiding presence among us.

HAPPY EASTER!

Although we are all facing a difficult and hard time as we are fighting against this dangerous global pandemic; the joy and the happiness and healing of Easter is with us all. May the Risen Lord bless, heal and protect you and your loved ones always. Fr continues to say a private Mass each day at 9.30am which he asks us to join him with from our homes. **Please visit the Archdiocese of Birmingham website for links to live streaming of daily masses from various churches in Birmingham.** <https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/>

Birmingham Archdiocese Virtual Pilgrimage to Lourdes

This weekend a number of our parishioners had hoped to travel to France to join the Birmingham Archdiocese Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes. As this did not happen you are invited to an online Lourdes pilgrimage, starting Sunday 24th May with Archbishop Bernard's opening Mass at 3pm live streamed from St Chad's Cathedral. The week features daily Mass, liturgy and Rosary 'processions'.

Find the full programme on www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/lourdes-pilgrimage.

Recently died and those whose anniversaries occur at this time:

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

The sick: Janice Pidgeon, Kath Taylor, Stan Oliver, Frances Irwin, George Irwin, Jean Chambers, Linda Conroy, Debbie Johnson, Perry Desmond, Philip Fox, Kevin Hollis, Bernie Bergin, Kathy Beattie, Tina Parkes, Father Gabby Maguire & all the sick priests of the diocese. May the Lord grant them the healing they require.

Mass Intentions: If you would like to have a Mass celebrated for a particular intention: on behalf of a family member, a friend or a deceased loved one, to remember a birthday or anniversary, envelopes are available at the back of church or email Fr Mathew.

Notice— Gift Aid envelopes and Gift Aid donations

Offertory collection boxes for this year are now available from the Presbytery for those parishioners that have already registered for them. If any parishioners would like to take a box of envelopes for use whilst we cannot attend weekly Mass then visit Fr Matthew at the Presbytery and he will be able to arrange for you. Please consider and complete a Gift Aid declaration if you are a tax payer so we can claim the tax back on any contributions. It has been eight weeks now since we were able to attend weekly Mass in church. Hopefully this situation will change soon but we need to ensure that financially we are able to re-open. Thank you to those parishioners who pay their offerings by way of Standing Order as these continue to be received. Please remember your church in the absence of weekly masses and continue to provide for those offerings which can be posted through the Presbytery door or collected when our Church reopens. A standing order form is available on our website if you wished to set this up or alternatively there is an online giving option on the Archdiocese website. <https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/>

Message from Archbishop Bernard Longley

As a Patron of FHL, I am kept informed of the wonderful work they are undertaking with a very small team of paid staff and many volunteers both over here and in the Holy Land. Coronavirus is changing the lives of all of us but for so many Christians, especially in the West Bank but also Gaza, Israel and Jordan, it is devastating. So many are dependent for their income on pilgrimages and tourism which disappeared overnight in early March. For many they have no government support nor even a health service which can handle this crisis.

FHL launched an appeal in March for those impacted in Bethlehem and widened it on 3 April as a Pentecost Challenge to cover the whole of the region. They secured match funding for the first £100,000 and, with a few days to go to Pentecost, are close to reaching the target but are seeking help from your parishioners to get over the line.

www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/pentecost-challenge will direct you to the FHL website where more information is available.

Thank you for your support to help those worse off than ourselves, as FHL strive to maintain a Christian presence in the Holy Land and please keep the FHL staff and volunteers plus those in the Holy Land in your prayers.

St Gerard's Catholic Primary School

'We Live, Love and Learn Together with Jesus'



Twitter: @StGerardsBham

School website: www.stgerard.bham.sch.uk

Parish Notice Board



Pope Francis's Prayer to Mary during Coronavirus Pandemic:

O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm. You, Salvation of Your People, know what we need, and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee, we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the resurrection. Amen. Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen.

Who's Who?

