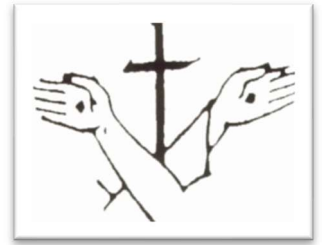




# St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter “Laudato, Si”



**ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH**  
Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, London, E15 1BJ



**4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF LENT ‘LAETAR’ SUNDAY  
& MOTHERS DAY – 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023**

“Laetare” is the first word — meaning “rejoice” — in the Latin text of the Entrance Antiphon today.. On ‘Laetare Sunday’ (similar to the Third Sunday of Advent’s ‘Gaudete Sunday’) the Church expresses hope and joy in the midst of our Lenten fasts and penances. Today, on Mid-Lent Sunday, we rejoice in the Lord and give thanks for the gift of Christ’s resurrection from the dead, which gives us hope and confidence. Today is also Mothering Sunday, and we thank God for mothers, living and dead, and ask the prayers of Our Lady, Mother of the Church, for them.

**TODAYS READINGS.**

1 Samuel 16:1. 6-7. 10-13. The spirit of the Lord seized on David and stayed with him from that day onwards.

**Response to the Psalm:**      **The Lord is my shepherd: there is nothing I shall want.**

**Ephesians 5:8-14:** Walk in the light of the Lord and turn away from the darkness of sin.  
**John 9:1-41:** Jesus gives the blind man new sight and the gift of faith.

Walk  
in the  
light  
of the  
Lord  
see John 5:19-21

**“One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see”.**

Jesus told his disciples that no follower of his would walk in darkness but would have the “light of life”. During the seven-day feast of Tabernacles, the temple area was illuminated with torches. On the last day of the festival, water from the pool of Siloam was poured on the altar in thanksgiving for the rain that assured a good harvest. Jesus declared that he was the fountain of “living water” that brought forth new life. Moreover, he was the “light of the world” who enlightened people in darkness. The story of the man born blind illustrates these two sayings of Jesus. When Jesus’ disciples saw the blind man, they asked, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he was born blind?” Jesus answered that it was not due to the sins of the man, nor of his parents. It was so that the works of God might be made visible through him. Then Jesus made a mixture of clay and saliva, put it on the blind man's eyes, and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam (meaning “sent”). When he did so, his blindness was cured. The Pharisees, who were spiritually blind,

accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath law by healing the man. But the man knew that his healing had come from God, and he fell at Jesus' feet and acknowledged him as “Lord.” This story was a popular feature of Baptismal ceremonies in the early Church. St. Augustine said, “The blind man is the whole human race.”



**Dates for your Diary:** STATIONS OF THE CROSS EVERY FRIDAY DURING LENT AT 7:30PM. 17<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2023 – ST PATRICKS DAY. 19<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2023 – MOTHERS DAY. 1<sup>st</sup> APRIL 2023 – STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN THE OLYMPIC PARK AT 11:30. 2<sup>nd</sup> APRIL 2023 – PALM SUNDAY. 9<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2023 – EASTER SUNDAY. FROM 10<sup>TH</sup> – 14<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023 – DAILY MASS WILL BE AT 10:00AM INSTEAD OF 12:15PM.

Pray for those who have died, and those whose Anniversaries occur around this time, also, please pray for the sick, and, remember the People of Ukraine. Our thoughts and prayers for the people of Turkey and Syria following the devastating earthquake

**Stations of the Cross  
Every Friday of Lent  
7.30pm**

**SOLEMNITY OF SAINT JOSEPH,  
SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY  
“When his mother Mary was engaged to Joseph, but  
before they lived together, she was found with child  
through the power of the Holy Spirit”**



Matthew recounts the infancy story from Joseph's point of view. When Joseph discovered that his betrothed wife, Mary, was with child, he decided to divorce her (betrothed couples were considered spouses). Joseph was a righteous man who followed the Mosaic Law, but he was unwilling to subject Mary to the charge of adultery as she would be put to death. An Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a

dream and told him he should not fear taking Mary as his wife as she had conceived the child through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph accepted guardianship for the child who would be named Jesus (Hebrew, Yeshua) meaning “Yahweh saves.” Jesus is also “Emmanuel,” meaning “God with us”. Joseph responded with faithful obedience and took Mary as his wife.

*SAINT JOSEPH'S DAY - this year transferred to tomorrow (Monday)*

*Joseph is the patron saint of the dying because, assuming he passed away before Jesus' public life, he died with Jesus and Mary close to him -- the way we all would like to leave this earth. Joseph is also patron saint of the Universal Church, families, fathers, expectant mothers, travellers, immigrants, house sellers and buyers, craftsmen, engineers, and working people in general. We celebrate two feast days for Joseph: March 19 for Joseph the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and May 1 for Joseph the Worker.*

**GIFT AID ENVELOPES 2023/24**

available at back of Church today.

*Please continue to use your current envelopes until the new ones start.*

Envelopes can only be identified by your number. If uncertain of your Gift Aid number, a Steward will be happy to help you. Gift Aiders with a current number **above 200** have been given **a new lower number**. Any one affected has been written to and advised of their new number, but you can also check this with the steward who will have details on their list.

*The renumbering does not affect your tax position in any way and there is no need to change any standing order payment if you pay through the bank.*

Renumbering is simply a way for us to minimise wasted envelopes.

**A huge thank you from the Finance Committee for your continued support of the parish**

*Happy  
Mothers  
Day*

The children of St. Francis of Assisi School will be helping to celebrate ‘Mothers Day’ at the 10:15 Mass. Tea & Coffee will be served in the Hall afterwards.

**SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE  
LORD**

**“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found  
favour with God”.**

Nine months before Christmas, the Church honours the Annunciation of the Lord's birth. After centuries of longing for the Messiah, the Archangel Gabriel announced the good news to a young woman in the obscure village of Nazareth. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel told Mary that she had found



favour with God and would bear a son, whom she was to name Jesus. Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, but she was told not to be afraid since God's Son had been conceived by the Holy Spirit. The “Son of the Most High” would rule eternally over the “house of Jacob” fulfilling the promise made to King David. Mary was given a sign to prove that “nothing was impossible with God”; Elizabeth, her kinswoman, had conceived a son in her old age. Mary responded with faithful submission to the will of God (fiat, “Let it be done”). Mary is the new Eve. While Eve grasped the forbidden fruit, Mary received the Divine fruit of her womb. Mary's dispositions of waiting, fidelity, and praise are necessary virtues for all Christians.

**Grove Crescent Rd, Stratford, E15 1BJ**

**Masses**

**Monday to Friday 12:15. Tuesday**, after Mass, St Anthony Novena. **Saturday:** Morning Prayer: 9:40am Mass 10am followed by Holy Hour Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 11:30am.

**Confession:** 10:30am — 11:30am & 5pm –5:45pm

**Sunday:** 6pm Saturday, 9am, 10:15am, 12 noon & 4:30pm (Ukrainian).

**Fr. Patrick Lonsdale, OFM (Guardian)**

**Fr Michael O'Grady, OFM (Parish Priest)**

**Fr Brian McGrath, OFM**

**Address: The Friary, 160 The Grove, Stratford, E15 1NS.**

**Parish Office: Monday to Friday 9:30am - 3pm**

**Parish Secretary: Kathleen Allen**

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