

St Michael's News



The quarterly magazine for the people of St Michael's Parish, Ashford

Issue 71

Feast of St Michael 2011

Our Lady's Statue

At long last the finishing alterations have been made to Our Lady's Statue in the presbytery garden.

The Statue is beautiful and it is good to see parishioners coming into the garden to pray to Our Lady. The legacy given to St Michael's Parish by May Champion RIP, who served as a housekeeper to the priests of the parish, has made it possible for the parish to purchase and erect the new Statue.

IN BRIEF

Adult Formation. I am delighted that Lee Gibson has generously accepted my invitation to serve as the Parish Catechist for Adult Formation. Lee is responsible for running the Rite of Initiation for Christian Adults (RCIA) which began in September with a dozen enquirers and she will co-ordinate other Adult Faith Formation courses and events. Lee is also responsible for running the new Baptismal Preparation Course to help parents prepare for the baptism of their child.

Liturgical changes. You will continue to see small changes in the way we celebrate the Mass over the next few weeks. The purpose behind these changes is to help us understand the sacredness of the Church's Liturgy, the meaning of the Sacrifice of the Mass, and the reverence that the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy demands from us.

New English translations of the Mass.

I hope that you are beginning to feel at home with the new English translations of the Mass. It is good to recover the biblical and patristic references of the original Latin texts. The new translations will help us to better understand the richness of the Mass and be a source of nourishment for us. I am grateful to a parishioner for the generous gift of a new Altar Missal which should reach us in time for Advent.

Parish Day of Recollection. There will be a Parish Day of Recollection to prepare for Advent at St Cuthman's Retreat Centre at Coolham, near Horsham on Saturday, 29th November. It will be a day of prayer and reflection and up to twenty parishioners will be able to participate. We will start at 10:15 am and finish by 4:00 pm. You will find more details in the narthex.

Re-establishing Friday penance. A key resolution of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, released after their May 2011 plenary meeting, was 'to re-establish the practice of Friday penance in the lives of the faithful as a clear and distinctive mark of their own Catholic identity.'

This act of common witness came into effect from Friday 16 September 2011 - the day when the Church in England and Wales marked the anniversary of the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to the United Kingdom. Let us joyfully accept the Church's invitation to practise Friday penance and abstinence.

From the Register – July – Sept 2011

Baptisms: Alexis Henriques-Pontes, Beatrice Barber, Jack Tomkins, Alberto Giannotto, Benjamin Hill, Grace Mansfield, Charlotte Saunders, Oliver Lloyd, Lucia Loveridge, Serenity Sheppard, Nicholas Fleming, Patrick Munt, Co_or Clarke, Teddy Twichen, Byronie Hogan, Arabella Ghazarian.

Marriages: Patrick Colfer and Lindsay Martin, James Trafford and Emma Smith, Scott Bridgman and Carolyne Roche, Jason Boxter and Chantelle Herbert, Joseph Rainbow and Lucy Creed, Liam Charles and Dawn Shanley.

Deaths: Marjorie Read.

St Michael's Bible Study Group

A bible study group has recently been formed in the parish and will meet weekly to study the scriptures and pray together.

We meet on Monday evenings in the presbytery meeting room to study and discuss the readings for the following Sunday, starting at 7:30 pm and finishing at 9:00 pm. *All are welcome.* For further information please contact Lee Gibson on **01784 252194** or lee.gibson.2na@btinternet.com

Local hospital visits

If anyone in your family is in hospital and would like a hospital chaplain to visit them, please contact Frances Castledine for Ashford Hospital on **01784 884488** or Sr Mellitus for St Peter's Hospital on **01932 872000**. It is most helpful to the hospital chaplains to be informed of a new admission.

Sunday Bulletin

A bulletin is issued each week containing forthcoming events and other useful matters. If you would like an article to be included, contact Shenda Holmes before Friday 10:00 am on **01784 252263** or email: ashford@rcdow.org.uk .

Churches Together in Ashford and Stanwell

Festival 11 Eleven 'fun' events in eight June days! - Spelthorne Churches Together hosted a busy and varied programme of events intended to make contact with people who seldom, if ever, come to church. All the events were well attended, some were sold out and all the reports say that they actually were good fun, from street dancing through cinema shows to a Teddy Bears Picnic. A good way of getting to know some of the neighbours we are supposed to love.

