

The Parish of Saint Stephen

Gloucester Road, South Kensington, London SW7

<http://www.saint-stephen.org.uk>

Parish Priest

The Reverend Philip Barnes SSC
5, Thomas Place, London W8 5UG
Telephone: 020 7937-4263 email: frphilipbarnes@btinternet.com

Assistant Priest

The Reverend John Hunter SSC
57, Manor Court
23, Bagleys Lane, London SW6 2BN
Telephone: 020 7736 -7544 email: frjohnhunter@hotmail.com

Churchwardens: Mr. Ross Egerton and Mr. Patrick Rodier

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Church Officials can be contacted by writing to:
**St. Stephen's Parish Office, Gloucester Road,
London SW7 4RL Telephone: 020 7370-3418**

SERVICES

SUNDAY	WEEKDAY
Low Mass 09.00	Monday No Mass
	Tuesday 12.30
	Wednesday 19.00
Solemn Mass 11.00	Thursday 08.00
	Friday 12.30
	Saturday 10.00

Major Feasts: 19.00 (Solemn or with hymns)

Holy Hour: first and third Friday: 09.30-10.30

Rosary: second and fourth Saturday at 10.30

CONFESSIONS

A priest is usually available before or after any Mass,

The Parish Priest writes

Giving up or Taking on?

‘What have you given up?’ is the most popular question to be asked during Lent. As we journey through the next few weeks that Lenten discipline of ‘giving-up’ might become more difficult, and temptation may have crossed our path! But I’ve noticed that its become fashionable to decry the giving up of things for Lent. “I don’t give things up, I take things on” people say with a sense of pious satisfaction.

Whilst it’s true to say that burdening yourself with little inconveniences is to miss the point of the season, and that ‘giving up’ is often just a way of losing a bit of weight or saving some money by foregoing a treat, it’s also true to say that looking after our bodies, ‘temples of the Holy Spirit’ as S. Paul reminds us, is a Christian duty, and prudent use of money is also a virtue. So let’s not be

too quick to belittle the giving up of things for forty days.

Yet Lent’s abstinence is of course a call to move deeper than this. We undergo lack in some minor way to show our solidarity both with our Lord’s suffering in the wilderness and with the suffering of those without our luxury to choose to go without. Even more, those times of inconvenience—the great desire for a drink at the end of a difficult day or whatever—can be ‘offered up’ as the phrase is, can be occasions for prayer, may be praying for those who are thirsty in the case I’ve just given, reflecting briefly on Jesus’ words from the Cross—‘I thirst’—which both reminds us that we’ll probably cope without a gin tonight and also raises our sights to heaven just a bit.

Fasting is only one part of the devotions that the Church urges upon us over the forty days. Alms-giving and prayer are the other two. The purpose of the fasting is that we are able to use the money we’ve saved through not having to buy so many bottles of gin towards to good

cause, and there are any number of charities that would appreciate your Lenten almsgiving. If you don't have spare money then why not think about giving food to the Kensington Foodbank (there's a collection point in Sainsbury's), or being more intentional about spending time with a lonely friend or a neighbour in need.

The final element, prayer, is a reminder—given that we obviously don't just pray in Lent—that the disciplines of this season, although we emphasise them particularly for these six weeks, are ones that we're called to embrace throughout our Christian lives. Lent, if anything, is a taster and encouragement to adopt these practices for the other forty-six weeks of the year.

That said, these spiritual muscle-stretches are not just about our living of our Christian lives generally, but are especially aimed at preparing us for Holy Week and Easter. The period from Palm Sunday to Easter Day is the most important time in the church's life and of absolute obligation for anyone who takes the name of Christian seriously. The intensity of those days and the joy of the

Easter festival are closely related to the extent to which we have prepared in the preceding weeks.

I've been struck, in the last few days, by a line in a sermon by John Donne, the seventeenth century Dean of St Paul, who in a beautiful phrase talks about the Church as a 'hemisphere of glory'—that place where we live by God's grace, sharing, even now, in something of the glory that one day we will know in all its fullness. It seems to me that during the season of Lent we are especially drawn into that 'hemisphere of glory' as we come close to the great events of our salvation—the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray that it may be so for us in a special way this year.

With my love and prayers,

Father Philip

PATRON SAINTS

Every nation, even most towns and cities, have their Patron Saints - generally a saint who has a particular connection with the place. And, of course, many trades and professions have their patron saints. So S. Cecilia is venerated as the patron of musicians, while S. Luke is the patron of doctors because S. Paul named him as 'the beloved physician'.

This month we celebrate the feast days of two saints who are counted as the patrons of two parts of the British Isles. March 1st is S. David's Day, patron saint of Wales, and the 17th of the month is S. Patrick's Day, patron of Ireland.

