

THE CATHOLIC PASTORAL PARTNERSHIP OF  
BIDDULPH, GOLDENHILL, KIDSGROVE & PACKMOOR  
*UNDER THE PATRONAGE AND PROTECTION OF OUR LADY OF GRACE*

# SUNDAY BULLETIN

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME

SUNDAY 23RD JULY 2023

## A WORD FROM THE PARISH PRIEST

I want to begin my words today with an apology. On Tuesday evening last week, the closing liturgy of the Visitation of the North Staffs Deanery took place at St Gregory's Longton. Until this moment, the priests had been instructed not to let everyone know the results and recommendations from the Visitation. I was fully aware of what the Visitation report said about our parishes, but refrained from discussing its contents with parishioners. The Visitation report recommends the closure of two of our churches: St John's and St Patrick's. It also recommends the amalgamation of our three parishes into one canonical parish. I was led to believe, by Bishop Stephen, at the time of the Visitation, that any such closures would be communicated to the pa-

rishioners directly. In other words, that he would come and speak at Mass about it before it was announced. As it happened, an announcement was made at the liturgy for the closure of the Visitation, and I only knew that this would be announced publicly on the day before. I was dismayed by how it was announced at a public meeting (even though everyone from our parishes was invited to be present).

It may be that you heard from a news item on Radio Stoke or by others sharing the information. And so I apologise, because you should have heard it from me or the Archbishop or one of his representatives first.

Anyway, the news is out there now. A recent document, prepared by the

Diocesan Chancellor, Fr Ray Corbett, details the way in which parish mergers and church closures are to be done in accordance with Canon Law. It places the emphasis on the parish priest and the community. And so we will take up what we are being asked to do, and will meet and talk about it. However, we will let the news sink in first during the summer, and come to the practicalities once we reach the autumn. I know this is an upsetting piece of news for those who are attached to St John's or St Patrick's. Let us pray for our partnership of parishes that, in spite of the sadness, we might trust in God's providence and remain faithful to the Lord, and to his Church, which is always bigger than any individual church building.

## SAINT OF THE WEEK



**St John Cassian**  
360-435

John was a monk who crossed the boundary between the western and eastern Church. He went to Palestine and joined a community of hermits near Bethlehem. He then went to the monasteries of Egypt and spent years there, but ended out fleeing as he entered on a theological

dispute with the Patriarch. So he went to Constantinople and appealed for protection from St John Chrysostom. Here he was ordained deacon before moving to Rome. He was then asked to found a monastic community in Marseilles, which served as a model for western monasteries. He was a great influence on St Benedict.

### CHURCHES

**Biddulph** English Martyrs' Church, Church Road, Biddulph, ST8 6NE

**Goldenhill** St Joseph's Church, High Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 5RD

**Kidsgrove** St John the Evangelist's Church, The Avenue, Kidsgrove, ST7 1AE

**Packmoor** St Patrick's Church, Mellor Street, Packmoor, Stoke-on-Trent, ST7 4SN

### PARISH PRIEST

Rev Fr Julian C Green  
St Joseph's Presbytery  
715 High Street  
Stoke-on-Trent ST6 5RD  
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fr.julian.green@rcaob.org.uk

### Parish Secretary

Teresa Harding  
Tel: (01782) 782121  
Email:  
OLG.parishes@rcaob.org.uk  
Office Hours: Mon, Tues, Fri  
9am to 3.30pm. Weds, Thurs  
9am to 1pm.

### Safeguarding

Please see the safeguarding section in the main body of the bulletin.