Ashford Baptist Church

Rev Graham Coldman writes:

"Thanks for your prayerful interest and support. ABC will be closing their Warwick Road premises on 15th September with our last service being on Sunday 4th September being a baptismal service which is a very happy and appropriate way for us to end our meeting and worshipping on those premises. We will be worshipping at Clarendon Primary School for the next year while a new church building is constructed on the Church Road site. It is no longer considered viable to refurbish the Warehouse. We are grateful that in the meantime other mid-week activities are being hosted by local churches."

Christmas Publicity The usual four-page listing of church services in Spelthorne, with a Christian message, will soon be prepared for insertion in The Informer newspaper, which is delivered free to some 44,000 homes in the borough. Should our church be included? Could you contribute to the £100 cost? Offers please to **01784 456774**.

Canaan Ministries are, by God's grace, managing to balance their books, despite the difficulties being faced by all British Christian bookshops in these times. One very good piece of related news is that Spelthorne Council are re-grading the shop as a community tenant and not a commercial tenant.

Please remember Canaan Bookshop for your Christmas shopping. Lots of charity cards are already on display, as well as cribs, nativity scenes, Christian-themed decorations and Advent books. The shop helps to support the works of counselling and witness in Staines High Street.

East to West is a local registered charity with the aim of Bringing Hope to Young Lives through work in schools, with the police and with youngsters who have no secure homes. In the current financial climate East to West has had to lose three staff members. The work done is massively successful in helping young people to get their lives back on track, surely we, as Christians must try to help. Prayer is the first thing that East to West asks for, but of course money is the next-best practical help we can give. Regular, committed giving, even of small amounts, is invaluable for sound budgeting and realistic work planning. See www.easttowest.org.uk

More fun! 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' Wednesday 12 to Saturday 15 October 2011 at Staines Methodist Church (at right hand end of Riverside car park). A quality, visiting production, with local choir support. Bible study with a swing! More information and tickets: josephsmc@live.co.uk

January 2012 St Mary's Church Stanwell will host a Service of Light on Sunday 22 January at 6:30 pm, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. They always give us a warm welcome. Make a note of the date now.

Praying together A good way to experience shared prayer with Christians from other churches is the monthly meeting in St Joseph's chapel at 8:00 pm on the first Monday, come and see. (Second Monday if first is a Bank Holiday).

At Lambeth Palace a year ago Pope Benedict spoke to the Archbishop of Canterbury in these words:

"We continue today to pray for the gift of unity among Christians, knowing that the unity Christ willed for his disciples will come about in answer to prayer, through the action of the Holy Spirit, who ceaselessly renews the Church and guides her into the fullness of truth"

Sunday Friends - Welcome Back

After our summer break it's nice to welcome back our Sunday Friends children, to "the children's 9:30 am Mass." As always, we are very happy to welcome new children to come through to join us, so parents if your child hasn't come through to join us yet, now's the time. It's so easy, you simply turn up to the Sunday 9:30 am Mass with your child, or children, and at the start of Mass, Monsignor Jim will invite the children to walk through to Sunday Friends under the safe supervision of the Sunday Friends team.

Sunday Friends is aimed at children, aged from four years olds, through to until they make their First Holy Communion. All our directors, and all our helpers have been CRB checked and approved by the Diocese of Westminster, we help and encourage the children to explore and understand their faith, we strive very hard to bring the Gospel stories to life for the children, and to help strengthen their faith. Our aim is to stay true to the Gospel stories, but present

them in a child friendly way, so that the children understand the story, and then understand the message behind the story. So what can parents do to help us?

Top of our list is: Bring your child to the children's liturgy to join the Sunday Friends. The children enjoy learning about the Gospel stories through Sunday Friends.

New helpers most welcome: We are always actively looking for new helpers, so please feel free to volunteer your help; you will be made to feel most welcome! Our helpers are timetabled to help us on average, once every six weeks, the more helpers we have to support our children the better.

