

Church of the Immaculate Conception - Farm Street



First Sunday in Lent 21st February 2021

PARISH CLERGY

Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, Parish Priest
Fr Chris Pedley SJ; Fr Michael Holman SJ

REGULARLY ASSISTING CLERGY

Fr Damian Howard SJ; Fr Paul Nicholson SJ
Fr Adrian Porter SJ; Fr Laco Sulik SJ

PARISH STAFF

George McCombe, Parish Secretary
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PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL CHAIRMAN

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SAFEGUARDING OFFICER

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Parish Office

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MASS SCHEDULE

Monday to Friday: 8am, 1.05pm, & 6pm

Saturday: 8am & 6pm

Sunday: 8am, 9.30am (Family), 11am (Latin), 12.30pm,
5.30pm, & 7pm (Young Adult, 18-35)

The dispensation from Sunday obligation remains in effect until further notice. All Masses can be viewed on our livestreaming page

<https://www.farmstreet.org.uk/livestream>

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Monday to Friday: 12 noon to 1pm

CONFESSIONS

Monday to Friday: 12 noon - 1pm

Saturday: 10am to 12 noon

By appointment

BAPTISM AND WEDDINGS

By appointment. Dates are subject to lockdown developments.

CHURCH OPENING HOURS

Monday to Saturday: 7.30am - 6.30pm

Sunday: 7.30am – 7.00pm

LONDON JESUIT CENTRE

All events are suspended until further notice. For more information, contact Anne Paolino at apaolino@jesuit.org.uk

Sunday Homilies & Articles Weekly newsletter articles are uploaded to our website on a weekly basis. They can be viewed at <https://www.farmstreet.org.uk/weekly-articles>. Our website also contains an archive of previous Sunday homilies.

Social Media

Farm Street Church has a strong presence on social media and we regularly update our Twitter account and Facebook page with information relating to the parish and the wider Catholic community.

Message From Pope Francis For Lent 2021

*“Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem” (Mt 20:18).
Lent: a Time for Renewing Faith, Hope and Love.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Jesus revealed to his disciples the deepest meaning of his mission when he told them of his passion, death and resurrection, in fulfilment of the Father’s will. He then called the disciples to share in this mission for the salvation of the world.

In our Lenten journey towards Easter, let us remember the One who “humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross” (*Phil 2:8*). During this season of conversion, let us renew our *faith*, draw from the “living water” of *hope*, and receive with open hearts the *love* of God, who makes us brothers and sisters in Christ. At the Easter vigil, we will renew our baptismal promises and experience rebirth as new men and women by the working of the Holy Spirit. This Lenten journey, like the entire pilgrimage of the Christian life, is even now illumined by the light of the resurrection, which inspires the thoughts, attitudes and decisions of the followers of Christ.

Fasting, prayer and almsgiving, as preached by Jesus (cf. *Mt 6:1-18*), enable and express our conversion. The path of poverty and self-denial (*fasting*), concern and loving care for the poor (*almsgiving*), and childlike dialogue with the Father (*prayer*) make it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope and effective charity.

1. Faith calls us to accept the truth and testify to it before God and all our brothers and sisters.

In this Lenten season, *accepting and living the truth revealed in Christ* means, first of all, opening our hearts to God’s word, which the Church passes on from generation to generation. This truth is not an abstract concept reserved for a chosen intelligent few. Instead, it is a message that all of us can receive and understand thanks to the wisdom of a heart open to the grandeur of God, who loves us even before we are aware of it. Christ himself is this truth. By taking on our humanity, even to its very limits, he has made himself the way – demanding, yet open to all – that leads to the fullness of life.

Fasting, experienced as a form of self-denial, helps those who undertake it in simplicity of heart to rediscover God’s gift and to recognize that, created in his image and likeness, we find our fulfilment in him. In embracing the experience of poverty, those who

fast make themselves poor with the poor and accumulate the treasure of a love both received and shared. In this way, fasting helps us to love God and our neighbour, inasmuch as love, as Saint Thomas Aquinas teaches, is a movement outwards that focuses our attention on others and considers them as one with ourselves (cf. *Fratelli Tutti*, 93).