### Website

[www.partnershipparishes.org](http://www.partnershipparishes.org)

### Diocesan Website

[birminghamdiocese.org.uk](http://birminghamdiocese.org.uk)

*The Parishes are part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity no. 234216*

# MASSES & SERVICES THIS WEEK

	Biddulph	Goldenhill	Kidsgrove	Packmoor	<b>Sacrament of Forgiveness (Confessions)</b> <b>St Joseph's</b> Sun 10.30am <b>English Martyrs'</b> Sun 8.30am <b>St John's</b> Sat 6pm <b>St Patrick's</b> Sun before Mass on request	
<b>Saturday 22nd</b>			6.30pm		Holy Mass of Sunday	John Martin
<b>Sunday 23rd</b> <b>Sixteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time</b> <i>Day of Prayer for Grandparents</i>	9.00am	11.00am		6.30pm	Holy Mass Holy Mass Holy Mass	People of the Parishes Frank & Betty Smithson Philip Clarke
<b>Monday 24th</b> St Charbel		6.00pm			Holy Mass	Michael & Maureen Meaney & family
<b>Tuesday 25th</b> <b>St James</b>	9.15am			2.15pm	Holy Mass Holy Rosary	Holy Souls
<b>Wednesday 26th</b> Ss Joachim & Anna						
<b>Thursday 27th</b> Feria						
<b>Friday 28th</b> Feria						
<b>Saturday 29th</b> Ss Martha, Mary & Lazarus			6.30pm		Holy Mass of Sunday	Peter Convey
<b>Sunday 30th</b> <b>Seventeenth Sunday of Ordinary Time</b>	9.00am	11.00am		6.30pm	Holy Mass Holy Mass Holy Mass	Catherine Lavin Michael & Maureen Meaney & family People of the Parishes
<b>Monday 31st</b> St Ignatius Loyola		6.00pm	12.30pm		Wedding Service Holy Mass	Phillip Sampey & Georgina Hewitt Paul McGough
<b>Tuesday 1st</b> St Alphonsus Liguori	9.15am			2.15pm	Holy Mass Holy Rosary	Holy Souls
<b>Wednesday 2nd</b> St Peter Julian Eymard		6.00pm			Holy Mass and Veneration of the Relic	Bernard Cunningham
<b>Thursday 3rd</b> Feria	12noon				Holy Mass	Holy Souls
<b>Friday 4th</b> <b>St John Mary Vianney</b>		9.30am			Holy Mass and Veneration of the Relic	Int Society of St John Mary Vianney
<b>Saturday 5th</b> Dedication St Mary Major			6.30pm		Holy Mass of Sunday	Thomas & Joan Warham
<b>Sunday 6th</b> <b>Eighteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time</b>	9.00am	11.00am		6.30pm	Holy Mass Holy Mass Holy Mass	Terry Wilson Bernard Cunningham People of the Parishes

**Day of Prayer for Grandparents**

Today is the worldwide day of prayer for Grandparents—the Sunday nearest the feast of Ss Joachim & Anne, the grandparents of our Blessed Lord. The Holy Father has granted a Plenary Indulgence to each Grandparent or elderly person who attends Mass on this day; each Grandparent or elderly person unable to attend Mass but who participates through livestream or by saying the prayers and reading the readings from Mass at home; to each person who visits a Grandparent or elderly person on this day so performing a work of mercy.

**Deanery Visitation Report** There are 'hard' copies available of the Deanery Visitation report together with the specific report for our parishes, prepared by Bishop Stephen. If you want a copy they are available in our churches. Also, they will be appearing online shortly.

**Episcopal Vicar** Now that we have said farewell to Bishop Stephen, who is now the Bishop of Hexham & Newcastle, we no longer have an area Bishop for Staffordshire and the Black Country. It may be that the Holy Father will grant an auxiliary bishop to the Archdiocese who could take over this position but it is unlikely to happen in the near future. And so the Archbishop has appointed Canon Paul McNally, Parish Priest of Newcastle-under-Lyme and Dean of North Staffs, as Episcopal Vicar, that is the priest who has the responsibility of representing the Archbishop in our area. It's like having an auxiliary Bishop who isn't a Bishop. He will be taking up his appointment from 1st October.

**Welcoming Places Goldenhill**

Our regular Tuesday hospitality group is now on summer holiday and will return in September. We ended the summer term meetings with a lovely visit to Burleigh pottery where we enjoyed a visit to the coffee shop.