The helpers' role is relatively simple; you will join our pool of helpers, and will be added, in due course to our rota. The helpers' job is to assist the director of the day at the 9:30 am Mass by:

- (1) Arriving just after 9 am to help the director set up prior to our 9:30 am start.
- (2) Return to the main church for the start of the 9:30 am Mass.
- (3) Go through with the children to the church hall when Monsignor Jim invites the children to go through to Sunday Friends.
- (4) Help the children to go through to Sunday Friends safely and quietly, and take your seat.

The director then welcomes all, and leads the children in prayers, the Alleluia and will then give a lead in talk about the days Gospel story. The Gospel story is then read to the children. If the children are asked to colour in animations representing the days Gospel, the helpers will...

- (5) Settle the children at the pre-prepared colouring in tables.
- (6) At the end of the childrens' Mass, the helpers' escort the children back into our main church safely and quietly along with an Alter server and the director.

That's it, that's the wonderful work our helpers do, without them there would be no Children's liturgy, but we need more helpers to join our friendly team, we are a friendly team and you will only be asked to help in activities that you are happy to do.

Lastly a special thank you, for all the hard work our existing helpers and directors do to ensure our children have a liturgically rich and enjoyable child friendly Mass.

If you would like to know more, or if you would like to join us, please ring

Rob Andrews on: **01784 241105/07905 249266** or Maria Gaiger on: **01784 254819**.

Or simply give your details to a member of the Sunday Friends team.

East to West

A few months ago, a member of our parish wrote to the Parish Council expressing her surprise that the Council had not taken up a suggestion to help people in need during the prolonged freezing temperatures we experienced last November/December.

The parishioner directed us to a charity based in Egham, which meets the needs associated with a particular form of homelessness – that of the young. It covers our parish in Ashford and also surrounding areas in Staines, Windsor and Maidenhead. The charity is called East to West, and works with young people providing support at local schools, a supporting lodgings scheme, and a police community youth pastor.

The parishioner's suggestion is a positive one and the CEO of East to West, Andy Burns, has been invited to the Parish Council's next meeting on 27th September to talk about the charity's works, the issues it faces today, particularly following the withdrawal of grants, its plans for the future and how we as a parish can provide support. If you have any questions to ask Andy or would like any points to be raised by the Council, please contact me on gpullicino0503@yahoo.co.uk.

A Privilege to Serve at St Michael's

Would you like to become an Altar Server?

"Servers exercise a genuine liturgical ministry. They ought therefore to discharge their office with the sincere piety and decorum demanded by their ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people. They must have a deep sense of the spirit of the liturgy and be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner."

Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy 29

There is an excellent Altar Server's team at St Michael's who carry out their duties with dedication and pride.

As a Server you have a special ministry in the Church. It is your privilege to assist the priest at the Altar. This means that there is a certain way that is appropriate to behave. Remember that you are always part of the congregation even if you are sitting in a different place to them.

If you have received your First Holy Communion and come to Mass regularly you might be thinking of joining the Altar Server's Team.

Requirements for Altar Servers Candidates*

A Candidate should fulfil the following requirements:

- A strong desire to serve at the Altar of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.
 - Be an active member of the parish community and believe in the teachings of the Catholic Church.
 - Have already made their First Holy Communion.
 - Know all the prayers of the Mass.
-

- Know how to properly genuflect.
- Know how to make the sign of the Cross.
- Know how to receive Holy Communion in the correct manner.

**Adapted from a training course prepared by the Archconfraternity of Saint Stephen, the Altar servers Guild, as well as other material, for which we are grateful.*

Parents and guardians are asked to support the coordinator, team leaders and the servers in their duties. Servers will be expected to be part of a team and be prepared to learn and undertake a range of duties including being available to serve at any Mass. However the duty roster will try to take account of individual circumstances. Training will be provided.

If you are interested or would like more information please contact:

Heather Nolan **01784 256549** or email: **Heather@nolan75.freeseve.co.uk**

“How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord God of Hosts...” *Psalm 83*

I have been a tour guide at Westminster Cathedral for almost twenty years, for many of them as Tours Director, and in that time I must have taken thousands of visitors round, from the age of five to ninety-five.