Lent is a time for believing, for welcoming God into our lives and allowing him to “make his dwelling” among us (cf. *Jn 14:23*). Fasting involves being freed from all that weighs us down – like consumerism or an excess of information, whether true or false – in order to open the doors of our hearts to the One who comes to us, poor in all things, yet “full of grace and truth” (*Jn 1:14*): the Son of God our Saviour.

2. Hope as “living water” enabling us to continue our journey.

The Samaritan woman at the well, whom Jesus asks for a drink, does not understand what he means when he says that he can offer her “living water” (*Jn 4:10*). Naturally, she thinks that he is referring to material water, but Jesus is speaking of the Holy Spirit whom he will give in abundance through the paschal mystery, bestowing a hope that does not disappoint. Jesus had already spoken of this hope when, in telling of his passion and death, he said that he would “be raised on the third day” (*Mt 20:19*). Jesus was speaking of the future opened up by the Father’s mercy. Hoping with him and because of him means believing that history does not end with our mistakes, our violence and injustice, or the sin that crucifies Love. It means receiving from his open heart the Father’s forgiveness.

In these times of trouble, when everything seems fragile and uncertain, it may appear challenging to speak of hope. Yet Lent is precisely the season of hope, when we turn back to God who patiently continues to care for his creation which we have often mistreated (cf. *Laudato Si’*, 32-33; 43-44). Saint Paul urges us to place our hope in reconciliation: “Be reconciled to God” (*2 Cor 5:20*). By receiving forgiveness in the sacrament that lies at the heart of our process of conversion, we in turn can spread forgiveness to others. Having received forgiveness ourselves, we can offer it through our willingness to enter into attentive dialogue with others and to give comfort to those experiencing sorrow and pain. God’s forgiveness, offered also through our words and actions, enables us to experience an Easter of fraternity.

In Lent, may we be increasingly concerned with “speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and

encouragement, and not words that demean, sadden, anger or show scorn” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 223). In order to give hope to others, it is sometimes enough simply to be kind, to be “willing to set everything else aside in order to show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference” (*ibid.*, 224).

Through recollection and silent prayer, hope is given to us as inspiration and interior light, illuminating the challenges and choices we face in our mission. Hence the need to pray (cf. *Mt* 6:6) and, in secret, to encounter the Father of tender love.

To experience Lent in hope entails growing in the realization that, in Jesus Christ, we are witnesses of new times, in which God is “making all things new” (cf. *Rev* 21:1-6). It means receiving the hope of Christ, who gave his life on the cross and was raised by God on the third day, and always being “prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls [us] to account for the hope that is in [us]” (*1 Pet* 3:15).

3. Love, following in the footsteps of Christ, in concern and compassion for all, is the highest expression of our faith and hope.

Love rejoices in seeing others grow. Hence it suffers when others are anguished, lonely, sick, homeless, despised or in need. Love is a leap of the heart; it brings us out of ourselves and creates bonds of sharing and communion.

“‘Social love’ makes it possible to advance towards a civilization of love, to which all of us can feel called. With its impulse to universality, love is capable of building a new world. No mere sentiment, it is the best means of discovering effective paths of development for everyone” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 183).

Love is a gift that gives meaning to our lives. It enables us to view those in need as members of our own family, as friends, brothers or sisters. A small amount, if given with love, never ends, but becomes a source of life and happiness. Such was the case with the jar of meal and jug of oil of the widow of Zarephath, who offered a cake of bread to the prophet Elijah (cf. *1 Kings* 17:7-16); it was also the case with the loaves blessed, broken and given by Jesus to the disciples to distribute to the crowd (cf. *Mk* 6:30-44). Such is the case too with our almsgiving, whether small or large, when offered with joy and simplicity.

To experience Lent with love means caring for those who suffer or feel abandoned and fearful because of the Covid-19 pandemic. In these days of deep uncertainty about the future, let us keep in mind the

Lord’s word to his Servant, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you” (*Is* 43:1). In our charity, may we speak words of reassurance and help others to realize that God loves them as sons and daughters.

