

At the 4pm Mass this Sunday (and for the two following Sundays) some of our children will be making their ***First Holy Communion***, and at the 7pm Mass this Sunday (and for the two following) our teenagers will be making their ***Confirmation***. These young people are dear to us as they are our future: we offer them our congratulations and the promise of our prayers.

Throughout September we will be enrolling for the next set of ***Sacramental Programmes***. Forms are now available at the back of church (***and also online - see the parish website***) and should be returned by the first weekend in October. When we know what the take-up is going to be we can plan accordingly.

One of our parishioners has a website to encourage devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus which includes a section appropriate for Our Lady of Sorrows. Look up <https://sacredheartofjesus.london/>

***The Order of Malta*** have resumed their Thursday soup kitchen. Current restrictions mean that only a limited number of meals can be served, but at least it is a move in the right direction.

If you can help the parish either by a one-off donation or by a commitment to regular giving, it would be greatly appreciated. More information from the parish office or use the bank details as set out below:-

**HSBC 69 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5EY**  
**Sort code: 40-05-20 Account no: 91094394**  
**WRCDT Spanish Place**

We are very grateful to those who have been volunteering as ***STEWARDS*** thus enabling the church to be open each day. ***We do need to expand the pool of stewards***. If you can offer an hour (or more) please sign the list available on a table at the back of the church.

***CONFESSIONS***: Please feel free to ring the rectory bell to ask for your confession to be heard. We are using one of the house parlours – suitably distanced – for the time being. We hope that October might see the return of regular daily times for the confessional.

**The link for the streaming of the Sunday 10.30am Mass is:-**  
<https://www.youtube.com/c/StJamessSpanishPlace>

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St James's Roman Catholic Church, Spanish Place,  
22 George Street, London W1U 3QY

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24th Sunday  
of the Year

13th September 2020

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### TODAY'S LITURGY

***Ecclesiasticus 27:33-28:9***  
*Forgive your neighbour the hurt he does you; and when you pray, your sins will be forgiven*

*The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.*

***Romans 14:7-9***  
*Alive or dead, we belong to the Lord*

*St Matthew 18:21-35 To be forgiven, you must forgive*

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### Music at 10.30am

Missa De Beata Maria Victoria  
Ego flos campi Clemens  
Soata No.3 Mendelssohn

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**The Reverend Christopher G. Colven (Rector)**

**The Reverend Canon Stuart Wilson**

**The Reverend Mark Elliott Smith (in residence)**

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## The Rector writes . . . . .

Perhaps I am wrong, but I have the sense that the general mood has shifted. A few weeks back there was a feeling of renewed purpose as people began to look beyond the restrictions of past months. The coming of September, with many able to return to school and places of work, pointed us towards a post Covid-19 normality. Now, though, as we move into autumn the positive note appears to have turned with people mourning a lost summer and finding it difficult to face the prospect of current limitations going on to the end of the year and beyond. Those who come to talk often speak of “*disorientation*” and several have even used the word “*despair*”. While as Christians we can never divorce ourselves from the experience of those around us as, rightly, we should be picking up on the concerns of our neighbours, our faith should offer a more positive dimension.

Saint Teresa of Avila said it this way: “*Hope, O my soul, hope. You know neither the day nor the hour. Watch carefully, for everything passes quickly. Dream that the more you struggle, the more that you prove the love you bear your God, and the more you will rejoice one day with your Beloved, in a happiness and rapture that can never end*”. We are a people of hope from no reasons of human optimism. We look around us and remain unconvinced by notions of inevitable progress. We are not naïve in our analysis of a world order in crisis. But we are those who take the promises made by God in Jesus Christ at their face value: our hope lies in the identity of the One who has made these promises. The virtue of hope has a long history in our tradition, Abraham is the archetypal figure who takes God at his word and begins the long preparation for the revelation of the Godhead in the humanity of Christ. The theological virtue, which stands as a trinity with faith and charity, has been central to the proclamation of the Gospel through 2000 years: it is not a “*hoping against hope*”, but the conviction that God’s nature is love and his intention towards every aspect of the creation is for its benefit..

“*Let us put on the breastplate of faith and charity, and for a helmet the hope of salvation*” (Hebrews 6:19). The Kingdom Christ came to establish cannot be identified solely in earthly, political terms ( as Jesus made clear in his response to Pontius Pilate) but neither can it be divorced from present realities. The Beatitudes which stand at the core of the Sermon on the Mount make clear that moral choices made in this life effect an individual’s future relationship to God. While “*waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ*” (Titus 2:13), we are committed to doing all we can to build the Kingdom of “*truth and life, of holiness of grace, of justice, love and peace*” which has to combine both present potential and future hope.

Among the early Christian writers, Saint Irenaeus of Lyons (130-202) holds a unique position, as a disciple of Saint Polycarp who was in turn a disciple of John, the Beloved Disciple. Irenaeus offers an insight which suggests that our capacity for hope is destined to be eternal – we will never, ever, reach the end of the rich mystery of the Godhead. “*We shall see no longer as in a mirror darkly; we shall rejoice face to face with the presence of God*” yet “*we shall always have further to go towards him: we shall never cease to receive his benefits anew*” for “*there are things reserved for God alone, not only in this world but also in the world to come, so that God will always have something to teach us, and we shall always have something to learn from him: the riches of God are unending, just as the Kingdom of God is without end*”. Much Christian art offers a static view of heaven – once we are there, we are there – but Irenaeus points to an ever-expanding dynamism where our understanding of the Godhead can never reach its limits. “*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope*” (Romans 15:13).

The advice in the Letter to the Romans: “*rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer*” has stood the test of time. Let it remind us that we are a people of hope and that “*hope is not deceptive*” (5:5). May we not miss an opportunity to speak to others of the hope which motivates us - we could all do with a measure of encouragement at the moment!

Christopher Colven

**During September, Mass will be said on Saturday at 10am and 6pm (Vigil of Sunday) On Sundays, there will be three public Masses – at Midday, 4pm & 7pm. The daily Masses remain at 12.30pm & 6pm. We hope to add to the provision of Masses from October..**

*The latest Government guidelines require that face coverings must be used in places of worship – an exception is made for those with medical conditions which make this difficult. It is also suggested that a trace should be kept so that any further viral outbreaks can be swiftly followed up. The red sheets of paper which you are asked to leave in your place after Mass now contain a space for your contact details should you feel able to leave them.*

**Collections** are not taken during Mass but baskets for your donations will be found by the doors as you leave. There is also a second collection this weekend – for the **Holy Places in Palestine** (the collection is usually taken on Good Friday but has had to be delayed this year). Your support for the remaining Christian community in the Holy Land is invited.