**SPUC petition** On the weekend of 22nd/23rd July, there will be the opportunity to sign a petition, organised by the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, directed at the

UK government. The Chinese Communist State is imposing forced abortions, sterilisation and infanticide on its own population, notably among the Uyghur minority. As the cost of living is rising in the UK, the government still sends tens of millions in international aid to China. The petition is to ask the government to stop funding the brutal regime in China and to oppose their anti-life policies.

**North Staffs Vocations Promotion Group** The group continues to work in North Staffs Deanery to promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The next Evening Prayer & Reflection will be held on Tuesday 25th July at St Gregory's Longton. It will be led by Deacon Owen Gresty, who is Diocesan Vocations Promoter.

**Harvington Pilgrimage** This year is the centenary pilgrimage to the Diocesan Shrine of the English Martyrs. It will be on Sunday 3rd September at Harvington Hall, with Mass at 3pm, celebrated by His Grace the Archbishop.

**Sanctuary Lamp Dedications**

**Week beginning 23rd July:**

St John's: John Martin

**Week beginning 16th July:**

St John's: McGough family

*To dedicate a lamp, please place min donation of £5 in an envelope with preferred church and intention written on the front, and put into the collection or hand to a steward.*

**Parish Office & Parish Priest's Open House**

The Parish Office is open at the times advertised on the front of the bulletin. It is always advisable to phone in advance of visiting.

**Open House** is when Fr Julian is available to be seen for consultations about baptisms, weddings, or for any other reason. There will be Open House on Monday 31st July at 6.30pm. There will be no Open House through the month of August, but will begin again in September.

**PARISH GIVING**

We have received notification that the branch we use for banking will be closing in the autumn. It means that Hanley and Newcastle are the only remaining branches, making it more difficult to bank money. It would be a great help to the Parishes if more parishioners would pay their weekly/monthly collection money by Standing Order. It means we receive your offertory even when you are unable to be at Mass! Please use the form here: <https://tinyurl.com/uqsttlr> or pick up a copy at church and deliver/post to St Joseph's presbytery. Please remember that your parish has seen bills rise too, particularly fuel bills. If you are able, please increase your regular giving by changing or making an additional Standing Order. And please remember to make a Gift Aid declaration if you are a UK income tax payer.

**PARISH REGISTERS****Baptisms**

Congratulations and welcome to the family of the Church to Isabelle Rose Alice Erskine, who was baptised at St John's on Sunday 16th July.

**Deaths**

Of your charity, please pray for the soul of Mary Hewitt. Funeral arrangements later.

**Requiescat in Pace**

The Partnership of Parishes operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the National and Archdioceses policies & procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representatives are: Bidduph & Packmoor: Julie Shufflebotham & Lorraine Connell ([sg.englishmartyrs.biddulph@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:sg.englishmartyrs.biddulph@rcaob.org.uk))

Goldenhill: Jo Kirkham ([sg.stjoseph.goldenhill@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:sg.stjoseph.goldenhill@rcaob.org.uk))

Kidsgrove: Denise Hewitt ([sg.stjtc.kidsgrove@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:sg.stjtc.kidsgrove@rcaob.org.uk))

Alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding team can be contacted on 0 1 2 1 2 3 0 6 2 4 0 or [safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk) if you have any concern.

# THE POPE'S MESSAGE FOR THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR GRANDPARENTS & THE ELDERLY

*Dear brothers and sisters!*

“His mercy is from age to age” (*Lk* 1:50). This is the theme of the Third World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, and it takes us back to the joyful meeting between the young Mary and her elderly relative Elizabeth (cf. *Lk* 1:39-56). Filled with the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth addressed the Mother of God with words that, millennia later, continue to echo in our daily prayer: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb” (v. 42). The Holy Spirit, who had earlier descended upon Mary, prompted her to respond with the *Magnificat*, in which she proclaimed that the Lord’s mercy is from generation to generation. That same Spirit blesses and accompanies every fruitful encounter between different generations: between grandparents and grandchildren, between young and old. God wants young people to bring joy to the hearts of the elderly, as Mary did to Elizabeth, and gain wisdom from their experiences. Yet, above all, the Lord wants us not to abandon the elderly or to push them to the margins of life, as tragically happens all too often in our time.