“Only a gaze transformed by charity can enable the dignity of others to be recognized and, as a consequence, the poor to be acknowledged and valued in their dignity, respected in their identity and culture, and thus truly integrated into society” (*Fratelli Tutti*, 187).

Dear brothers and sisters, every moment of our lives is a time for believing, hoping and loving. The call to experience Lent as a journey of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, helps us – as communities and as individuals – to revive the faith that comes from the living Christ, the hope inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit and the love flowing from the merciful heart of the Father.

May Mary, Mother of the Saviour, ever faithful at the foot of the cross and in the heart of the Church, sustain us with her loving presence. May the blessing of the risen Lord accompany all of us on our journey towards the light of Easter.

Pope Francis

Liturgical Calendar

Sun:	First Sunday in Lent
Mon:	The Chair of St Peter the Apostle
Tue:	Lent feria; St Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr
Wed:	Lent feria;
Thu:	Lent feria
Fri:	Lent feria
Sat:	Lent feria
Sun:	Second Sunday in Lent

Daily Bible Readings

Sun:	Genesis 9:8-15; I Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:12-15
Mon:	I Peter 5:1-4; Matthew 16:13-19
Tue:	Isaiah 55:10-11; Matthew 6:7-15
Wed:	Jonah 3:1-10; Luke 11:29-32
Thu:	Esther 4:1-17; Matthew 7:7-12
Fri:	Ezekiel 18:21-28; Matthew 5:20-26
Sat:	Deuteronomy 26:16-19; Matthew 5:43-48
Sun:	Genesis 22:1-18; Romans 8:31-34; Mark 9:2-10

Resumption of Public Worship

Following a consultation among the Parish Pastoral Council, the decision has been taken to reopen the church for public Masses and confessions from the 6pm Vigil Mass on Saturday 20th February. We are assured that, following COVID protocol, this is a safe move, and many will appreciate the opportunity to come to Mass and confession in the church as contributing to overall well-being at this difficult time. Our ordinary Mass schedule will resume, and this can be viewed on page 1 of this newsletter. The obligation to attend Mass remains suspended, and we would discourage those who are elderly or vulnerable from travelling to the church, especially if this involves the use of public transport.

Face Covering Update

'Face coverings will be mandatory in Places of Worship from Saturday 8th August 2020. All those who are attending churches must wear a face covering unless they are exempt from doing so. This is for the good of all who gather in the Church for Mass [or for private prayer] as it is an enclosed public space where there are people from differing households who they do not normally meet.' (*Statement issued by the Bishops' Conference*). Further information can be found on the relevant section of the Government's website.

Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross will be prayed at Farm Street Church every Friday at 12 noon during the season of Lent. This can be attended either in person or via the livestream page on our website.

The Pope's Monthly Prayer Intention

In the month of February, Pope Francis encourages us to pray for women suffering from violence. We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and their sufferings considered and heeded.

Scripture Speaks

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."
Deuteronomy 31:6

Cardinal's Lenten Appeal

We would like to draw your attention to the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal, which is currently requesting donations. The Cardinal's Lenten Appeal is a diocesan fund which supports work in areas relating to poverty and homelessness; marriage and family life; youth and evangelization; and education services. A tremendous amount of good work is achieved by projects funded by the Lenten Appeal, which in turn is supported by the generosity of donors. One example of this good work has been the meals provided to the homeless over the past year by Central London Catholic Churches which has, in part, been funded by a very generous grant from the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal. Poverty and inequality have risen significantly in London as a result of the pandemic, and this year the Lenten Appeal will focus particularly on families who are struggling to place food on the table.

We would encourage you to visit the following link (<https://rcdow.org.uk/donations/cardinals-appeal/>) to find out more about the Lenten Appeal and, if you are able to do so, to consider donating to this important fund.

