**St Columba’s Church, Selsdon**

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**AUGUST 23, 2020**

**21st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (YEAR A)**

**THIS SUNDAY’S MASS READINGS**

**Entrance Antiphon:** Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me; save the servant who trusts in you, my God. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all the day long.

**1st Reading: from the prophet Isaiah 22:19-23**

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 137:1-3,6,8. R. v.8** Your love, O Lord, is eternal, discard not the work of your hands.

**2nd Reading: from the letter of St Paul to the Romans 11:33-36**

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! God in Christ was reconciling the world to himself, and he entrusted to us the news that they are reconciled. Alleluia!

**Gospel: Matthew 16:13-20**

**Communion Antiphon:** The earth is replete with the fruits of your work, O Lord; you bring forth bread from the earth and wine to cheer the heart.

**SERVICES THIS COMING WEEK**

Just a reminder: all are welcome to 10am Mass at St Columba’s every day of the week, Sunday to Friday. In addition, as well as 8am and 6.30pm Mass every Sunday, there is a vigil Mass at 6.30pm on Saturdays. If you are not still shielding, do feel free to come and join us.

Don’t forget either that Adoration in front of the exposed Blessed Sacrament has resumed every Tuesday. It is limited in time to one hour from 10.30-11.30am. If you are staying on for Holy Hour after Mass simply return to your seat after Holy Communion.

 ***THE ROLE OF THE POPE IN THE 21ST CENTURY***

**A REFLECTION FOR THE 21ST SUNDAY BY DEACON PHILIP**

‘You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church.’

We are all familiar with Jesus’s words naming our first pope in today’s Gospel.

Maybe we even take them and the Pope for granted.

The man in white: a rock, immovable, a fixed point in our lives, unchanging.

And yet, popes are not unchanging, identikit figures, all the same. Far from it.

Reading today’s Gospel, I found myself thinking about the popes I’ve known in my lifetime.

First came Pius XII, an austere, solemn, remote figure.

Then John XXIII who called the Second Vatican Council and changed the face of the Church for ever. Good Pope John was what Protestants called him.

He was a warm, jovial figure who loved cracking jokes. When asked on one occasion how many people worked in the Vatican, he smilingly replied: ‘About half’.

**‘…the first pope to resign in almost 600 years…’**

He was followed by Paul VI, known as the jet-setting pope because of the number of trips he made on pilgrimage all over the world but also forever linked with the issue of contraception.

Then came John-Paul I, nicknamed the laughing pope, whose papacy, the shortest in modern times, lasted just 33 days before he suddenly died.

Everyone will remember the first-ever Polish pope, John-Paul II, canonised a saint in 2014 and seen as instrumental in the fall of Communism in Europe.

He was followed by Benedict XVI, the first pope to resign in almost 600 years and still living in the Vatican. Which means that, technically, we currently have not one but two popes.

And finally, Francis, the first pope to come from the Americas and a man recognised worldwide for putting love and compassion front and centre in his papacy.

So seven popes in total during my lifetime. Seven very different men.

What they have shared in common is the theme of today’s readings: authority.

As we read in Matthew’s Gospel this Sunday, Jesus gave Peter (and all his successors) authority to bind and to loose; in other words, the power to permit and the power to forbid.

He was to be ruler, teacher and sanctifier. As the Second Vatican Council put it, ‘In virtue of his office, the Roman Pontiff has full, supreme and universal power over the Church.’

But that was not to be a power to sanction tyranny; something harsh and remote.

It didn’t mean that whatever the Pope said, on any subject, had to be accepted as being true.

Only when he is declaring on faith and morals ‘ex cathedra’, that is with the full authority of his papal office, does the doctrine of papal infallibility come into play.

As Christ made clear, the pope’s power was to be exercised in gentleness and kindness, to be unifying and for the good of the Church.

All summed up in the Pope’s loveliest title: Servant of the servants of God.

In other words, the man who would most epitomise the example set by Jesus himself at the Last Supper when he washed the feet of his disciples.

We live in an age that challenges authority and is suspicious of those in power.

But it is not authority that needs abandoning: rather the misguided manner in which it is often exercised.

**‘Blind obedience…is not acceptable’**

Blind obedience, even to the teachings of the Church, is not acceptable.

While there need to be rules, reasons are required for them to be treated with respect.

Authority must be clear, firm and exercised reasonably and compassionately.

