

CATHOLIC CHURCH OF ST. EDMUND OF CANTERBURY

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15 MAY 2022

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‘IT’S THE THEOLOGY...’

A few years ago I was at a large dinner in a rather expensive part of London (not a good way to start a newsletter piece, but please bear with me) where a well-known and senior Catholic politician (who shall remain nameless) admitted that he ‘didn’t know much about patristic theology’ (this is the theology of the Early Church theologians, from the period just after the New Testament to the sixth century or so). While his honesty was commendable, and if you knew who he is you would realise that he was telling the truth, at the same time it was rather disconcerting. There is a tendency these days, not only in the Church but in wider society, to make a virtue of ignorance or intellectual illiteracy, a suspicion of ‘experts,’ which our forbears and people in other cultures would find incomprehensible. You even come across teaching or pastoral programmes which feel obliged to take a swipe at ‘academic theology.’ People do feel threatened when you try and argue a case on theological grounds if it exposes that they don’t know much about the topic; I wrote a blog piece six years ago which unwisely tried to parody Barack Obama’s famous phrase ‘It’s the economy, stupid!’, causing some offence (you can read it at <https://catholicherald.co.uk/brexit-debate-its-the-theology-stupid/>), though whether it was the word ‘stupid’ or the word ‘theology’ wasn’t altogether clear.

The Church does not expect Christians to be academic, intellectual or particularly intelligent. We know that Our Lord and his first disciples are unlikely to have had a full scale rabbinical education; God’s preferential love for the poor has meant throughout most of human history that those perceived to be well educated are not within this group. At least one female ‘Doctor of the Church’ (the term we apply to saints with particular theological insight), Catherine of Siena, probably couldn’t read or write. But we are all expected to know our faith, to have a formation in the ‘things of God’ - and that is what theology is. It doesn’t have to be ‘high brow’, but it does have to make sense and be serious: and this is why clergy and laypeople who teach religious studies are expected to have a proper theological formation. Throughout history the Church has invested a lot of money in theological education because it is important (last Sunday we marked Vocations Sunday: it is thought that the cost of a seminarian’s formation is about £30,000 a year [training



deacons costs a lot less]). If we’ve had this formation we have a responsibility to impart what we have learnt to people in a manner which can be understood: we should also learn from those whom we are asked to teach in the name of Christ.

Someone who knew a thing or two about theology (and philosophy) is being made a saint this Sunday in Rome by Pope Francis, the Dutch Carmelite friar Titus Brandsma (shown here). He combined teaching theology and philosophy and being a journalist with his vocation as a priest and friar, and was murdered by the Nazis in Dachau in 1942 - he had been known as an opponent of Nazism. Many Christians, and many priests, kept silence in the face of the Nazis. The reason Brandsma didn’t was theology:

what he believed about God, and about God’s creation. Whenever we affirm, as the Catholic Church does, that there is no area whatever of human life or the life of the world which is outside the scope of our faith, we are saying something theological. We can never say that a particular issue is not the preserve of our faith: this is why the Church seeks to guide us all about morality, about how we should live and about how the world should be. We would never dream of encouraging people to become Catholics - and we need to do a good deal more of this - if we didn’t try to prepare them by teaching and sharing our faith. This is simply ‘doing theology’ - it doesn’t need to be a degree course, but it is part of the same search for truth.

This is why it is important that at least some of us who teach theology in universities, seminaries and clergy formation programmes should also be based in parishes - so that different parts of the Catholic community in this country can learn from each other and pray for each other. Please pray particularly at this time for those who teach theology: a number of institutions have closed or are likely to; departments and faculties, like those in other Humanities courses, have been closed or cut back, and people have lost their jobs. In the search for truth we all need each other, and that is why theology is important.

Fr Ashley

CHURCH SHOP

We would like to open our Church Shop on a regular basis but to do this we need a team of volunteers. The more we have, the lighter your responsibility will be.

If you could offer your services or to find out more, please phone Mary on 0798 511 0072 and if leaving a message please say that it is a *Message for Mary*.

The shop will definitely be open on **May 22 and May 29** after the 9.30 am Masses for parishioners to buy gifts and cards for our many young people who will be either receiving their first communion or being confirmed during June.

If you have a particular item that you would like to purchase please email Mary at mdstarhouse@yahoo.co.uk or phone her as above, and she will be happy to source this for you.

VOTIVE CANDLES FOR UKRAINE

We have purchased some votive lights decorated in the colours of Ukraine and the dove of peace.

The company which manufactures these is a church supplier from whom we purchase a great deal. They are giving all profits from the candles to Cafod and we too will donate all the money made from their sale to Cafod's Ukraine appeal.

We would suggest a minimum donation of £3.00 per candle, but please feel free to donate more.

Please give your donation by putting cash in the marked wall safe in the porch or in an envelope through the office door.



UPDATE ON THE 'SYNODAL PATHWAY

We recently made available on our website a summary of the synod responses from those of you who took part.

The Southwark archdiocese has published a synthesis of responses from different parishes and communities here: https://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/media/n0vfb2my/southwarksynthesis_final.pdf.

