**St Columba’s Church, Selsdon**

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**21 MARCH 2021**

**5TH SUNDAY OF LENT (YEAR B)**

**THIS SUNDAY’S MASS READINGS**

**Entrance Antiphon:** Give me justice, O God, and plead my cause against a nation that is faithless. From the deceitful and cunning rescue me, for you, O God, are my strength.

**1st Reading from the prophet Jeremiah: 31:31-34**

**Responsorial Psalm PS 50:3-4. 12-15. Rv12:** A pure heart create for me, O God.

**2nd Reading: from the letter to the Hebrews: 5:7-9**

**Gospel Acclamation:** Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God! If a man serves me, says the Lord, he must follow me; wherever I am, my servant will be there too. Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

**Gospel: John 12:20-30**

**Communion Antiphon:** Everyone who lives and believes in me will not die for ever, says the Lord.

***YES, OUR BENCHES ARE BACK AT LAST***

Yes, the chairs (or most of them) have now gone and you can once again sit/kneel in the benches.

People must, however, make sure to leave plenty of space between them in the bench. There should be no more than three people – unless you are a family or in a bubble. The ideal is one person at each end and one in the middle.

You also need to be prepared to lend a hand helping the stewards clean the benches, front and back, after Mass.

Don’t forget that the one-way system is still in force: come in via the Sacred Heart chapel and leave via the main doors at the back.

**WHY WE TOO, LIKE JESUS, MUST DIE TO SELF**

*A reflection on this Sunday’s Gospel, by Deacon Philip*

Technically, Sunday is the first day of spring.

But you don’t need an astronomical calendar to tell you that.

Daffodils, snow drops, crocuses and blossom have all been spreading the good news.

There is new life all around us.

You can see it in the garden, in the park, in the countryside.

In two weeks’ time we shall be celebrating the new life of Easter.

The Resurrection.

Jesus coming out of the tomb, rising from the dead. The sobering thing of course is that in order to rise in glory from the dead, Jesus had to experience loss first, to die on the cross.

Only then could he conquer sin and death, thus bringing us eternal life.

But just pause for a moment to think about all this.

In order for all those daffodils and other plants to bloom, they first had to die.

Only through that loss of life could they later emerge anew, rejuvenated, reborn, full of colour.

All human life is like that too.

Life begins in loss.

Birth entails being ejected from the comfort of a mother’s womb into a new world.

To gain a place in that new world, we first had to lose our place in the old one, the womb.

Our lives thereafter were characterized by loss, leaving and being left, letting go and moving on.

It is only through losses that we learn to change and adapt and make new gains.

To grow.

No pain, no gain.

As we grow older we have to let go of many things – our youthful good health, our perfect vision, our immature earnestness, our naïve beliefs, even – dare I say it – our waistlines.

But in the middle of this litany of loss, there will be new growth, new life and new opportunities.

All that is just one aspect of what Jesus says in today’s Gospel.

‘Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies it yields a rich harvest’.

The losing of Jesus’s life on the cross was a necessary loss.

But it was also our gain.

Christ’s radical act of self giving stands at the centre of the Christian story.

And that is because he is the grain of wheat that died in order to bear much fruit, to produce a rich harvest indeed.

We celebrate that harvest at Easter.

As Christ demonstrated, a grain of wheat is a symbol that is humble yet powerful in its message.

Each of us is like a grain of wheat, one that has been planted by our heavenly Father.

Like Jesus, we too must die if we are to produce a harvest.

This dying to self is a gradual process that happens in very ordinary ways.

Every act of love involves dying to selfishness.

Every act of humility involves dying to pride.

Every act of forgiveness involves dying to sin.

In other words, each time we die to self, we give up a love of life for the sake of a life of love.

To finish, the philanthropist John Ruskin wrote: ‘When a man is wrapped up in himself he makes a pretty small package.’

That may be true.

But by following Jesus’s example and dying to self, each and every one of us can, like the grain of wheat, reap a rich harvest indeed.

