



Our Lady Help of Christians

Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

31st January, 2021

Fr. Harry Curtis, Parish Priest

(Also serving Sacred Heart, Blackbird Leys)

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Sunday, 31 st January Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time <i>Racial Justice Sunday</i>	Sat evening Vigil: 5.30 pm Sun morning: 11.00 am	<i>The People of the Parish</i> <i>Mary and Danny Harrington</i> <i>(Intentions)</i>
Monday, 1 st February	No Mass Today	
Tuesday, 2 nd February <i>Feast of the Presentation of the Lord</i>	9.15 am Mass	<i>Mrs Georgie McArthur (get well)</i>
Wednesday, 3 rd February <i>Optional Memorials of St. Werburg,</i> <i>or of St. Blaise, or of St. Ansgar</i>	No Mass Today	
Thursday, 4 th February	No Mass Today	
Friday, 5 th February <i>Memorial of St. Agatha, Martyr</i>	6.00 pm Exposition & Benediction 7.00 pm Mass	<i>Maureen Grealish (get well)</i>
Saturday, 6 th February <i>Mem. of St. Paul Miki & Comps., Martyrs</i>	Sat evening Vigil: 5.30 pm	<i>Andy Scully (get well)</i>
Sunday, 7 th February Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Sun morning: 11.00 am	<i>The People of the Parish</i>
Sacrament of Reconciliation: Friday, 6.00-6.45 pm		

Welcome to Our Lady Help of Christians for Mass today.

The Sanctuary Candle is burning this week for a Special Intention.

St. Don Bosco's Candle is burning this week for the members of the Salesian Order.

Today is Racial Justice Sunday. This year Racial Justice Sunday is more important than ever. The effects of the pandemic, the killing of George Floyd, and the powerful message on fraternity and equality by Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* speak of the need to actively oppose racism and pursue racial justice with renewed vigour. We are all children of God. The Bishops' Conference has commissioned a series of videos to share the thoughts of Black Catholics about the events of the past year, how we can build a better society and the important role that our Church can play. These are available at: cbcew.org.uk/home/events/racial-justicesunday-2021.

First Friday. This Friday is the First of the month. Novena Prayers to the Sacred Heart will be said before Mass.

Prayer at the end of Mass:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! *Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,* that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen
Mass at Our Lady's. You are welcome to come to Our Lady's for Mass, but if you wish to join us for Mass from your home, we are now live and can be viewed at <https://www.mcnmedia.tv/camera/our-lady-help-of-christians>

Here is a prayer, an Act of Spiritual Communion, which you can say as you watch a Livestream Mass:

"My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You."

Please pray for those we know who are sick, especially John Flanagan. If you or family members are ill and you would like to ask for prayers on this newsletter, let me know (in writing, please). Thank you.

Please pray for Canon Giles Goward, Fr. Pat Joyce, Bernadette Gavin, Mary Lillis, Sean Smith and all who have died recently, and for all those whose anniversaries occur at this time Mgr. Michael Williams, Frs. David Patrick Condrón, Denis Clancy, Joseph Connelly and Thomas O'Carroll, and also Anne Barlow, Wayne St Clair, Christopher Graham, Tom Penders, Philomena Surman, Patrick Tuttle, Carlos Da Costa and Speranza Mirto. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. May they rest in peace. Please pray for the families who have been bereaved, especially Liam Gavin who lost his twin sisters, Bernie and Mary, within a single day. I should also like to ask for prayers for Canon Giles Goward, a friend of mine who was only recently appointed as the Rector of the Diocesan Seminary in Birmingham, and Fr. Pat Joyce who was a curate in my home parish many years ago and was influential in my own spiritual development.

Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas), this Tuesday, 2nd February. I shall be celebrating Mass at Our Lady's at 9.15 am. I shall start Mass at the back of the church and process to the altar. Everyone else will be in their place with a candle; because of the pandemic we shall not be lighting them in church, but they will be blessed and you can take your candle home and light it there (with all suitable fire precautions, please!).

The Feast of St. John Bosco. Today, 31st January, would be the feast of St. John Bosco if it did not fall on a Sunday, so a very happy feastday to all members of the Salesian Family. I received a lovely card from Fr Graham this week in which he expressed thanks for all the prayers and good wishes for him over Christmastide. He concluded by writing: "On Don Bosco's Day I place you, and the people I've known, before God's love. Happy Feast Day."

Lent. Two weeks on Wednesday will be the start of Lent. It's not too early to start thinking what you can do to make this season of grace fruitful.

Ashes for Ash Wednesday (17th February). Thank you to all the people who have been so generous in bringing their old palms to church so that they can be burned to make ashes. We can always burn some more, so if you have palms from earlier Palm Sundays, please bring them to church over the next few weeks.

COVID-19. We continue to be able to open the churches for communal Worship, but this may change if restrictions are tightened. Please continue to be sensible and to make wise decisions concerning you and your family. For your protection and that of everyone else, when you come to church, please wear a face-covering, sanitise your hands on arrival and departure, check in for the track and trace, and keep your distance from others who are not in your "bubble. Thank you.

Annual Guild of St Stephen Mass. It is one of my regrets that because of the pandemic I have not yet been able to meet many of our altar servers, but I have been told that you are very keen and faithful. Well, here is something you can get involved in. Altar servers across the Archdiocese are invited to join the live streaming of the Guild of St Stephen Mass at St Chad's Cathedral at 10am on Saturday, 6th March. As part of the celebration servers (young and old, whether at home or in church, vested or not) are encouraged to send a picture of themselves holding their Guild Medal to office@vocations.org.uk so the Vocations team can create a montage poster in lieu of the annual photo at Mass. **Please save the date and get involved!**

Scaffolding. You may have been surprised to see Our Lady's surrounded by scaffolding this weekend. Don't worry; this is to allow some work to be carried out on the roof so that (hopefully) it will no longer allow the rain to come in.

Our Lady's needs your help. I should like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has continued to donate to our parish during the pandemic. Whether you have done this as a one-off or as a regular contribution, thank you. It is also possible to set up a regular or a single donation to the parish via the diocesan website. Visit www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk click on Donate (top right) and follow the instructions. When asked which church you want to donate to, please select 'Oxford: Cowley'. I do appreciate that you may be struggling financially at this time. Please be assured there is no expectation to give.

Echoes of God: Journeying with the word of God. Last week we began a 7-week course on the Bible, written by David McLoughlin. These weekly reflections are perfect for us to read through and chew over at home during this period of lockdown. Each week takes a fundamental core teaching of Scripture and together the sessions help us get a sense of the Scriptures as a whole. Last week we began with Exodus. This week we move back to the Book of Genesis. The materials are available to take away, but you can access them at <https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/the-god-who-speaks/focus/sunday-of-the-word-of-god/echoes-of-god-journeying-with-the-word-of-god/>

Tailpiece: Children were asked what they thought about dating and marriage; here are some of their answers.

1. *How Do You Decide Who To Marry?*

No one really decides before they grow up who they're going to marry. God decides it all way before, and you get to find out later who you're stuck with. - Kirsten, aged 10

2. *How Can A Stranger Tell If Two People Are Married?*

You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids. - Derrick, aged 8

3. *What Do Most People Do On A Date?*

Dates are for having fun, and people should use them to get to know each other. Even boys have something to say if you listen long enough. - Lynnette, aged 8

4. *When Is It Okay To Kiss Someone?*

When they're rich. - Pam, aged 7

May God bless you and all those who are dear to you
Fr. Harry