I normally start with the group seated comfortably in the nave and talk about the style (Byzantine) and date (late Victorian) of the building with plenty of time for any questions they may have. Then we see our first mosaic – St Anthony preaching to the fishes, one of which carries a gold ring referring to the saint's ability to find lost things. And so to the nearby baptistry, and beside it the Chapel of St Gregory and St Augustine, and the conversion of England to Christianity, and where Cardinal Basil Hume is now buried.

After baptism and conversion we move to Ireland and St Patrick's Chapel, decorated with the shamrocks which the saint used to illustrate the Holy Trinity, and snakes which represent evil and which he is said to have expelled from Ireland. This provides the opportunity for the tale of the 'Last Snake of Ireland' which refused to leave until St Patrick built a wooden box and challenged it to get inside. Whereupon the saint locked the box and flung it into the Irish Sea, accounting for the high waves and frequently bad weather there as the snake tries to get out!

On to the very Byzantine St Andrew's Chapel and another stormy sea with twenty-nine sea creatures on the marble floor and mosaic fish-scales on the ceiling, for St Andrew was a fisherman (as well as being patron saint of Scotland). St Paul's Chapel is next, and looking at the two chapels together from the aisle, visitors can see the difference between mosaic tesserae installed piece by piece, which glitters (St Andrew's), and that pre-prepared on paper in the studio, which doesn't (St Paul's).

Then to the Lady Chapel with its rosary held by angels, and Christ as the Tree of Life above the altar. Also lots of animals in mosaic including several UFIs (unidentified flying insects). Now past the sanctuary with its great blue arch mosaic showing Christ, the four evangelists and the twelve apostles against a background of a thousand little angels' faces – the Host of Heaven. The Blessed Sacrament Chapel is next with lots of symbols such as the peacock (immortality), phoenix (resurrection) and pelican (sacrifice).

Past the Chapel of St Thomas Becket where the tomb of Cardinal Vaughan, the Cathedral's founder, lies, to St Joseph's Chapel which was completed in 2006. Then to the Chapel of St George and the English Martyrs with the reliquary of a martyred priest (St John Southworth) whose body lies in a glass sarcophagus. And finally to the Holy Souls Chapel with its themes of death, purgatory and redemption. I usually end the tour at the statue of St Peter, where those who wish to, can touch his foot and perhaps light a candle.

Parish tour of Westminster Cathedral

Sunshine, blue skies and hardly a cloud in sight, the perfect start to a perfect day as a group of eight parishioners from St Michael's church travelled up to Westminster Cathedral in July.

On arrival we were met by our tour guide who showed us around the inside of the Cathedral and told us a little bit about the history of the church. After the hour long tour we all retired to the Cathedral kitchen for some refreshments.

The trip was organised by Lee Gibson of the Parish Council.

Shortly to retire, Fr Tim Dean looks back

I am just about to retire from Westminster Cathedral and I have been reflecting on my curious life story for the benefit of the people there and here in Ashford, who might be interested.

My second look at the priesthood

I trained for the priesthood late in life, influenced by a great man of our diocese, the late Fr Michael Hollings MC. "Why not?" he said when, in 1986, I asked him if I should put myself forward. I had been 'in formation' once before, aged 19, at Oscott College, near Birmingham, but withdrew after two years in 1962. Too young for it. I then exchanged my Devon home for London, where I worked on the creative side of advertising. At 30, I set off for a similar post in Hong Kong, living there for 12 happy years.

Boys and girls – go east and learn Chinese!

I think all English youngsters should work overseas for a while. It helps you see your own country in a totally new light. Leaving HK in 1984, I worked for a while in the Gulf, before Cardinal Basil Hume sent me to the Pontifical Beda College, Rome. In 1992 he ordained me at Buckfast Abbey, as my mother was in nearby Exeter and getting a bit frail. That's how thoughtful the Cardinal was.

When I left St Michael's, Ashford some eight or nine years ago I had only been there a year and done nothing very memorable except get your little statue of the Archangel Michael mounted on a meeting room wall. Oh yes, and I changed the front door to the white one you see now. Little did I realise I was destined to return to Westminster Cathedral where I have been a Chaplain ever since.