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS ONLINE AT 7PM EVERY FRIDAY EVENING**

Note that on Friday evening there are Stations of the Cross online every week during Lent from St Columba’s.

They can be accessed at 7pm every Friday via YouTube using the same link as for daily Mass:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYVyZ2Xpfs0NiuU3bxAjsCQ/live>

All are welcome. Note: the church will not be open.

***DON’T FORGET WHEN COMING TO ST COLUMBA’S…***

We know we must take precautions when coming to Mass. They are set by the Government – and the local council is checking that we comply. So make sure to:

* Remember to bring and wear a face mask covering the nose as well as the mouth
* Enter the church via the side door leading into the Sacred Heart chapel/confessional, observe the one-way system and leave via the centre back door.
* Meet Track-and-Trace requirements by providing a written note – and this applies every time you come to church – of your name and contact details (phone number or email or postal address) plus the date and, if relevant, Mass time. To save queuing and filling out a form, send an email to selsdon@rcaos.org.uk
* Use hand sanitizer, provided, both when entering and leaving the church.
* Unless they are in your family or bubble, leave plenty of space between yourself and anyone else in your bench – there should be no more than three people in a bench.
* Leave where they are the chairs which have replaced some of our benches and are at 1m intervals to ensure the necessary social distancing.
* Bring your own Mass or prayer book – there are no shared items:. That applies to readers as well.
* Keep silent when receiving Holy Communion.
* If you are sitting on a chair as opposed to being in a bench, before leaving the church (i.e. before you come up to receive Holy Communion), turn your chair back to front so that the stewards know which ones to clean afterwards. That also includes any chair you may have used, for example the one in front as support when kneeling during Mass.
* Leave the church straight after Holy Communion and don’t congregate outside to socialise.

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| **LITURGICAL CALENDAR OF THE WEEK** | |
| Sat 20th | Weekday of Lent |
| Sun 21st | 5th Sunday of Lent |
| Mon 22nd | Weekday of Lent |
| Tues 23rd | Weekday of Lent  St Turibius de Mogrovejo, Bishop |
| Wed 24th | Weekday of Lent |
| Thurs 25th | The Annunciation of the Lord |
| Fri 26th | Weekday of Lent |
| Sat 27th | Weekday of Lent |
| Sun 28th | Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord |

**DON’T REFUSE A COVID JAB**

**A series of films has been produced by the NHS to encourage and promote the uptake of Covid-19 vaccination across Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities as well as different faith groups. Presenters include a permanent deacon from St Joseph’s, Bromley.**

**You can watch by clicking any of the links here:**

* YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL1fo7mb0qmAvQANj-ByeV72ScnslGPk2M>
* Facebook: <https://fb.watch/3oZtBYzOUd/>
* Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NHSSELondonCCG/status/1356571921983426564>

**REMEMBER THE SICK AND NEEDY**

Please pray for all those in need at this time including: Kevin Staunton, Alice Barclay, Rob Adams, Thelma Benn, Julie Ballesteros, Cora Litchfield, Sean Walsh, Judy Freegard, Imogen Fernando, Joan Charman, Joan Cunningham, Solveya La Marina, Chris Jones, Maria Reece, Margaret Bolton, Eddie Aldridge, Ellis Warburton, Mary Marks, Jean-Claude Anthony, Ellen Everett, Maureen Coffey, James Guckian, Elizabeth Sensano, Stephen Beck and sick residents at the four residential homes usually, in better times, visited by the parish St Vincent de Paul group.