Given the division in the Church today, it isn’t just Catholics but all Christians who clearly need the Petrine figure as someone using his authority in the service of unity.

To conclude, in assessing a pope we should not so much look for cleverness but for goodness.

The one thing we must never do is to take away his humanity. We must not make a superman out of him, much less a god.

So let us thank God for our Pope, Francis, a human being just like us. A man, just like Peter, with whom we can readily identify.

And a person who, as Christ’s right-hand-man, has been endowed by God with the charism of authority for the good of the Church. God bless him.

**ALL MASSES FROM ST COLUMBA’S ONLINE**

Follow Fr Roy celebrating Mass live on YouTube – <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYVyZ2Xpfs0NiuU3bxAjsCQ/live>

10am Mass is also live streamed daily (except Saturday) on Zoom:

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/73986660636?pwd=UkJMZHQ0S1ZYUDdOR21MVkpYZElBdz09>

***COVID 10 COMMANDMENTS FOR COMING TO CHURCH…***

We are gradually getting back to normal after the months of lockdown. Daily Mass and weekly Adoration have both resumed at St Columba’s.

But this is a ‘new normal’ with changes that we would have thought unthinkable last year.

So don’t forget, whether you are coming to Mass or to Tuesday Adoration, that we must all comply with the following ‘Ten Commandments’:

1. Remember to bring and wear a face mask.
2. 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.
3. Provide 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, why not send an email to selsdon@rcaos.org.uk?
4. Use hand sanitizer, provided, both when entering and leaving the church.
5. Do not move the chairs which have replaced our benches and are at 1m intervals to ensure the necessary social distancing.
6. Don’t expect to find Mass or prayer books or any other shared items: bring your own.
7. Remember that singing is not allowed.
8. Don’t forget that Holy Communion is silent.
9. Before leaving, turn your chair back to front so that the stewards know which ones to clean afterwards.
10. Unless staying for Adoration, on Tuesdays, leave the church straight after Holy Communion.
* ***Please note: the toilets at church cannot be used.***

**REMEMBER THE SICK AND NEEDY**

Please pray for: John Litchfield, Vera De Souza, Ian Messenger, Baby Tommy, Joan Charman, Nina Wade, Roger Fenton, Deacon John Letley, Joan Cunningham, John Davis, Noreen Lawlor, Solveya La Marina, Chris Jones, Maria Reece, Margaret Bolton, Eddie Aldridge, Ellis Warburton, Mary Marks, Margaret Edwards, Jean-Claude Anthony, Ellen Everett, Maureen Coffey, Albert Khayyat, Grant Russell, James Patrick Guckian, Elizabeth Sensano and sick residents at the four residential homes usually, in better times, visited by the parish SVP group.

**JUST PUBLISHED: A TALE OF ENDURANCE**

*Ten Long Days* is the title of a new book which tells the extraordinary story of Joan de Souza’s escape to India from the Japanese after they invaded Burma during the Second World War. Joan, a valued member of our parish, was 12 at the time. Available from Amazon and all good bookshops. Highly recommended.

***STILL WANTED: SECRETARIAL HELP***

***Someone is still needed to help out with parish secretarial duties for a few hours each week. Contact Fr Roy for more details.***

**LITURGICAL CALENDAR FOR THE WEEK**

Sat 22nd: Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Sun 23rd: 21st Sunday in ordinary time year A

Mon 24th: St Bartholomew

Tues 25th: Feria or St Louis

Wed 26th: Feria or Blessed Dominic of the Mother of God

Thurs 27th: St Monica

Fri 28th: St Augustine

Sat 29th: The Passion of St John the Baptist

Sun 30th: 22nd Sunday in ordinary time year A

**ARRANGING TO HAVE A MASS SAID**

If you wish to have a Mass offered for a special intention, you can do so. Email the details to Fr Roy. Or write them out and post or deliver them to the presbytery. The information needed is the name of the person for whom the Mass is to be offered and whether they are deceased and if there is a specific anniversary or if it is some other special intention; also the date on or near which you would like the Mass to be celebrated; plus your own name and phone number/email address.

* It is customary to make an offering to the priest when asking for a Mass to be celebrated.

**60 NOW ALLOWED IN CHURCH**

A reminder. We must ensure social distancing in St Columba’s. That’s why chairs have replaced the benches. Chairs also make it easier to keep seating clean and clear of Covid-19.