This year, the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly takes place close to World Youth Day. Both celebrations remind us of the “haste” (cf. v. 39) with which Mary set out to visit Elizabeth. In this way, they invite us to reflect on the bond that unites young and old. The Lord trusts that young people, through their relationships with the elderly, will realize that they are called to cultivate memory and recognize the beauty of being part of a much larger history. Friendship with an older person can help the young to see life not only in terms of the present and realize that not everything depends on them and their abilities. For the elderly, the presence of a young person in their lives can give them hope that their experience will not be lost and that their dreams can find fulfilment. Mary’s visit to Elizabeth and their shared awareness that the Lord’s mercy is from generation to generation remind us that, alone, we cannot move forward, much less save ourselves, and that God’s presence and activity are always part of something greater, the history of a people. Mary herself said this in the *Magnificat*, as she rejoiced in God, who, in fidelity to the promise he had made to Abraham, had worked new and unexpected wonders (cf. vv. 51-55).

To better appreciate God’s way of acting, let us remember that our life is meant to be lived to the full, and that our greatest hopes and dreams are not achieved instantly but through a process of growth and maturation, in dialogue and in relationship with others. Those who focus only on the here and now, on money and possessions, on “having it all now”, are blind to the way God works. His loving plan spans past, present and future; it embraces and connects the generations. It is greater than we are, yet includes each of us and calls us at every moment to *keep pressing forward*. For the young, this means being ready to break free from the fleeting present in which virtual reality can entrap us, preventing us from doing something productive. For the elderly, it means not dwelling on the loss of physical strength and thinking with regret about missed opportunities. Let us all look ahead! And allow ourselves to be shaped by God’s grace, which from generation to generation frees us from inertia and from dwelling on the past!

In the meeting between Mary and Elizabeth, between young and old, God points us towards the future that he is opening up before us. Indeed, Mary’s visit and Elizabeth’s greeting open our eyes to the dawn of salvation: in their embrace, God’s mercy quietly breaks into human history amid abundant joy. I encourage everyone to reflect on that meeting, to picture, like a snapshot, that embrace between the young Mother of God and the elderly mother of Saint John the Baptist, and to frame it in their minds and hearts as a radiant icon.

Next, I would invite you to make a concrete gesture that would include grandparents and the elderly. Let us not abandon them. Their presence in families and communities is a precious one, for it reminds us that we share the same heritage and are part of a people committed to preserving its roots. From the elderly we received the gift of belonging to God’s holy people. The Church, as well as society, needs them, for they entrust to the present the past that is needed to build the future. Let us honour them, neither depriving ourselves of their company nor depriving them of ours. May we never allow the elderly to be cast aside!

The World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is meant to be a small but precious sign of hope for them and for the whole Church. I renew my invitation to everyone – dioceses, parishes, associations and communities – to celebrate this Day and to make it the occasion of a joyful and renewed encounter between young and old. To you, the young who are preparing to meet in Lisbon or to celebrate World Youth Day in your own countries, I would ask: before you set out on your journey, visit your grandparents or an elderly person who lives alone! Their prayers will protect you and you will carry in your heart the blessing of that encounter. I ask you, the elderly among us, to accompany by your prayers the young people about to celebrate World Youth Day. Those young people are God’s answer to your prayers, the fruits of all that you have sown, the sign that God does not abandon his people, but always rejuvenates them with the creativity of the Holy Spirit.

Dear grandparents, dear elderly brothers and sisters, may the blessing of the embrace between Mary and Elizabeth come upon you and fill your hearts with peace. With great affection, I give you my blessing. And I ask you, please, to pray for me.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 31 May 2023,  
Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

POPE FRANCIS