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| **MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK** | | |
| Sat 20th | 6.30pm | Cecilia Roxas Gagalang, RIP |
| Sun 21st | 8.00am | David Chan Sing, RIP, Jeanie & Winston, wellbeing |
| Sun 21st | 10.00am | Pro Populo |
| Sun 21st | 6.30pm | Stanislaw Gonek, RIP |
| Mon 22nd | 10.00am | Chea & Sue Lim, RIP |
| Tues 23rd | 10.00am | Kevin Staunton, wellbeing |
| Wed 24th | 10.00am | Intention the Alvarez Family |
| Thurs 25th | 10.00am | Shirley Gaunt, RIP |
| Fri 26th | 10.00am | Margarette Smith, RIP |
| Sat 27th | 6.30pm | Intention the Alvarez Family |
| Sun 28th | 8.00am | Pro Populo |
| Sun 28th | 10.00am | Bruno Sampson, RIP |
| Sun 28th | 6.30pm | Mrs Joseph, RIP |

**PATHWAYS TO CHRIST'S PASSION**  
To prepare for Holy Week, Fr Henry Wansbrough, a Benedictine monk based at Ampleforth Abbey, will lead participants through different narratives of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus in order to gain a deeper understanding of these powerful events. The series offers an opportunity to increase personal insights into the historical context and profound theology expressed in these accounts, with a view to understanding what the Resurrection means for the mission of the Church and for our spirituality.

One session remains. The remaining webinar running from 7.45-9.15pm, is as follows:

* **March 24 The Passion and Resurrection of Jesus according to the writings of Paul**

Click here for details and to book tickets:

[***www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pathways-to-christs-passion-synoptic-gospels-john-and-writings-of-paul-tickets-139850876737***](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/pathways-to-christs-passion-synoptic-gospels-john-and-writings-of-paul-tickets-139850876737)

**GOING INTO HOSPITAL? TELL US**

If you or a member of your family go into hospital, ask the Ward Sister or Staff Nurse to notify the hospital’s Roman Catholic hospital chaplain direct.

That will make it much more likely that you have the opportunity of receiving Holy Communion (or any other sacraments) while in hospital. And don’t forget to let Fr Roy or Deacon Philip know beforehand of your admission into hospital. We can then keep you in our prayers.

***IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID…***

Should that happen and you have been to Mass at St Columba’s in the preceding week, let Fr Roy or Deacon Philip know.

For track’n’trace purposes, they may then need to contact anyone else who was at the same Mass.

**VOICES FROM THE HOLY LAND**

During Lent last year, Fr Richard Nesbitt found inspiration to write a series of 15 poems on the themes of Our Lord’s passion, death and resurrection as he faced the challenge of a closed church at Easter,

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, which contains:

* Forewords by Cardinal Vincent Nichols and Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury
* 15 chapters each featuring a poem, Scripture, a reflection from a Holy Land
* ‘Voice’, a prayer and questions for meditation.
* Stations of the Cross during a Time of Pandemic, first prayed at Our Lady of Fátima in Lent 2020.
* An invitation to share the reader’s own poem or reflection on Simon of Cyrene.

Holy Week Voices from the Holy Land can be used for individual meditation. Parishioners may wish to purchase a physical copy directly from Friends of the Holy Land or obtain an electronic/digital version (also priced £7.99): click on:

[(](https://rcsouthwark.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a40ab1a35eac7236d856fe882&id=206196bab0&e=7d4ac57aff)[www.friendsoftheholyland.org.uk](https://rcsouthwark.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a40ab1a35eac7236d856fe882&id=6262e7e53a&e=7d4ac57aff)[)](https://rcsouthwark.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a40ab1a35eac7236d856fe882&id=2cce6fb326&e=7d4ac57aff).

The proceeds will go towards their work in helping our Christian brothers and sisters in that area, who have suffered a dramatic loss of livelihood due to the significant decline in pilgrimages to Bethlehem and the surrounding areas.



***SHOPPING ONLINE? HELP ST C’S AT NO COST TO YOURSELF***

Thinking of buying something online? Anything? A new washing machine or any other white goods?

Or perhaps you need a new vacuum cleaner or intend ordering a book or dvd or, in fact, other items.

If you do it online you can help St Columba’s finances, depleted by the lockdown, at the same time and at no cost to yourself.

More and more parishioners are signing up for this scheme. It means that you can turn your everyday online shopping into free donations to our parish.

It’s simple. It’s straightforward. And it will cost you nothing.