Also there is an article about diocesan documents and some reactions to what has appeared so far in *The Tablet*: <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/news/15417/many-laity-find-catholic-church-to-be-judgemental-and-condemning-> which also says that there will be a presentation of the national document later in the year in our own cathedral.

Each week our newsletter is sent to about 1130 Parishioners who are registered on ChurchSuite and have given an email address.

It is disappointing that on average only 60% of those who receive it ever open the document.

We were so heartened last week when Deacon Sean reported that he had visited two parishioners, both of whom are in their 90s, who when he arrived at their home just after 4.00 pm on Friday afternoon, with a **paper** newsletter for them to read, had already opened and read their emailed copy!

We are currently printing just under 200 paper copies for those who are unable to receive it on-line and will continue to do this as long as is necessary, but we do ask those who receive it by email not to pick up a paper copy when they are in the church.

At the moment our industrial copier/printer is out of action. Replacement ink cartridges we are told are held up in Japan. The office at St George's Church have been a lifesaver this week and printed all our essential documents. We cannot thank them enough.

Jubilee Tea Party

Come and celebrate with us on
Friday 3rd June
2.30 – 4.30 pm

Places **£7.50 per head**
for a traditional afternoon tea.
Come alone or with friends or
family.

Reserve your place by
contacting the
Parish Office or by calling
Sue on 07828 132 921

Next week we will be asking for donations of home made cakes and biscuits and petit fours, so please watch this space.



MASS IN CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

St George's Cathedral, July 9

If you are celebrating your 1st/10th/25th/40th/50th/60th + wedding anniversary this year, please apply as soon as possible, and no later than May 31 if you would like to attend this special Mass.

Get in touch with us at mfise@rcaos.org.uk so you can receive an invitation from the Archbishop.

As the title of your email, please write your parish location e.g. Clapham, Beckenham and give the following details: your names in the format John and Mary Smith, your home address, the anniversary you are celebrating.

We look forward to seeing you in July!

Marriage and Family Life South East

WALKING GROUP

Fitzrovia and Bloomsbury

Thursday 26 May

This is a linear walk of 4.5 miles starting at Warren Street underground station and finishing at Euston underground/overground.

Meet at Beckenham Junction for the 10.10 am train to Victoria.

This walk explores the artistic legacy of Virginia Woolf, passing several museums and galleries. Café or picnic lunch at Bedford Square or Russell Square.

If you wish to join this walk please e-mail or text me: 07904812350 or alagar@pobroadband.co.uk.

There are leaflets on the reading slopes with the details of a Circular Walk to take in the multitude of churches in Beckenham. Some of the parishioners from these churches in Beckenham are doing this circular walk on Saturday 21st May and many of the churches will be open during the day so you will have an opportunity to see inside some that are usually closed outside service times.

LIGHT OF CHRIST CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP

Wednesday 11 May

7.45 pm - Praise & Worship

8.00 pm - Holy Mass

Celebrant Fr David Camilleri

Followed by informal prayer meeting

10.00 pm - Evening concludes

MASS INTENTIONS

If you would like to ask for an intention to be prayed for at Mass, please either email the Office or post a note through the door. We will do our best to give you the date that you request but if this is not available we will book a Mass close to it. Mass stipends can be given by cheque or through ChurchSuite.

WHICH BIBLE TO BUY?

Sometimes people ask for advice about buying Bibles. I am not a biblical scholar but I think I always indicate two things. First of all, make sure you get a *Catholic Bible* (so not, for example, the 'Authorised Version' or the 'New International Version'). I am not being anti-Protestant or anti-Anglican, but most Bibles you buy in this country are incomplete and don't have all the Old Testament books which the Catholic Church says are in the Bible.

Being more positive, what I have said before and would say again is that the 2019 *Revised New Jerusalem Bible* edited by Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB (Ampleforth Abbey) is one of the best I have seen in recent years:

<https://www.dartonlongmantodd.co.uk/titles/2240-9780232533620-revised-new-jerusalem-bible-study-edition>.

This has good, up to date notes, a very readable and accurate translation, and it is not too expensive. It also has official approval from the Bishops Conference. It is the second revision of *The Jerusalem Bible* (1966) which we currently use at Mass.

Fr Ashley.

PARISH RECORDS

On a number of occasions in the last few weeks we have been unable to get in touch with parishioners because their name and details are not recorded on ChurchSuite.

We will conduct a census later this year to update our records but in the meantime ask those of you who have a computer to visit saintedmunds.net and add your details and update them if needed.

For those of you who cannot do this, please drop off a note of your name, address and telephone number through the Office door and we will add it to the system.

CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Our bishops met recently in Cardiff and have published a number of important statements, including an invitation to all Catholics to return to Mass attendance on Sundays and Holy days from the feast of Pentecost:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/spring-plenary-2022-resolution-returning-to-mass-at-pentecost/>) and an important resolution about migration and government policy:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/spring-plenary-2022-resolution-migration/>)

DIARY

3 June - Jubilee Tea Party
5 June - Confirmation Mass at 3.00 pm
First Holy Communions on Saturday June 11 and Saturday June 18

MASSES

| Sunday 15 May | | Fifth Sunday of Easter |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8.00 am | Church | Thomas (Tommy) Coffey RIP |
| 9.30 am | Church | Mass of Commitment for all being confirmed at Pentecost. |
| 9.30 am | Family Mass in the Hall | For the people |
| 11.00 am | Church | Thanksgiving for favours received, conversion & God's guidance & protection. |
| 5.30 pm | Church | Gary Said RIP |
| Monday 16 May | | St Simon Stock, Priest |
| 10.00 am | Church | Peggy & Peter Gwynne RIP |
| 6.00 pm | Church | Johanna Pauline Platek RIP |
| 7.00 pm | 25 VW | Adoration |
| Tuesday 17 May | | Feria - Day of Prayer for Survivors of Sexual Abuse |
| 10.00 am | Church | Umberto Ferrando RIP |
| 6.00 pm | Church | Ints of Aine |
| Wednesday 18 May | | Feria (St John 1, Pope & Martyr) |
| 9.10 am | St Mary's | May Procession on the feast Day of Raphaela Mary |
| 10.00 am | Church | Dec'd Finnegan Family members |
| 6.00 pm | Church | Ronnie Savage RIP |
| Thursday 19 May | | Feria (St Dunstan, Bishop) |
| 10.00 am | Church | Benefactors & Promoters of the Claver Sisters |
| 6.00 pm | Church | Ida Brito E Carvalho RIP |
| Friday 20 May | | Feria (St Bernadine of Sienna, Priest) |
| 9.10 am | St Mary's | |
| 10.00 am | Church | Dec'd family members of O'Mahony/Holland Families |
| 6.00 pm | Church | David McFetridge RIP. |
| Saturday 21 May | | Feria (St Christopher of Magellanes) |
| 10.00 am | Church | Stephen Jones RIP. |
| 6.00 pm vigil | Church | Raymond Duval RIP. |
| Sunday 22 May | | Sixth Sunday of Easter |
| 8.00 am | Church | For the Holy Souls |
| 9.30 am | Church | Louise Mayungba (b'day) |
| 9.30 am | Family Mass in the Hall | For the people |
| 11.00 am | Church | Fr Gordon Thompson RIP. |
| 5.30 pm | Church | Jack McCarthy RIP (anniv) |



ONE FORM FITS ALL - ONE PAGE PLEDGE & STANDING ORDER FORM

The name of our bank account has been changed and the diocese has produced a combined standing order form/gift aid declaration to reflect this change. You can download a copy of the form from our website by using this link:

<https://saintedmunds.net/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Beckenham-St-Edmund-Pledge-Form-1.pdf> and copies are available at the back of church. Please drop your completed form through the office door. If you have previously set up a standing order you *do not need to complete a new form*. Please use the new account name when writing cheques: **RCAS BECKENHAM**

We have removed all Gift Aid envelopes from the porch. If you haven't collected your set and decide that you want them please collect them from the Office before the end of May. We will not keep them beyond that date.

PARISH GIVING - Mass Stipends

If you request a Mass intention it is usual to give a donation (known as a Mass stipend). There is no fixed amount but a minimum of £10 is suggested. Cash for Mass stipends can be put in the Mass intention envelopes which are in the porch, and then, either be put in the offertory collection or through the office door. Please do not put a note through the door asking for a Mass intention on a specific date without also including your name and phone number, so we can get in contact with you if needed.

MEDITATION

In the Hall on Mondays (except Bank Holidays) from 5.30 - 6.20 pm.

CONTEMPLATIVE SATURDAY

In the Hall from 11-12 noon on every second Saturday. Next one is on 14 May.

There is Rosary every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 9.30 am, and Adoration after the 10.00 am Mass Monday to Friday unless there is a funeral. On Friday Adoration concludes with Benediction.

Confessions are every Saturday from 10.30 am - 11.00 am and from 5.00 pm - 5.55 pm

We pray for those who have died recently: Aston Du Haney, Philip van Wingerdon, Berenice Roetheli, Brenda Higgins, Esther Teresa Minihane, Sally Kidd, Mayangar Djasrabe, Arlette Shaw.

We pray for those whose anniversaries are this week: Toy Kendrick, Janet O'Brien, Patrick Boudville, Joanna Pauline Platek, Sylvania Verlengia, Umberto Ferrando, Finola Butler, Anna Fleming, Msg Peter Strand, Anthony Mensa, Kathleen Yourell, Doreen Griffin, Geraldine O'Connor, Catherine 'Kay' O'Sullivan, Joseph Keappock, Mary Smith, Patrick Callaghan, Paul Skelly.

We pray for all members of our parish and beyond, and in particular those who are suffering from ill health.

Heavenly Father, giver of life and health: Comfort and relieve your sick servants, and give your power of healing to those who minister to their needs, that they may be strengthened in their weakness and have confidence in your loving care; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen