



Dear parishioners, see below for important news including our appeal for a new parish secretary, advance notice of Holy Weeks services and advice on using the contactless giving machines...

1. From this weekend until the Easter Vigil, the images in the church are veiled, marking the beginning of 'Passiontide', the last two weeks of Lent. The veiling of the images is intended to help us concentrate more single-mindedly on the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ, which are the main focus of the liturgy over the next two weeks.
2. Our long-standing Parish Secretary, **Valerie Slezak**, has now stepped back after many years of service to our parish – going right back to the days of Father Bennett! Val has been a huge asset to the parish and will be very much missed (although we are pleased to say that she and her husband Lu remain very much part of the parish, even if retired!).

This being so, we need to recruit a new Parish Secretary. Please see the job description below:

Holy Ghost Parish in Balham is looking to recruit a part time Parish Secretary to assist in the administration of a busy parish. This will initially be on a 12- month fixed term contract. The role is to provide comprehensive support to the Parish Priest in all administrative matters within the Parish and will cover secretarial, financial and office management work. Previous secretarial experience is essential - along with good knowledge of bookkeeping/financial work. The successful candidate will be fully conversant with current office software such as Outlook, Word and Excel and be

generally comfortable with IT and office equipment. He/she will have excellent telephone skills and a good understanding of the workings of a Roman Catholic Parish.

Our ideal hours are from 9.00 am – 12.00, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, with the possibility of moving to five mornings a week as parish life returns after lockdown. Salary £12.00 - £14.00 per hour depending on experience. **If you would like to apply for this position please email your CV to richardwhinder@rcaos.org.uk by the closing date of 10th April 2021.** Please do not apply for this job if you do not have current permission to work in the UK.

3. **Advance notice of our Holy Week services** – on **Palm Sunday** (28th March) all Masses are at their usual times, and palms will be blessed and distributed at all Masses. On **Maundy Thursday** (1st April), the Mass of the Lord's Supper will be at 8.00 pm – the church will remain open for private prayer until midnight. On **Good Friday** (2nd April) there will be two services – Stations of the Cross at 12.00 noon and the Solemn Liturgy at 3.00 pm – *since numbers are limited, we encourage families with younger children to attend the 12.00 service, which will be shorter* – this allows more people to attend church this day. On Holy Saturday (3rd April), the **Easter Vigil** will begin at 8.00 pm, and on **Easter Sunday**, all Masses are again at the usual times (including an evening Mass at 6.00 pm).

Drawing on our experience last Christmas, we are **not** introducing a booking system for Holy Week – all services will be on a 'first come, first served' basis, and the stewards will close the church once there is no more room. **Please note, all the Holy Week services will be live streamed, so those unable to attend can watch at home.**

4. There will also be additional times for **Confession** during Holy Week – immediately after the evening Mass on Maundy Thursday – immediately after the 3.00 service on Good Friday – from 10.00 – 11.00 am on Holy Saturday and again from 5.00 – 6.00 pm on Holy Saturday.
5. Thank you to everyone who has been using the **contactless payment devices** and we apologise for the few teething problems that we have had. In general, the machines are working well and we have collected around £5,700 since they were installed on 5 December 2020 at an average of around £380 per week, and £13.00 per donation. The good news is that some 60% of the £5,700 is being Gift Aided. Signing up to Gift Aid using the machines can be a little time-consuming and it may be easier for parishioners to do this from home using their own PC or tablet. **An email is being sent to all parishioners with details of how to sign up to Gift Aid at home.** If you pay tax in the UK, please take this opportunity to sign up to Gift Aid so that the Parish can then reclaim the tax on then every donation you then make using the contactless machines. Even if you have previously signed up with the Diocese you will still need to sign up via the portal or the device as it is via a different payment method.
6. Please don't forget that we still 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 are now looking for stewards to help with Holy Week and April Masses – please follow the link below:

<https://doodle.com/poll/b2zmrayc3tuvhh6z>

With our best wishes,

Fr Richard and Fr Giovanni