Parish Safeguarding and Health and Safety Officer is Hayley Macilwraith : contact on **07840 866201**

Parish Administrator is Sue Perkins: contact on **07971 076835** or stgerardscv.rc@gmail.com

Young Persons Officer is Eleanor Perkins: contact on **07852 404992** or emp010697@googlemail.com

Parish Finance Committee is made up of Fr, Sue Perkins, Sue Byrne, Therese and Frank.

Pastoral Committee is currently being led by Shirley Harris

Social Committee is made up of Beulah, Sarita, Bernie, Rosaline and Sue.

Premises Committee is still to be established. Interested in joining this committee? Speak to Sue Perkins.

Baptisms; A parent of the child to be baptised must be baptised, attend Sunday Mass regularly and undertake 3 preparation meetings. If you require your child to be baptised then please speak to Father for details of forthcoming preparation meetings.

Communion to the Sick and Housebound: Anyone who is unable to go to Mass and would like Communion or would like to receive sacrament of the sick before going into hospital? Let Fr Mathew know and he will endeavour to arrange.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

The radiance of the risen Lord shines upon us. At a time when so many shadows are cast into our lives, and upon our world, the light of the resurrection shines forever to renew and restore our hope. In the words of our Holy Father, Pope Francis: 'In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side.' (27 March 2020).

The impact of Covid-19, both nationally and internationally, has been immense. So much of what we take for granted has changed. Our health and physical interaction, our capacity to travel and gather, have all been affected. There is uncertainty in our future, especially with work and the country's economy. As we know, very sadly, large numbers of people have died because of the coronavirus, and others have been or remain seriously ill. Keyworkers, not least in the National Health Service and care sectors, are serving selflessly to sustain the life of our nation. Our hearts and prayers go out to everyone who is suffering because of Covid-19, and to all those battling to overcome its effects. May those who have died rest in peace and those who are bereaved find comfort. When the Prime Minister announced the lockdown, this included places of worship. These measures were put in place to stem the general transmission of the virus. It is right that the Catholic community fulfils its role in contributing to the preservation of life and the common good of society. This must continue until the restrictions applied by the Government are lifted. None of us would want to be in the situation in which we find ourselves. While the live-streaming of the Mass and other devotions is playing an important part in maintaining the life of faith, there is no substitute for Catholics being able to physically attend and participate in the celebration of the Mass and the other sacraments. Our faith is expressed powerfully and beautifully though 'seeing, touching, and tasting.' We know that every bishop and every priest recognises the pain of Catholics who, at present, cannot pray in church or receive the sacraments. This weighs heavily on our hearts. We are deeply moved by the Eucharistic yearning expressed by so many members of the faithful. We thank you sincerely for your love for the Lord Jesus, present in the Sacraments and supremely so in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The bishops and priests of every diocese are remembering you and your loved ones at Mass each day in our churches as we pray 'in hope of health and wellbeing.' We thank our priests for this faithfulness to their calling.

As the Government's restrictions are relaxed step by step, we look forward to opening our churches and resuming our liturgical, spiritual, catechetical and pastoral life step by step. This will also be of service to those beyond the Catholic Church who depend on our outreach. None of us knows, as yet, how or when the lockdown will end. There is likely to be a phased return to travelling and gathering. As a church, we are now planning for this time and our discussions with the statutory public health agencies and Government representatives are ongoing. Together with Catholics across England and Wales we desire the opening of our churches and access to the sacraments. Until then, we are continuing to pray and prepare. We want to acknowledge with gratitude the service of our fellow bishops and priests, our deacons and religious, our families and lay faithful, together with all our parish and school. On that first Easter day, the disciples were in lockdown and the doors were closed. In their isolation the Lord Jesus came among them and said 'Peace be with you.' May the peace of the risen Lord reign in our hearts and homes as we look forward to the day we can enter church again and gather around the altar to offer together the Sacrifice of Praise. We unite in asking the intercession of Our Blessed Lady and assure you of our prayers and blessing.

Yours devotedly in Christ,

Archbishop Bernard Longley.