

**A prayer
to Saint Joseph:**

“Hail, guardian of the Redeemer, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man. Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life. Obtain for us grace, mercy and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen”.

Our bishops have recently reminded us that the **obligation** to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is **in abeyance** during the pandemic which means that while – for the moment – we do not have to attend Mass we are not discouraged from doing so. The bishops suggest that in parishes where numbers are restricted the faithful might attend Mass during the week thus reducing the pressure on Sundays (this hardly applies to Spanish Place where with proper distancing we can accommodate 150-200 people and there are seven Masses to choose from each Sunday)

We are trying to **open the church** on Sundays from 7.30am through till after the 7pm Mass and on weekdays from Midday till after the 6pm Mass. In order to do so we are relying on those able to give time as **STEWARDS**. If you have the time, please sign up for an hour or more. It is a requirement that a responsible person should be available whenever the church is open, and if volunteers are not available then we face having to further restrict times of opening.

Please remember in your prayers the soul of **Father Patrick Nolan**, formerly Parish Priest here, whose 6th anniversary of death occurs on 10th Jan. *“Well done good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord”.*

At present, **CONFESSIONS** are heard only on request: please feel free to ring the bell at the rectory at any (reasonable!) time and ask for a priest..

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CLASSES. Have begun and **CONFIRMATION CLASSES**. Start next Sunday (17th January). Both programmes are being conducted through Zoom. If, for whatever reason, those who have signed up have not yet collected their course books etc they can do so from the parish office between 9am & 5pm on weekdays.

The **soup kitchen** organised by the Order of Malta Volunteers operates on Monday and Thursday evenings. Under present restrictions food is distributed outside the social centre to a limited number.

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, the website, or use the bank details set out below:-

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

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

**THE BAPTISM
OF THE LORD
10th January 2021**

TODAY'S LITURGY

Isaiah 55:1-11

*Come to me and your soul will live,
and I will make an everlasting
covenant with you.*



The rejoicing of a redeemed people

1 John 5:1-9

Jesus Christ came by water and blood

St Mark 1:7-11

‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you’

**The Youtube link for the streaming of the masses
(both Sunday at 10.30am and weekdays at 6.00pm) is:**
<https://www.youtube.com/c/StJamesSpanishPlace>

Those who do use the streaming facility are invited to share their views by accessing
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/KHFHMMV>

Music at 10.30am

Kleine Orgelmesse *Haydn*
Tribus miraculis *Palestrina*

The Reverend Christopher G. Colven (Rector)

The Reverend Canon Stuart Wilson

The Reverend Mark Elliott Smith (in residence)

Telephone: 020 7935 0943

Email: spanishplace@sjrcc.org.uk

Web: www.sjrcc.org.uk

The Rector writes

On 8th December 1870 Pope Pius IX declared Saint Joseph “*Patron of the Universal Church*”, and Pope Francis is marking the anniversary by declaring a year (from last December 8th until December 8th this year) to honour Saint Joseph. As we come to the end of the Christmas season it seems good to reflect on the role of that “*just man*” (as Saint Matthew calls him) who was the foster-father of Jesus and the husband and protector of Jesus’s Mother. In an apostolic letter, titled “*Patris Corde* (“*with a Father’s Heart*”) Pope Francis suggests a number of headings under which Joseph’s place in the history of salvation might be considered: he admits, though, that we know very little about the man who provided a secure environment in which the Son of Mary: “*grew to maturity, and was filled with wisdom, and God’s favour was with him*” (Luke 2:40)

Perhaps it is the silence which surrounds the person of Joseph which points to the major theme of his life. Here is someone who is given a part to play and does it well, while remaining hidden in the shadows. Clearly, he was propelled along by events and challenged (as with Mary) to move beyond his natural comfort zone. Finding his fiancée carrying a child he tries to do the decent thing by her. Given the mores of the time and the potential punishments attached to an adulterous relationship, he is both sensitive and courageous in his initial reaction. An angelic visitation settles Joseph’s mind and he accepts the mission entrusted to him by God’s providence, so much so that all four of the Gospels refer to Jesus as “*the son of Joseph*”. Saint Paul VI speaks of Joseph’s subsequent sense of vocation as: “*a love placed at the service of the Messiah who was growing to maturity in his home*”.

None of the Gospel writers provide anything like a conventional biography of Jesus (that was never their intention) but the tenderness with which the Son of Mary constantly speaks of his Heavenly Father can only reflect the image of fatherhood which he had first experienced in the hidden years at Nazareth. It is a testimony to the radical nature of the Incarnation that God in Christ was prepared to go through every stage of human development without any short cuts. Yves Congar offers an insight which is crucial to our understanding of the Word made flesh: “*the human feelings, the dispositions of heart and will had gradually been formed in his experience as a young Jew and in his education at Nazareth by Mary and Joseph*”, and, Congar continues: “*it was by the practice of the fourth commandment that Jesus began, in his human soul, the filial obedience which he had to give to his heavenly Father. It was this which began the formation in him of the sentiments and the attitudes by which, in his Passion, he effected our salvation*”.

Pope Francis writes: “*Often in life, things happen whose meaning we do not understand. Our first reaction is frequently one of disappointment and rebellion. Joseph set aside his own ideas in order to accept the course of events and, mysterious as they seemed, to embrace them, take responsibility for them and make them part of his own history – Joseph is certainly not passively resigned, but courageously and firmly proactive*”. We see these lessons exemplified most particularly in the forty days and nights Jesus spent in the wilderness as his public ministry began and in the Agony in the Garden on the eve of his Passion: “*Father, if you are willing, take his chalice away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine*” (Luke 22:42). Pope Francis also says: “*the Son of the Almighty came into our world in a state of great vulnerability. He needed to be defended, protected, cared for and raised by Joseph. God trusted Joseph, as did Mary, who found in him someone who would not only save her life but would always provide for her and her child. In this sense, Saint Joseph could not be other than the Guardian of the Church, for the Church is the continuation of the Body of Christ in history*”.

We are fortunate at Spanish Place to have a beautiful altar dedicated to Saint Joseph (the first commission undertaken for the church by J F Bentley dating from 1891). The frontal depicts the Flight into Egypt, while the statue above offers a delicate insight into the love with which (“*patris corde - with a father’s heart*”) Joseph looks upon Jesus. Let us not be shy in making our devotions to Saint Joseph at his shrine during this year of special devotion

Christopher Colven

NOTICES

This weekend’s celebration of the **BAPTISM of the LORD** marks the end of the Christmas season and provides a last opportunity to make a crib offerings for the **Westminster Diocesan Children’s Society**. Please use the marked slot in the wall near the main door

The annual **White Flower collection** for the work of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn will be taken after all Masses this weekend.

Under the Government’s new phase of lockdown places of worship may remain open but this concession does mean that we must be very careful in ensuring the safety of those who come into our building either for individual prayer or corporate devotion. Social distancing MUST be maintained and masks worn by everyone (except those clinically exempt). It is important that people do not gather to chat inside or outside the church.