My Cathedral years really go back to 1992.

The first time I left the Cathedral in 1998, I had been a Cathedral Chaplain for six years after my ordination at 50. Leaving this time, I will have been there another eight years since a successful heart bypass in 2003 (immediately after St Michael's). That surgery apart, a miracle of modern medicine, the nursing care at the Royal Brompton Hospital was unforgettable. Those specialist nurses are top-of-the-range and had me wondering why I had never married, but I couldn't stay, they needed the bed.

Many are surprised that at 69 I am retiring. It's because my left leg is playing up and can be quite troublesome. So the diocese has made arrangements that will, I hope, enable me to manage the condition. I pray that it will improve, by the Lord's grace and the intercession of Our Lady of Westminster and Lourdes. So I'm going to live in Rickmansworth, Herts.

Cathedral flair

I have been asked what I'll miss most when I am no longer at the Cathedral.

"*The music*" is my instinctive reply. There are always three professional organists, of the highest calibre, playing there on one of the finest large organs in the country, week in, week out. With over a century of choral tradition under one outstanding Master of Music after another, currently Martin Baker, the cathedral of our diocese holds an unrivalled world reputation for Catholic liturgical music of impeccable provenance. (I'm not sure many Catholics realise how extraordinary this is). I'll also miss the many kind and interesting folk I have got to know over the years. I can also say the same about St Michael's, Ashford.

Now St Michael's is looking its best

Ashfordians were always very kind and helpful to me. I rejoice in everything that Mgr Jim Overton has had done in reordering your church and making it even more beautiful and fit-for-purpose than it was before. Even I could see, along with many parishioners, that certain things needed doing some years back. But maybe the Holy Spirit sent Father Jim to ensure that project would be done properly. Now it is all done it won't need fussing over for at least a generation. I can't wait to see the new floor!

Bless you

With the school year beginning again, I'd like to wish all the young people in St Michael's parish every success in the year ahead. I'll pray for you and to all other Ashford parishioners. Let's keep each other in our prayers.

A Very Happy Septuagenarian!

In May the Parish Council took Mgr Jim out for a meal at La Bettola in Colnbrook to celebrate being seventy years young, it was a lovely occasion. He was presented with a Kindle as a gift, which, as you can see, was thrilled to receive.

St Thérèse of Lisieux – Virgin and Doctor of the Church

Thérèse Martin was born at Alençon in 1873. Whilst very young, she felt that God had a vocation for her in a convent. The death of her mother, when she was four, followed by the death of her father, after years in a mental hospital, hastened her early entry into the Carmelite convent at Lisieux in Normandy. She wrote the Secret of Sanctity, Spiritual Childhood, Praying for Others, Charity, and the Joy of Suffering to mention just a few. When she was twenty-four years old she died of tuberculosis. After her death all her writings were put together and copies sent to other convents. Thérèse's "little way" of simple trust and love for God, trusting in Jesus to make her holy and relying on small daily sacrifices instead of great deeds, appealed to many who were trying to find holiness in ordinary life. She was canonised in 1925. In recognition of her special teaching mission she was proclaimed a doctor of the church. She is the patron saint of the missions.

Her feast day is 3rd October.

Prayer

O my God! I offer Thee all my actions of this day for the intentions and for the glory of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. I desire to sanctify every beat of my heart, my every thought, my simplest works, by uniting them to Its infinite merits; and I wish to make reparation for my sins by casting them into the furnace of Its Merciful Love.

O my God! I ask of Thee for myself and for those whom I hold dear, the grace to fulfil perfectly Thy Holy Will, to accept for love of Thee the joys and sorrows of this passing life, so that we may one day be united together in heaven for all Eternity.

Amen.

Malta's Long Christian Legacy

Last August, my wife and I went on holiday on a tiny island in the middle of the Mediterranean called Malta. Malta is steeped in history, having been occupied by many powers over the centuries from the Phoenicians, to the Carthaginians, the Normans, the Arabs, the Romans, the Knights of St John, the French under Napoleon Bonaparte, and until 1964, the British. Among its attractions, Malta also has beautiful azure seas, wonderful beaches, some of the oldest megalithic temples in the world and a good mix of architecture reflecting its culturally rich past, and still evident today in its splendid churches.