All you have to do is to logon to the following website [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk), register (which is quick and easy) and then go shopping online at whichever retailer you choose. Each time you buy something – anything – a small donation is made to St Columba’s.

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| There are more than 4,000 retailers to choose from including lots of big names such as Argos, John Lewis, Amazon, M&S and Sainsbury’s.  Have a look at this link to find out more: [https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stcolumbasldn/?invite=ZTUSO0%26referral-campaign=c2s%26utm\_campaign=admin-trigger%26utm\_content=nst](http://t.e.easyfundraising.org.uk/r/?id=h2ef6bab4,257a256b,25302fff&utm_source=adobecampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=referral-2018&utm_content=trigger-supp-referee-raised-2018&origin=RTNS2&p1=stcolumbasldn&p2=ZTUSO0)  **THE MARRIAGE GAP**  **It wasn’t** so long ago that everybody got married if they had kids . Rich and poor alike. Today, marriage is still the norm among the better-off. But it's become the exception among the least well-off. A new report by the Marriage Foundation – already featured in the Sunday Express, Sun, Times, Mail, Star, BBC World Service, Radio 4 *You and Yours*, Church Times and the LadBible - explains what the ‘marriage gap’ is all about. Click on [Marriage Gap](https://marriagefoundation.us5.list-manage.com/track/click?u=7a9d31013953dc4d039e1d034&id=d8c9e4500c&e=e4670e1b0c) to find out why it matters.  **WHAT DO YOU THINK OF IT SO FAR…?**  **Our newsletter, that is.**  **Your comments, thoughts, suggestions, ideas and contributions would be most welcome.**  **They will also enable us to know whether this newsletter is considered helpful and useful – or not. Email Deacon Philip – the deadline for each weekend’s newsletter is the Wednesday before.**  **KNOWING JESUS: AN ONLINE RETREAT**  Walk with the Jesuits through Lent and Easter and really come to understand and love Jesus. This online retreat, pondering Gospel stories, will reflect on their meaning and see how startlingly relevant Jesus is to living a truly human life in the 21st Century. Sign up by clicking here:  <https://www.onlineprayer.net/> You can also sign up to receive daily emails during Lent and additional resources: [http://eepurl.com/hnIXAn](https://rcsouthwark.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a40ab1a35eac7236d856fe882&id=3bb43464bf&e=087693309e) |  |  |

**FAITH COMPANION: TASTE AND SEE**

The *Faith Companion* is an online magazine likely to be of interest to parishioners and recommended by our own Abp John.

Visit its website and you will also find details of Christian Gifts online including the *Faith Companion* candle, rosaries, journals and a skin care range made by Benedictine monks.

A free copy of the magazine is obtainable to “taste and see” by visiting the website at <http://www.thefaithcompanion.co.uk>. Please do consider supporting their work for the Church.

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

**There will be an online meeting via Zoom of St Columba’s parish council at 7.30pm on Monday (March 22).**

**All parish council representatives are invited so as to discuss plans for returning to normal once lockdown ends and the Covid situation eases.**

**If there are particular issues you would like to be raised at the meeting, please let Fr Roy or Deacon Philip know.**

**Contact parish secretary Gill Tomei for more details and the Zoom link:** [g.tomei@btopenworld.com](mailto:g.tomei@btopenworld.com)



**LENT: HOW ARE YOU GETTING ON?**

**How are you getting on with your Lenten resolutions?**

**Whatever you have chosen to do or not to do, you could do worse than simply remember and try to put into practice the little list of things to give up (fast from) suggested by Pope Francis.**

**Here they are:**

**Give up hurtful words and say kind words instead.**

**Give up sadness and be filled with gratitude.**

**Give up aggression and be patient.**

**Give up worrying and trust in God.**

**Give up complaining and contemplate simplicity.**

**Give up stress and be prayerful.**

**Give up bitterness and be joyful.**

**Give up selfishness and be compassionate.**

**Give up grudges and be reconciled.**

**Give up words and listen to God.**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR OFFERING**

**The Offertory collection on February 28 amounted to £463.18 of which £216 was gift aided and £247.18 not.**

**That on March 7 totalled £294.84 of which £71 was gift aided and £223.84 not.**

**Many thanks everyone.**

**ST OSCAR ROMERO MASS**

On Saturday 27 March at 12.30pm a Mass will be offered at St George’s Cathedral, Southwark, for St Oscar Romero. Our Abp John will install the Guardians of the Diocesan Romero Shrine in St George’s Cathedral.