Originally the number was lower but as a result of some rearranging last week we can now accommodate up to 60 people in church.

***If there are already that number inside when you arrive, the stewards will advise that you cannot come into the church.***

So far that situation has not arisen – 45 is the largest number we have had at St Columba’s and that was for a 10am Sunday Mass.

**SITUATION VACANT: MANAGER WANTED**

Contact is our local neighbourhood care charity, based at Selsdon Community Centre. It provides practical help, advice, support and information to people of all ages in the Selsdon area.

The manager, Andy Stranack, is moving on and so the trustees wish to appoint a new manager.

Interested?

We are seeking someone to:

* take responsibility for client care, activity and quality
* recruit, supervise and coordinate the team of volunteers
* ensure the smooth running of the office
* develop strategy and fundraising
* maintain and develop all necessary external links.

The initial contract will be for a period of six months with the possibility of extending to a permanent position.

The hours are 20 spread over four days per week.  The salary will be in the region of £15 per hour depending on previous relevant experience.

An application pack is available from the Contact office on the lower ground floor at Sainsbury's Selsdon or by e-mail at info@selsdoncontact.org.uk

The closing date for applications is Friday 4 September 2020

***HOW YOU CAN HELP ST COLUMBA’S WHILE DOING YOUR SHOPPING ONLINE***

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

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

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 – not just of white goods but anything – into free donations to our parish.

It’s simple. It’s straightforward. And it will cost you nothing. All you have to do is visit the

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) website, register (which is quick and easy) and then go shopping online at whichever retailer you choose.

Each time you buy something a small donation is made to St Columba’s.

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:

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| [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) **OFFERTORY COLLECTION**Thank you for your kind offering. The amount raised at Mass over the weekend of August 1-2 was £810.74, of which £395 was covered by Gift Aid and £415.74 was not. If you are a taxpayer and not already signed up for Gift Aid (which, at no cost to you, enables St Columba’s to reclaim from the Government tax you have already paid) contact Fr Roy or Deacon Philip for details of how to join the scheme.**PRAY FOR THE DECEASED** |  |  |

All victims of Covid-19: may they rest in peace.

**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

Sat 22nd: 6.30pm Holy Souls

Sun 23rd: 8am Pro Populo

SUN 23rd: Nina Freegard RIP

Sun 23rd: 6.30pm Holy Souls

Mon 24th: 10am Patrick Mascarenhas RIP

Tues 25th: 10am Anne Page

Wed 26th: 10am Maureen Coffee

Thurs 27th: 10am Michael Conneely RIP

Fri 28th: 10am Holy Souls

Sat 29th: 6.30pm Holy Souls

Sun 30th: 8am Holy Souls

SUN 30th: Pro Populo

Sun 30th: 6.30pm Holy Souls

**HOW ABOUT MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER..?**

For the past 50 years Worldwide Marriage Encounter has been offering marriage enrichment retreats all around the world.

They are aimed at couples in average-to-good marriages who want to enrich their relationship and gain a deeper understanding of the Sacrament of Marriage.

The Marriage Encounter experience offers a unique experience to explore your relationship at a deeper, more intimate level, regardless of how long you have been together.

During the coronavirus pandemic, the residential retreats have had to be cancelled.

In their place, for couples who want to deepen their relationship, is a newly energised video conferenced retreat.

So why not give yourselves and your relationship a treat and sign up for the next online experience scheduled for September 26-27?

Find out more at wwme.org.uk or telephone 0845 260 2016

**WHAT ABOUT GIFT AID ENVELOPES?**

We have not been able to distribute new Gift Aid envelopes because of the coronavirus. There is a way round that, however, to ensure that St Columba’s continues to benefit from Gift Aid. All you need to do is to put your offering in any blank envelope on which you then write ‘Gift Aid’ plus your name. Then place that envelope in the Offertory collection box/basket at church. Better still, set up a standing order.

**CATHEDRAL JOB VACANCIES**

There are two part-time admin vacancies at St George’s Cathedral, Southwark.  For more information please contact triciagilbride@stgeorges.org.uk. Closing date for applications is 1st September.

**NOT RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION?**

If you are not receiving Holy Communion at Mass, for whatever reason, please do come forward with the communicants and receive a blessing. Indicate in the usual way: by crossing your arms across your chest.

**THIS NEWSLETTER: HAVE YOUR SAY**

Items for publication should be emailed to Deacon Philip by Thursday evening at the latest.