One memory we brought back with us was the feast of St Helena celebrated in the town of Birkirkara. St Helena was the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine and throughout her life sought to discover the True Cross of Our Lord. St Helena never gave up and finally found the Holy Cross when she was well in her eighties. The feast day falls on 18 August.

We went to Birkirkara on the morning of Sunday 21 August to see and experience a 'festa' when the whole town is decorated in colour, banners, and lights, and the local church is adorned with beautiful red damask covering the walls. Unlike all other festas on the island, this is uniquely held in the morning, under a blue sky with the sun beating down – but the locals and tourists who thronged to participate in the event were clearly not deterred one second from the celebrations.

The 'festa' is a very traditional Maltese event in which the statue of the patron saint of the town or village is taken out of its niche in the church and taken out in procession through the main streets of the town or village. The atmosphere is unique, crowds of people, hawkers lined up along different parts of the town selling ice-cream, local cakes and pastries, nougat etc, people all in joyful and festive mood celebrating a special day in their calendar: the feast day of their patron saint. A band from another town is invited to play marches throughout the 3-hour procession adding to the noise and festive atmosphere, while fireworks regularly bang away in the morning sky. The highlight of the 'festa' is when the statue of St Helena is about to return back to the church. While the statue is stationary facing the church, the band plays the Hymn to St Helena, after which the locals enthusiastically cheer their patron saint as the 8 people carrying the statue over their shoulders suddenly run some 20m from the square up a ramp towards the main entrance of the church. It sends the crowds wild with enthusiasm, clapping and calling out St Helena's name while some wipe away their tears clearly overcome by emotion.

It was a wonderful experience to see a very different aspect to celebrating the patron saint of the town. There is a strong influence of the local culture, traditions and generally a Mediterranean way of celebrating and doing things. The procession itself offered much to see: different confraternities in procession, the cantor, the canons of the basilica of St Helena, the Florentine-like character carrying the mace symbolising the status of 'basilica' of the local parish church, a huge umbrella adorned in the town's yellow and red colours adorned with scenes from St Helena's life, and finally in the procession line, the statue of St Helena itself.

These are traditions that one still sees in Catholic countries, particularly in Italy, Spain, parts of Austria, Germany and some Latin American countries. All have their own way of celebrating their own 'feast day'. They are a testimony to the faith of a nation or town and the accumulation of hundreds of years that come together in an explosive mix of colour, festive noise, religion, art, food, people, music, culture, history and tradition. How might this go down in Ashford, I wonder...!

Serving your Parish by Volunteering

Often many people use the start of a new year to review the past and to make commitments for a better future. Can I suggest that as the memories and long days of summer fade and with the commencement of a new school term, now is a good time to renew your faith in an active way by making a commitment to serve your parish community.

St Michael's is blessed with many parishioners who give their time and serve with gladness to the Lord, but we need help from so many more. Whatever your interest or talent, we have a place to welcome you.

Musical? Channel your 'X-factor' into our folk group. Good with words? Our bidding prayer writing team would love to hear from you! A parent who'd like to help your child grow in their faith? Our Sunday Friends, Followers, First Holy Communion and Confirmation catechist teams are all depleted and in desperate need of new volunteers.

These are just a few of the opportunities and there are many ways to become involved at St Michael's. From my own personal experience, I've found volunteering a great way of enriching my faith as well as meeting new friends.

So, open your heart to the Holy Spirit and let the call of service to your parish move you to action!

By thunder... it's St Michael's School Sports Day!

After the hottest day of the year to date on Monday 27 June with temperatures soaring to 30 degrees, followed by some spectacular thunder and lightening directly over the town the day after; we must have been wondering what the weather had in store for St Michael's Sports Day on the Wednesday. *Fortunately, it turned out rather nice!*

'Marriage is a public good' *Archbishop of Westminster*

Parishioners from St Michael's were among the 543 married couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries who have taken part in a special Mass for Matrimony at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 11 June 2011 at 3 pm.