A limited number of seats will be available in the Cathedral but the Mass will also be live-streamed. For more information on Romero Week visit: [http://www.romerotrust.org.uk/news/romero-week-2021](http://www.romerotrust.org.uk/news/romero-week-2021?fbclid=IwAR1q8JbICgjyO0oCbdxsajmbBQoLlINIRQI20FPkr2c2VNG7bDqQH4A-By0)

**NATIONAL DAY OF REFLECTION**

The Prime Minister has asked for a National Day of Reflection on the first anniversary of the first lockdown – that’s 23 March.  The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales ask all Catholics to hold this day not only as one of reflection but of prayer. We are encouraged to pay a visit to churches and pray for the many needs, hopes and sorrows that have emerged over the last year. Click this link to read the statement from the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England & Wales:



**THINK YOU HAVE A VOCATION?**

The Beda College in Rome is running a discernment weekend for men between the ages of 30 and 55 from September 3-5. It takes place at St Beuno’s Spirituality Centre in North Wales.

The weekend is a first step for those who may be exploring the possibility of priestly vocation in later life.

Information and registration forms are at: <https://www.pathwaystogod.org/courses-events-retreats/discernment-weekend-older-men-1>

**HOW DID COVID AFFECT YOU?**

Our diocesanAgency for Evangelisation and Catechesis has partnered with other dioceses to produce and promote a survey which aims to find out about the experiences of Catholics over the period of the Coronavirus pandemic.

This research will help us to understand what has been happening during this time when churches have been closed and/or only opened for limited periods and Catholics have had to practice their faith ‘at a distance’. To complete the survey, select our Archdiocese from the drop-down menu so that we can hear about what God has been doing and what He wants to say to us about the future of the Church in this part of England and Wales.

This important survey should take about 10 minutes to complete and the deadline for submissions for Southwark is July 4. Click on this link:

<https://forms.rcaos.org.uk/covid-19-survey-form/>

**VICTIMS & SURVIVORS OF ABUSE**

**Make a note in your diary. There will be a day of prayer for victims and survivors of abuse on May 4. More details to follow nearer the time.**

**EASTER SERVICES WITH ABP JOHN**

Various services celebrated by our Archbishop John Wilson are going to be livestreamed from the Cathedral:

Palm Sunday 28 March: 12 noon, solemn Mass

Holy Wednesday 31 March:  11:30 Chrism Mass

Maundy Thursday 1 April: 19:30 Mass

Good Friday 2 April: 15:00 the Passion of the Lord

Holy Saturday 3 April: 20:30 Paschal Vigil

Easter Sunday 4 April: 10:00 Family Mass

**For more details visit the Southwark diocesan website:** <http://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/>

**THE PEOPLE KEEPING ST COLUMBA’S OPEN DURING THE PANDEMIC**

**We have a number of parishioners who have been doing an invaluable job during the pandemic to ensure that St Columba’s can stay open for Mass.**

**They are the stewards who check people into the church before Mass starts, ensure they provide a completed track’n’trace form and make sure everyone uses hand sanitizer. After Mass they clean the seating which has been used and sanitize door handles and the like.**

**These volunteers are essential if we are to keep St Columba’s open during the pandemic.**

**But there are not enough of them: we need more, especially now that the benches are back in use and numbers attending Mass hopefully will start to increase.**

**If you are willing to help - and do give it serious consideration - contact Fr Roy or Deacon Philip.**