



Dear parishioners,

1. This coming Wednesday, 17th February is **ASH WEDNESDAY**, the beginning of Lent. We will have three Masses to mark this day – **at 6.45 am, 9.30 am and 8.00 pm**. At each Mass, ashes will be blessed and distributed. Please note, due to the on-going coronavirus pandemic, ashes will be given in a slightly different way to usual. By order of the Vatican, ratified by our own bishops, ashes will be sprinkled on the head, rather than marked on the forehead. This is actually the traditional, and normal, method of giving ashes as practiced in most European countries (as shown in the painting above!). In any case, ashes are, of course, only an outward sign of our inner desire to repent for our sins and amend our lives in preparation for Holy Week and Easter.
2. We are not able to offer our usual Lent talks in the parish this year, however this online course by Mauro Iannicelli comes highly recommended. Please follow the link to discover more:

<https://comeandsee.org/lent.html>
3. Please don't forget that we need your help with stewarding in church. Our churches are permitted by law to open and hold services during the lockdown, but they need to be safe places. **Our very special gratitude goes out to our stewards**, whose work is now more important than ever. If you value our open churches, and the ability to come to Mass, please do consider volunteering as a steward – we need your help.

We have a 'Doodle' where you can sign up to help during February – please follow this link:

<https://doodle.com/poll/znzccbchagzge2d8>

If you have any difficulty is using the Doodle, or other questions, you can email us at holyghostvolunteers@gmail.com. Thank you!

4. The pandemic has reminded all of us just how important taking care of each other is our and as a result we are looking to set up a network of helpers from our Holy Ghost community to provide help to those in the parish who may need it from time to time.

Initially this is to last during lockdown and the remaining winter months, but we may continue beyond this if there seems to be demand.

We are organising a team of friends to provide light touch assistance as required which could include: purchasing daily essentials, a weekly phone call or collecting prescriptions.

We imagine that individuals would be needed for an hour or so every couple of weeks.

If you are interested could you please provide your full name, email address and mobile number by emailing us at the following address: HGBalhamvolunteers@gmail.com

We will be in contact following the same.

With our best wishes and every blessing,

Fr Richard and Fr Giovanni