



# OUR LADY OF LOURDES CATHOLIC CHURCH

A LIVESIMPLY and FAIRTRADE PARISH

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**SUNDAY, 16 MAY 2021**

**SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (Psalter Week 3, Cycle B)**

## WHERE LOVE IS GOD IS

In my youth, twee little cartoons were in vogue of a boy and a girl holding hands over various cheesy captions that began with the words, "Love is ..." The only one I can remember (because it annoyed me so much) was "Love is never having to say you're sorry" – an idiocy which would probably destine any relationship to failure. Real love is (amongst many other beautiful things) a profound desire to heal any hurt that we cause to the Beloved by thoughtlessness or harsh words.

Our culture would wish it otherwise, but there is actually something rather 'unromantic' about love – even the love of lovers, after passion's first flush. Being hit by Cupid's arrow is a wonderful thing; but emotion gets you only so far. Enduring love is fundamentally a decision and an act of will: it's what you do anyway when you don't feel particularly loving. Paul famously reminds us (1 Cor 13.4-7) that love's durability depends on a life of humble, truthful and forgiving care for each other. The consolations and delights of love flow from that – or so we dare to hope.

This Sunday's second reading (1 Jn 4.11-16) repeats the message we heard last week: "God is love;" and assures us that "to live in love is to live in God." A few hundred years after that was written, a poet turned that insight into a Latin chant: "Ubi caritas, Deus ibi est." Precisely because God is love, "wherever [authentic, unselfish] love is, there God is." How the Church would have been helped over the centuries had we taken these words more to heart. Instead of insisting that the only love that counts is married love (and condemning every other expression of love as 'sinful') we could have acknowledged the presence of grace even in the absence of that public pledging and blessing of relationship. That would certainly help us to encourage the young, whose path to commitment (and to getting a home of their own!) is so often slow and complicated nowadays. It would also allow a far more fruitful dialogue with LGBT+ couples and with anyone rebuilding their family life after the failure of a relationship.

The Church must still gently proclaim that human love usually reaches its full potential by being pledged unconditionally (by promises fittingly exchanged in church). But in our confused society, which often seems to live by the Creed, "Love is God," we need to point beyond the 'institution' of marriage to the grace that sustains it. "We ourselves have known and put our faith in God's love towards ourselves," says John. That is the foundation on which we build: a trust that, in Christ, God comes both to dwell in us and to love through us.

- Fr. Rob

### MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

**Streamed Masses can be viewed at:** <https://bit.ly/2Lu1sN4>

Sat	6pm	Pauline Mascolo Int.
Sun	9am	Sabene Burger RIP
	10.45am	People of the Parish
Mon	9.30am	Lionel Ede RIP
Tue	9.30am	Neville & Penny Ransley (unwell)
Wed	9.30am	<b>Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament &amp; Rosary</b>
Thu	9.30am	Special Intention
Fri	9.30am	Joyce Bull RIP
Sat	6pm	People of the Parish
Sun	9am	Special Intention
	10.45am	Private Intention

**We commend to the Lord** all who have died; especially Maureen Curran, Veronica Davies and Liz Boullin, whose anniversaries of death fall this week.

**Parish Prayer Intentions For May:** That each of us may have a renewed attentiveness to the Holy Spirit in our lives and prepare in prayer for Pentecost; for the families preparing their children for first sacraments (baptism, first reconciliation, first communion); for our young people preparing for Confirmation; for Pope Francis' own prayer-intention for the month: "that those in charge of finance will work with governments to regulate the financial sphere and protect citizens from its dangers."

**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 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter, celebrated as World Communications Day. There is a **retiring collection** for the **Catholic Communications Network**, which coordinates media relations and web-based media for our Bishops' Conference.

**Preparing For Pentecost:** The 10 days from the Ascension of the Lord (last Thursday) to Pentecost (next Sunday) should be a period of intense prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit (as at that first Christian Pentecost - see Acts 1.6-14). One way of entering into this is to join in **Thy Kingdom Come** prayer project during these days. Originally launched in the Anglican Church but now ecumenical and worldwide, it invites us to pray each day (a) that our own relationship with Jesus may be deepened, (b) for 5 friends or family members, that they may come to faith, (c) for the empowerment of the Holy Spirit that would make us good witnesses to the Gospel. See <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

**May is by tradition 'The Month Of Mary'**. Pope Francis has asked us to pray this month especially for an end to the pandemic – and invites us to pray the Rosary for this intention.

**This Sunday** is the culmination of **National Marriage Week** from **May 10-16**. Let's use that as an opportunity to give thanks for married love, to ask God's blessing on our relationships, to pray for the healing of hurts, to renew the promises and the trust that are at the heart of our family life.