Encounters with Jesus in Lent

Farm Street Church and The Grosvenor Chapel are running a joint Lent reflection course titled 'Encounters with Jesus'. This will be held via Zoom at 8pm on six consecutive Wednesdays, beginning on the 24th February and concluding on the 31st March. The course will reflect on the encounters with Jesus experienced by people in the Gospels and will use the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola as a guide.

Each session will consist of 1.) A Brief Introduction, 2.) A Scriptural Reading, 3.) A 20-minute Guided Meditation on the Reading, 4.) Break out rooms to reflect on the Guided Meditation (20 minutes) with Facilitator in each Group 5.) Return to plenary and Final Prayers.

The theme of each week will be:

Week 1: Curing of the leper Mk 2:40-45

Week 2: Call of the first disciples Mt 4:18-22

Week 3: Walking on the water Mt 14:22-33

Week 4: Bartimaeus Mk 10:46-52

Week 5: This man was Son of God Mk 15: 33-39

Week 6. Mary at the tomb Jn 20: 11-18

If you would like to participate in this course, please contact the Parish Secretary at farmstreetoffice@rcdow.org.uk for the Zoom details.

A Prayer if Anxious

*Do not look forward in fear to the changes in life;
rather, look to them with full hope that as they arise,
God, whose very own you are,
will lead you safely through all things;
and when you cannot stand it,
God will carry you in His arms.*

*Do not fear what may happen tomorrow;
the same understanding Father who cares for
you today will take care of you then and every day.*

*He will either shield you from suffering
or will give you unfailing strength to bear it.*

*Be at peace,
and put aside all anxious thoughts and imaginations.*

St Francis De Sales

Society for Ecumenical Studies Talk

The Society for Ecumenical Studies is hosting an online seminar to mark the 850th anniversary of the murder of St Thomas Becket. The seminar is titled 'St Thomas Becket: An inspiration for the churches today?' and will take place via Zoom at 7.30pm on Tuesday 23rd February.

The keynote speaker is Professor Henry Mayr-Harting, Emeritus Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History, University of Oxford. Responses by:

Revd. Dr. Keith Clements, former General Secretary of the Conference of European Churches who will reflect on Church-State relations;

and

Archbishop Angaelos, Coptic Orthodox Archbishop of London who will speak about martyrdom today.

Chair: Fr. Dominic Robinson S.J., Vice-chair, SfES

To book, please go to <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/thomas-becket-an-inspiration-for-the-churches-today-tickets-139835701347>

For more information, please contact the secretary at sfes.secretary@gmail.com

Thank you

Thank you to everyone who supported our appeal for Jesuit Missions, which raised a total of £544.64. For more information about the work of Jesuit Missions, please visit <https://jesuitmissions.org.uk/>

Young Catholic Lenten Retreat

Join like-minded people in the 18-30 age bracket who are motivated by social action and social justice with Caritas Westminster and Young Caritas Westminster. The 'Let Us Dream' Lenten Retreat is an opportunity to break open the themes discussed in the Pope's latest book, and to discover and share the things speaking to your heart this Lent.

Retreatants will attend three online sessions to share, grow, and discern together. Alongside this is the opportunity for one-to-one accompaniment provided by trained guides. Retreatants will be provided with a pack, containing a copy of 'Let Us Dream' and notebook to write down your reflections. Sessions will have spiritual input from the Jesuit Young Adult Ministry, Diocese of Westminster Youth Ministry and Young Caritas. Sessions will be held fortnightly, beginning on the 23rd February.

For more information and to book a place, please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/young-caritas-let-us-dream-lenten-retreat-tickets-138923194013>

Holy Land Pilgrimage

The Aid to the Church in Need's Pilgrimage to the Holy Land is due to take place between Friday 12 November and Saturday 20 November 2021. Pilgrims will not only visit Holy sites, but will have the chance to visit ACN projects, as well as meeting with local Church leaders and Christian families.

