



1. This weekend we celebrate the **Twenty Fourth Sunday of Ordinary Time**. The readings can be found on page 136 of the Parish Mass Books.
2. Please note, **the 8.00 am Sunday Mass resumes on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September, as does the Sunday afternoon Holy Hour.**
3. **Children's Liturgy** recommences this Sunday, September 11th at the 9.30am Family Mass. The session is run for children ages 4-8 who have not yet prepared for their First Holy Communion. Families wishing to register may complete the required form located in the church foyer. If you have already registered your child(ren) for last year's programme and your information has not changed, there is no need to re-register. The programme relies on the active participation of all parents & caretakers so please be prepared to be called upon to volunteer in some capacity.
4. We were saddened to hear of the recent death of **Mrs. Ifeoma Oniri**, a long-standing and much-loved parishioner. Please keep Ifeoma, her family and friends in your prayers. Her Requiem Mass has been arranged to take place at church at 12.00 on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September.
5. Looking ahead – considerably! – to Christmas, **we hope to hold a parish Christmas Fair again this year**, after an absence of several years caused by Covid. **There will be a meeting for everyone interested on Thursday September 15<sup>th</sup> at 8.00 pm in the Parish Centre.** More details to follow – but please note the date now!

6. **We will be holding a DBS RECHECK DAY for parish volunteers on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> September**, from 9.00 – 12.00 at the Parish Office (27 Nightingale Square). This is for volunteers carrying out a role which requires a DBS (safeguarding) check, such as First Holy Communion or Confirmation catechists. We hope as many of our volunteers as possible will attend on this day, which makes the process easier and quicker. PLEASE NOTE: this event is for re-checking those who already have a Diocesan DBS check – new volunteers, who have never been checked before, will have to be done on another occasion. We hope to contact eligible volunteers in person prior to 30<sup>th</sup> September, but please take this as advance notice.
7. **We are now taking applications for the Confirmation programme 2022/2023.** The course will run from November to May and candidates will be invited to a short interview in October before the beginning of the course. To apply, please email [balhamcat@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:balhamcat@rcaos.org.uk) with 'CONFIRMATION' in the subject line, and you will receive a document with all the details you need.
8. **During the autumn term, we are holding a short series of formational talks** – the first is this week, on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September. **Fr Marcus Holden will talk on: “Navigating Sacred Scripture - A Guide to the Geography, History, Literature and Spirituality of the Bible”.** The talk takes place at the Parish Centre, 27 Nightingale Square. Refreshments at 7.30 pm, talk at 8.00 pm
9. We invite volunteers to act as welcomers at Mass – you can sign up using this link <https://doodle.com/meeting/participate/id/dJqNOrDb>
10. **Over the next few months, we will be undertaking a new series of works here at the church.** Firstly, the main doors to the church need replacing, as they have decayed badly and are no longer weatherproof nor secure. The new doors will be traditional English church doors which should last a century or more! I would like to thank the 'tea and coffee' stall after the 9.30 Mass, which has raised nearly £200 towards the cost of these doors. On a bigger scale, we were recently informed that we have a duty to install some accessible toilets in the church. Following a visit from a surveyor and a builder, it has been concluded that the best – indeed, only – place for these would be at the end of the existing church porch, nearest to the primary school. This will involve building a small extension, which will in turn involve obtaining planning permission and so on – so the process may take some months, at least. However, this work will meet a real need and make the church more welcoming to everyone. We will keep you posted on the progress of this project. Lastly, again over the next few months, we hope to install a new frontal to the altar in the Lady Chapel, and to repaint and decorate the baptistry – these works would have been done when the rest of the Lady Chapel was decorated a little while ago, but were postponed due to the COVID pandemic. Obviously, all this work comes at a cost – especially the extension for the new toilets – so we hope to undertake some fund-raising initiatives over the next few months as well.
11. Parents hoping to have their children accepted at Catholic Schools normally need to provide a 'priests' reference form' (sometimes called a 'Certificate of Catholic Practice'), confirming

their regular attendance at Sunday Mass for a period of 3 years or more. To assist the priest in making his professional judgment about a family's attendance, many parishes, including our own, have traditionally made use of 'Mass attendance Forms', which a family will fill out each week to demonstrate attendance at Mass.

During the period of the pandemic, the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales suspended the obligation to attend Sunday Mass, since for many people it was very difficult or indeed impossible to come to church at this time. For this reason, we did not provide 'Mass attendance Forms' during this time.

However, as of Pentecost Sunday 2022 (5<sup>th</sup> June) the Sunday obligation has been restored. **Therefore, we are returning to the practice of providing 'Mass attendance forms' which will be available after every Sunday Mass as from 11<sup>th</sup> September 2022.**

**Families who will be applying for places in a Catholic school – primary, secondary or Sixth Form – in the near future should make sure they fill in a form every Sunday (or Saturday evening). Forms are available at the back of church and, once completed, should be left in the tray provided.**

12. In September and October this year, **the relics of St. Bernadette, the young visionary who saw Our Lady at Lourdes, will journey to England, Scotland and Wales for the very first time.** This very special, once in a lifetime event will provide an opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds to experience the special gifts and graces of Lourdes in a church or cathedral near them. If you would like to know more, visit <https://stbernadette.org.uk/>, where you can register to visit the relics. Please note, there is no charge for registration, and all people are warmly invited to be part of this special journey.
  
13. **The Backpack programme** helps build human and spiritual development. It has been run in schools, parishes, youth groups, and used with addiction recovery. The backpack program is a resilience initiative. The contemporary formation provided is described by participants as a life-changing. The lessons offer skills in emotional self-regulation, with practical tools for mind and body calming. People flourish as they develop increased self-awareness and learn to instil boundaries for healthier relationships. Contemplative prayer cultivates their choice to make their relationship with God both private and personal. A virtue-based approach in contemporary society builds resilience and peace, which are more essential than ever before. **The backpack for adults begins soon!** 11 sessions of 2 hours in the Plunkett room, starting 29th September for a two hour session from 12.00 to 2.00 pm in the Plunkett room on Thursdays. Price £140 which includes the book and the lunch for 11 sessions. Course ends on 15th December.
  
14. Fr Richard and a number of parishioners took part in last Saturday's '**March for Life**' – just a few of us are pictured below! It was a very encouraging event and inspiring to see so many people (especially young people) coming together to express our belief in the sanctity of life.

With our prayers and best wishes,

Fr. Richard and Fr. Giovanni