**This is Laudato Si' Week 2021** (May 16-24), the crowning event of the Special *Laudato Si'* Anniversary Year (marking 5 years since the publication of Pope Francis' great (and easily readable!) 2015 letter on '*Caring For Our Common Home*' – copies of which are available in the Narthex.) and a celebration of the great progress the whole Church has made on its journey to ecological conversion. It is also a time to reflect on what the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us and to prepare for the future with hope. To find out more see <https://laudatosiweek.org/>

**We want to say a big thank you** to all who have continued to keep our finances healthy by continuing their standing orders throughout this last year. We are extremely grateful. Going forward standing orders are our preferred method of donation; if you would like to set up a new one there is a form with our bank details on our website, alongside a gift aid declaration form <https://olchurch.co.uk/give>.

**Alternatively you may donate via our Collectins** for contactless payments (or chip and pin) – they have now been updated and cards can be registered for gift aid; we would encourage you to register your card as this enables us to claim 25p in every £1 donated to Diocesan collections and our Offertory. This can also be accessed on the parish website at <https://olchurch.co.uk/give> using the Donate button where you can make a payment and register your card if you are unable to make it to the church.

**An Invitation To Read:** As we return to having 3 'Sunday Eucharists' each weekend it is an opportunity to reflect on the importance of the 'Ministry of the Word' in our worship. Do you love words? Do you love the Word of God? Could you proclaim it convincingly to our Eucharistic assembly? If you would like to join our **readers' rota** (especially at the **10.45am** mass), please contact the parish office. If you are already a reader, you are invited (with would-be readers, too) to a **one-off training session** at Christ the Prince of Peace Church, Portmore Way, Weybridge KT13 8JD **on Tuesday, June 1 at 7.30pm**. The evening will be led by Nicholas Lee, an English teacher by profession, with long experience as a reader in church. Contact the office if you would like to attend.

**Save the date:** We plan to have **one Open Air Mass on Sunday, June 27 at 10.30am** (replacing 9am and 10.45am masses), the first Sunday after the planned final easing of lockdown regulations.

**Baptism Preparation:** From May 17 it should be possible to celebrate baptisms again (in small-scale celebrations). So if you have a child awaiting baptism please contact Fr. Rob or the parish office.

**First Communion:** It is wonderful to have begun our preparations for First Reconciliation (in July) and First Communion (in November). Please pray for the children and their families as they learn more about the wonderful gift that Jesus gives us in the Eucharist – the gift of himself to feed us and strengthen us.

**Confirmation:** Covid-19 has prevented us from meeting until now, so thanks to everyone for your patience while we established what we could do and when. We invite the young people in Year 10 or above who have registered their interest, together with their parents, to attend an introductory meeting in church **at 6pm next Sunday, Pentecost**, at which we'll explain the programme, the commitment involved and the ways we'll explore our Catholic faith together, using videos, speakers, discussion and prayer. Given the belated start (Bishop Richard has fixed our deanery date for celebrating the sacrament as September 17-18—straight after the summer break!) we're very dependent on everyone committing to the journey and supporting each other on the path. We are equally dependent on the prayers and encouragement of the whole parish for our fine young people, their families and their catechists, Charlotte, Georgie, Jo and Paul. May the Holy Spirit fire them up and inspire them all.

**Celebrating Reconciliation:** If you wish to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation call Fr. Rob to arrange a time.

**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.

**CAFOD Parliament in your Parish** is about engaging with our MPs to plan a better post-COVID world. This year the UK hosts both the G7 meeting of rich countries, discussing overseas Debt & Aid, and the Cop26 Climate Summit. It's important to hold our politicians accountable after the Pandemic to rebuild in a way that addresses the world's most pressing ecological and social issues. CAFOD invites Catholics of all ages to join a Zoom meeting with their MPs to discuss climate change, debt, aid budget, and to encourage our MPs to take actions. Email [jfinlayson@cafod.org.uk](mailto:jfinlayson@cafod.org.uk) to join (with the name of your MP). See <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Reclaim>

**Fundraiser for Pax Christi:** From 15-21 May, Pax Christi members, supporters and friends are participating in a range of activities to raise funds for lost income due to Covid19. See [www.paxchristi.org.uk/register-you-interest](http://www.paxchristi.org.uk/register-you-interest) for details on how to sponsor them.

**2021 - A year of opportunity:** Online talk with Christine Allen, Director of CAFOD, 26 May at 7.30pm, Cost £5. This year the UK hosts the G7 and the Climate Conference (COP26). Christine will explore ways these events could make a difference to our world, especially to the lives of people who live in poverty. She will reflect on the impact of COVID-19 and draw lessons for the future for our interdependence with one another and with our natural world as we seek to recover and heal after the pandemic. Book: <https://bit.ly/2QbYG1f> / T: 01428 642161

**The London Jesuit Centre** offers opportunities for prayer: [Saturday Retreats](#) (next one is 19 June); [Retreats in Daily Life](#) in June and in July; Brian Purfield's [Introduction to the Bible](#) begins on 21 June (morning or evening classes). Book online for these or many other events at: [www.londonjesuitcentre.org](http://www.londonjesuitcentre.org).