



# OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC CHURCH

A FAIRTRADE PARISH

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## SUNDAY, 10 JANUARY 2021 THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Cycle B)

### THE SPIRIT, THE WATER & THE BLOOD

Occasionally in history events happen which don't just affect the people involved but change the outlook of an entire generation. Think Black Death, Great War, Hiroshima, JFK's assassination ... Each one an epoch-making tragedy. Has Covid-19 been another of those moments? Not only the capacity of the NHS has been tested to the limits but also our economic model. Our assumptions about what constitutes the good life have been questioned. It turns out: that both our trading patterns and our wanderlust globalise disease transmission; that habitat destruction puts humans in dangerous proximity to new species; that factory-farming invites cross-species transmission of pathogens and the growth of bacterial immunity to antibiotics; in other words, that there's no such thing as a free lunch.

Theology also has to respond to such shocks – chiefly by going back to its sources. In this Sunday's second reading, when St. John speaks of the trio of *'the Spirit, the water and the blood'* (1 Jn 5.6-8) it is **the blood** which he underlines (probably because some in his community were beginning to deny that Jesus really died – precisely because he was divine – see Jn 19.34-5; 20.24-9). They were comfortable with 'the Spirit' and 'the water', the realm of religious experience and sacraments. They just didn't want that bloody ending. But Christianity, says John, is not an idea. It's a relationship with a person, and that person had veins (through which corona viruses doubtless flowed). Divinity is met not in some ideal world elsewhere but here and now in our fight against this damned virus and in our attempt to heal our ecosystem. *"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us"* – and still does, precisely there, in our spirit, our tears and our blood.

- Fr. Rob

#### MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

**Sat** 6pm Lilian Child RIP  
**Sun** 9am Brenden McEnhill RIP

**Streamed Mass (online only):**

**Sun** 10.15am People of the Parish

Mon 9.30am Joyce Austin RIP  
Tue 9.30am Jeff McCormack RIP

**Wed 9.30-10am Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament & Rosary**

Thu 9.30am Private Intention  
Fri 9.30am Holy Souls

**Sat** 6pm People of the Parish  
**Sun** 9am Marion Gonsalves RIP

**Streamed Mass (online only):**

**Sun** 10.15am Private Intention

**We commend to the Lord** Marion Gonsalves, David Porter and Jeff McCormack, who have died recently; and Isabel Knowles, Karine Harrison, Carol Lee, John Kilner, Romao Mendonca, Anthony McCaffery and Lino D'Mello, whose anniversaries of death fall this week.

**January Prayer Intentions:** for the staff and students of our schools, colleges and universities; for our parish *LiveSimply Award* application and our own 'ecological conversion' to caring for our planet; for Pope Francis' own *"Intention for evangelization - Human fraternity: May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all."*

**Prayers needed?** A book of prayer intentions is placed on the altar at all masses. If you'd like a name or intention added to the book, phone / e-mail Fr. Rob.

This Sunday is **the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord** (using the optional readings for 'Year B' – Isa 55.1-11; Isa 12.2-6 (as canticle); 1 Jn 5.1-9; Mk 1.7-11). **'Ordinary Time'** (**Year B** on Sundays, **Year 1** on weekdays) begins this Monday.

**The Growing Parish Family:** This Sunday we would normally have invited all the families who have had children baptised in the last year to come back for a blessing (and to send a photograph of their bonny offspring for display!). Of course, we can't host parties at present, but we certainly pray with gratitude for George, Ryan, Hugh, Louis, Elena, Benedykt, Joseph Yu Yuan, Patrick, Ella, Rory, James, Martha, Barney, Jan and Blake, and pray also for their parents as they share with them the joy of the Gospel.

**Our Crib Collection** (for **Catholic Children's Society** Emergency Crisis Fund for families) finishes this Sunday

**Lockdown, Sanitising and Sanity:** Perhaps to our surprise, public worship is allowed to continue in lockdown, but with the provisos that we must give adequate attention to **sanitising** and **social distancing**. In particular, **we must not interact socially with those not in our own social bubble**. We have heard of several cases of Covid-19 among parishioners in recent weeks. If you are vulnerable, please consider participating online via our livestreams on *YouTube* – especially at weekends. Weekday masses are usually attended by a smaller number of people so may feel more Covid-secure. Once again, we need to ask for younger volunteers (i.e. those not classed as vulnerable because of their age) to steward if services are to take place and the church is to remain open.

**Sacramental Preparation:** Group meetings are not allowed at present and, with the general uncertainty regarding future arrangements, we have decided to put off the programme of preparation for both **First Communion and Confirmation** until later in the year. Parents should have received a letter regarding our First Communion timetable (which will be concentrated in the summer term) in recent days. Confirmation candidates will also be contacted shortly. We haven't forgotten you!

**Are you greener than you were last year?** We are nearing the end of the **Livesimply Award** process and would like to capture the progress we are making as a parish community in making greener choices and taking greener actions. To help us, please take a few minutes to fill in this very short survey: <https://bit.ly/3bc3Eml>.