The pilgrimage will be led by Father Dominic Robinson SJ, ACN UK's National Ecclesiastical Assistant and Neville Kyrke-Smith, National Director of ACN UK. The nine-day itinerary will take in locations of important religious and historical importance: Bethlehem, Mount of Olives, Mount Zion, Old City Jerusalem, Qumran, Dead Sea, Galilee, Cana, Nazareth and Tiberias. For more information, please visit <https://acnuk.org/event/aid-to-the-church-in-needs-pilgrimage-to-the-holy-land-2021/>

Mass intention

If you would like a Mass to be celebrated for a specific intention, please contact the Parish Secretary at farmstreetoffice@rcdow.org.uk

Scripture Speaks

"And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love."

Romans 8:38-39

Help the Homeless Donation Hub

During the first Covid 19 lockdown in the Spring 2020, Companions of the Order of Malta and Westminster City Council worked in partnership to start a donation hub for the homeless. The aim was to streamline the donations available and produce a circular network where the necessary supplies were available to support vulnerable individuals being housed in the hotels and hostels and the street population.

35,000 items were sorted and packed at St Joseph's Hall, Brompton Oratory from April to July and then delivered to the homeless. The donation hub opened again in November 2020, and we open to receive donations again.

Donation Hub location:

St Joseph's Hall, 5 Thurloe Place, Knightsbridge,
London SW7 2RR. .

Opening times for receiving donations:

Wednesday 2 – 5.30pm

Wednesday 6.30 – 8pm (by arrangement)

Saturday 10.30am – 2pm.

Please only deliver donations at these times.

Types of Donations:

Toiletries – only unopened items please
Men and women's clothes (no children's
clothes please)

Entertainment items e.g. books – fact or
fiction/crosswords/puzzles/art and craft items
(please ensure the books are appropriate
eg No recipe books)

Thank you very much for any support you can give.

Contact: Kate MacKenzie

at London.companionsofmalta@gmail.com if you
have any queries.

Prayer to St Corona

*Lord Jesus Christ, You came into this world for our
salvation. Look kindly on us now, we pray, that we,
and all those who serve You, might be kept safe from
this epidemic. Heal those who are sick, comfort the
suffering, bring back those gone astray and, above all,
increase our faith, O Lord.*

*Give us the grace to follow You and, like the martyr St
Corona, who gave her life for the love of You, to take
up our crosses daily without fear or hesitation.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy
on us and on the whole world. Amen.*

St Corona, patroness of epidemic victims, pray for us.

Holy Week Book

During Lent last year, Fr Richard Nesbitt, parish priest of Our Lady of Fatima, White City, found inspiration to write a series of 15 poems on the themes of Our Lord's passion, death and resurrection. Through the Friends of the Holy Land charity, a number of people in the Holy Land were then approached to offer their reflections on the Scriptures for Holy Week, the poems and their own personal experiences. The result is *Holy Week Voices from the Holy Land*, a prayerful and timely resource. The proceeds of this book (priced at £7.99 plus postage and packaging) will go to the Friends of the Holy Land to aid their work with the neediest of our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land. For more information and to order a copy of this book, please visit <https://rcdow.org.uk/faith/news/holy-week-voices/>

Act of Perfect Contrition

My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against You, whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with Your help, to do penance, to sin no more, to avoid whatever leads me to sin, and to confess my sins when possible.

Act of Spiritual Communion

Jesus, I believe you are present in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You and draw closer to You. Since I cannot receive Your body and blood sacramentally at this time, come to me spiritually. Help me to embrace You more deeply and unite myself more wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from Your love. Amen

Supporting the Parish

We are grateful to everyone who has continued to financially support the church during the months of disruption caused by the pandemic. We are mindful that many people are currently struggling financially and may not be able to donate as they once did. If you can donate to the work of the parish, we would ask that you consider doing so in a way that avoids physical cash. This is for the safety of our staff, who need to physically count any money that is donated. Please consider donating via our website, setting up a standing order, or donating via the cashless terminals in the church. We are also implementing a new donating system called Givt, which will allow contactless donations via mobile phones. If you would like to donate via standing order, please contact the parish Finance Officer at farmstreetfin@rcdow.org.uk. Thank you again for your support.