The Mass was celebrated by the Most Reverend Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster who, in his homily, praised the recent Royal Wedding and highlighted the public good which marriage brings to society.

He said "*Marriage is not simply something done in church by a few. Marriage is not a private arrangement. Rather marriage expresses our deepest longings and expectations for ourselves, for our children and for our society*".

The Mass was attended by couples celebrating their 10th, 25th, 40th, 50th or 60th + wedding anniversaries during 2011 who gathered to give thanks, renew their vows and pray for their families and all marriages. As part of the Mass, after the homily, the couples faced each other and stated their intention to continue to love one another, and were then solemnly blessed by Archbishop Vincent Nichols.

Afterwards in the bright sunshine of the piazza, he met with many couples who greeted one another and exchanged congratulations.

Regular Events

Sundays: Charismatic Prayer Group, St Joseph's Chapel, 7:00 pm

Alternate Wednesdays: Folk Group practice, St Joseph's Chapel, 7:30 pm

Thursdays: Rosary Group, St Joseph's Chapel, 7:00 pm

Alternate Thursdays: Ladies Circle, 8:00 pm, Parish Hall

Saturdays: Antique Fair (3rd Saturday of month)

Usual service times

Sunday Masses

Saturday 6:00 pm (first Mass of Sunday), 9:30 am (including Children's Liturgy of the Word), 11:30 am and 6:00 pm

Weekday Masses

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9:15 am Saturday 9:30 am *No Mass on Thursdays*

Holy Days of Obligation Masses

9:30 am and 8:00 pm

Eucharistic Adoration

Saturday 10:00 – 10:30 am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 10:30 – 11:00 am

Sacrament of Baptism

Contact the Parish Secretary on 01784 252263 or ashford@rcdow.org.uk

Old Man Parking Blues

*Having a car is a liability
you drive around 'ad infinity'.
For sure you can't park it just anywhere
and it'll cost you much more than a bus fare.*

*There are many Wardens to keep you in place
and why is it they always win the race
to give you a ticket for parking too long.
We wouldn't mind if we'd done something wrong!*

*It's thirty five quid if you pay up in time
but double the price if you haven't a dime!
There is a solution - get rid of your car.
Without it though, you wouldn't get far!*

*Repair Bills and Road Tax and Insurance too
are draining our wages and bank, it's true,
which leaves little money to fill up the tank
and for that we have the Pound's value to thank!*

*No Waiting, No Entry, No Access, of course,
we would be much better off riding a horse!
You can't go this way and you can't go that,
if you're riding a motorbike, you must wear a hat!*

*The car parks are full of 'Disabled Bays'
and 'Mother and Child' - (Their little 'rays')
There are single and double lines everywhere
but if you've a 'Badge' you haven't a care!*

*Though for mortals like us who are mobile indeed,
there is little sympathy for what we need.
We've been driving around for such a long while,
we've a permanent frown and no longer a smile!*

*We could always travel on a bus or the train
and like the 'ad' says, 'it will take the strain'
The only thing is, it will cost us a packet
and just like Road Tax, it's a bit of a 'racket!'*

*So I'm off to the Scrap yard to pulverise 'it'
and I know without it I'll be very fit.
I've been to the Town Hall to get my Bus Pass
and so I'll travel in style for as long as I last!*

Roger Houlding

Local Catholic schools

St Michael's RC Primary School (Age 5-11) Feltham Hill Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2DG
Tel: 01784 253333 www.st-michaels.surrey.sch.uk

Our Lady of the Rosary RC Primary School (Age 5-11)
Park Avenue, Staines, Middlesex TW18 2EF Tel: 01784 453539 www.ourlady.surrey.sch.uk

St Ignatius RC Primary School
(Age 5-11) Green Street, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex TW16 6QG Tel: 01932 785396
www.st-ignatius.surrey.sch.uk

St Paul's Catholic College
(age 11-18) The Ridings, Green Street, Sunbury-on-Thames, Middlesex
TW16 6NX Tel: 01932 783811 www.st-pauls.surrey.sch.uk

Salesian School (age 11-18)
Guildford Road Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9LU Tel: 01932 582520 www.salesian.surrey.sch.uk

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