**What can our parishes do to help end food poverty in the UK?** 10 years ago, who would have thought that there would be a need for a Foodbank here in East Elmbridge? Yet now it is an essential support for some, while nationally, in 6 months, the Trussell Trust network issued 1.2 million emergency food parcels. The diocesan Justice & Peace Assembly is offering a **free Webinar next Saturday from 10am-12.30pm**, with a range of presentations by speakers from the diocese & beyond. See <https://abdiocese.org.uk/news/justice-peace-webinar>.

**Live-Streaming:** We are now streaming entirely via our YouTube account (as more accessible and viewable directly on 'smart TVs'), but continue to post reminders and hymn-sheets on Facebook each week. Please 'subscribe' to our YouTube account <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC2-PqplmHXq9iGePDKmmcbw/videos?view=57> and 'like' our parish Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/olchurch.org.uk> (which we shall continue to use as a noticeboard for communications).

**Parenting For Faith:** If you've enjoyed the **Colour and Shape** children's liturgy videos produced by Eleanor Oliver over recent months (and posted on our parish Facebook page), you might wish to visit the new website at [www.colourandshapeonline.com](http://www.colourandshapeonline.com) where you can subscribe to a course on 'parenting for faith'.

**The Blessing Cup That We Bless:** Fr. Rob has a reflection on the withdrawal of sharing the cup as a result of the pandemic on *The Tablet* blogsite. For a generation and more, the presence of lay Eucharistic Ministers on the sanctuary made visible the nature of our community as a ministering community. Now unshared, the chalice gives visual expression to our deepest thirst. Read it at <https://bit.ly/38gOb2H>. (Needless to say, it is not that we no longer value the role of our lay ministers of the Eucharist - only public health concern has imposed the current restrictions - and taking the Eucharist to people in their homes is currently problematic for the same reason.)

**Journey In Faith:** Have you been worshipping with our community for years (as spouse of a parishioner or parent at St. Paul's) and yet no one has asked you whether you'd like to be a Catholic? Or have you bumped into OLOL parish in some other way and something resonated with your story? Or was it something the Pope said ...? Or having a re-think because of Covid-19? Whatever your story, contact Fr. Rob to talk about where the Lord might be leading you.

**Opposition To Assisted Suicide:** Catholic medical and social ethics remains resolutely opposed to assisted suicide (which, as well as being incompatible with our belief that life is a gift from God, not to be ended arbitrarily, also risks pressuring the vulnerable and those who fear they may be 'a nuisance'). *Right To Life UK* believes that those campaigning for a change in the law will pressure government on the subject in coming months. They urge us to write to our MP to show that there is opposition to any relaxation of current rules and have offered a simple template: <https://righttolife.org.uk/StopAssistedSuicide>

**The House of Prayer** in Molesey have launched their 2021 programme: see <https://bit.ly/3m1G0Li>.

**Alone – or just looking for a new interest?** In exchange for a small annual fee, Elmbridge U3A offers a whole range of activities for 'those no longer in full-time employment', the chance to learn new skills and make new friends (whether online during the pandemic or face-to-face, usually), in order to live well in 'The Third Age'. See <https://u3asites.org.uk/elmbridge/welcome>.

We continue to support the **East Elmbridge Foodbank** and donations can be left in the church when it is open or at the presbytery. See lists on display of most-wanted items (And posters detailing how to obtain help). If you wish to make a donation to pay for wholesale supplies, go to [www.localgiving.org/east-elmbridge-foodbank](http://www.localgiving.org/east-elmbridge-foodbank).

**Phone A Friend:** Following Esther Rantzen's suggestion about the importance of ordinary conversation in helping people deal with current pressures, call someone today to check they are okay, especially if they might be alone or struggling. A friendly voice is nearly as good as a hug!

**In these winter days** as we wait for the vaccine to release us from social distancing, we are all the more in need of friendship and human contact. If you or anyone you know, would like a weekly chat with a friendly fellow parishioner, please email [visitingteam@olchurch.org.uk](mailto:visitingteam@olchurch.org.uk) and one of the visiting team will call you.

**Take Time Meditation** – find stillness and peace amidst the hassles of life. Every Monday at 8pm via zoom. Please email [meditations@olchurch.org.uk](mailto:meditations@olchurch.org.uk) for the link.

**FaithJustice** is a new movement which seeks to help young adults in their 20s and 30s discover the intimate connection between a life of faith and the struggle for justice in our world, launched by a group of Catholic organisations including Pax Christi. To find out more visit [www.faithjustice.org.uk](http://www.faithjustice.org.uk)

**Domestic Abuse:** The National Board of Catholic Women has produced an excellent booklet on the different forms of domestic abuse (physical, emotional, sexual, etc.), with statistics, details of relevant agencies, case studies, a summary of the law and Church teaching. Everyone has a right to live in physical and emotional safety – and to help when things go wrong. See <https://bit.ly/2Xhv0jg>.