S. David's exact dates are not known, but it is probable that he died about the end of the 6th century. He was one of the influential monks of the 6th century, and his cognomen, 'the Waterman' (W. 'Dyfrwr,' Lat. 'Aquatiscus'), suggests that he was a member of that monastic sect who rejoiced in the rigour of their ascetic life and who were called 'aquatici,' 'the watermen.' He is mentioned together with Cadog and Gildas in the 'Catalogue of the Saints of Ireland' (c. 730); and in 'The Martyrology of Oengus' (c. 800) 1 March is recorded as his festival. There are churches associated with his name in South Wales, Brittany, Cornwall, and south-western England. It is likely that the distribution of his churches represents the area in which he laboured, and their geographical positions suggest that he and his followers represented a more extreme and reformatory monastic movement than that of Illtud, Cadog, and Gildas, and that he evangelized in districts outside the areas of his predecessors' activities. Reference is made to him in 'Arymes Prydein Vawr' (The Prophecy of Great Britain, Bk. Tal., 13) early in the 10th century, as the spiritual leader of the Welsh against the English. His 'Life' was written by Rhygyfarch, son of Sulien, bishop of S. Davids c. 1090, and this is the source of every 'story' of his life. Rhygyfarch states that he made use of ancient records at S. Davids, some of them in the saint's own hand, but the contents of the 'Life' consist of a mixture of folk-lore, oral traditions, and some historical facts. He states that David was the son of Sant, king of Ceredigion, and Non (Lat. 'Nonnita'), that he was educated by Pauli-

nus at Henfynyw (near Aberayron), that he founded many monasteries, that he overcame an Irish chieftain called Boia near S. Davids; and he describes the hard life led by David and his fellow-monks, the miracles which he performed, his journey to Jerusalem with Teilo and Padarn, the part he played in two synods (at Llanddewi-brefi and 'Lucus Victoriae') against the Pelagian heresy, and the general lamentation at his death.

Saint Patrick (Latin: Patricius; Irish: Pádraig [ˈpˠaːd̪ˠr̪ˠəj]; Welsh: Padrig) was a fifth-century Romano-British Christian missionary and bishop in Ireland. Known as the "Apostle of Ireland", he is the primary patron saint of Ireland, the other patron saints being Brigit of Kildare and Columba. He is venerated in the Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, the Lutheran Churches, the Old Catholic Church, and in the Eastern Orthodox Church as equal-to-the-apostles and Enlightener of Ireland.

The dates of Patrick's life cannot be fixed with certainty, but there is broad agreement that he was active as a missionary in Ireland during the fifth century. Nevertheless, as the most recent biography on Patrick shows, a late fourth-century date for the saint is not impossible. Early medieval tradition credits him with being the first bishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland, and regards him as the founder of Christianity in Ireland, converting a society practising a form of Celtic polytheism. He has been generally so regarded ever since, despite evidence of some earlier Christian presence in Ireland.

According to the autobiographical *Confessio* of Patrick, when he was about 16, he was captured by Irish pirates from his home in Britain and taken as a slave to Ireland, looking after animals; he lived there for six years before escaping and returning to his family. After becoming a cleric, he returned to northern and western Ireland. In later life, he served as a bishop, but little is known about the places where he worked. By the seventh century, he had already come to be revered as the patron saint of Ireland.

Saint Patrick's Day is observed on 17 March, the supposed date of his death.

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

S. Cuthbert, Philbeach Gardens

First Sunday of Lent, 1st March:

6pm Lenten Readings, Meditation and Music with
Benediction.

With the Rosa Mystica Choir

World Day of Prayer 2020, Praying with Zimbabwe,
St Mary's Church, The Boltons SW10 9TB, Friday
6th March, 11am - Noon

Society of Our Lady of Pew at Westminster Abbey.
Lent Quiet Day,

Saturday 7th March, 10.30am – 2.30pm

Christian Meditation

Every Wednesday at 18.00 in the church.

Holy Hour

Fridays 6th & 20th March 09.30 - 10.30

Rosary

Saturdays 14th & 28th March 10.30

SUNDAY EVENINGS IN LENT

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT Sunday 15 March

6pm at St Stephen's, Gloucester Road

Tea, talk and Compline

*An evening looking at the Passion through art, with tea and cake
and ending with the ancient Office of Compline.*

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT Sunday 29 March

6pm at St Cuthbert's, Philbeach Gardens

Choral Evensong and Benediction

PALM SUNDAY Sunday 5 April

6pm at St Stephen's, Gloucester Road

Crux Fidelis

Music and Readings for Holy Week

*With choral music sung by the choir, readings from scripture, poetry
and prose reflecting on the great themes of Holy Week this special
service will be a poignant and reflective way
to begin the most significant week in the Christian year.*

MUSIC FOR MARCH

1st March Missa Bell' amfitrit altera - *Lassus*
Beati quorum via - *Satnford*

8th March Communion Service 'Collegium Regale' - *Howells*
Vexilla regis - *Bruckner*

15th March St Wilfrid Missa brevis - *Grey*
O sacrum convivium - *Drott*

22nd March Short Communion Service - *Batten*
Lord, we beseech thee - *Batten*

29th March Mass for four voices - *Byrd*
Call to remembrance - *Farrant*

The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary....

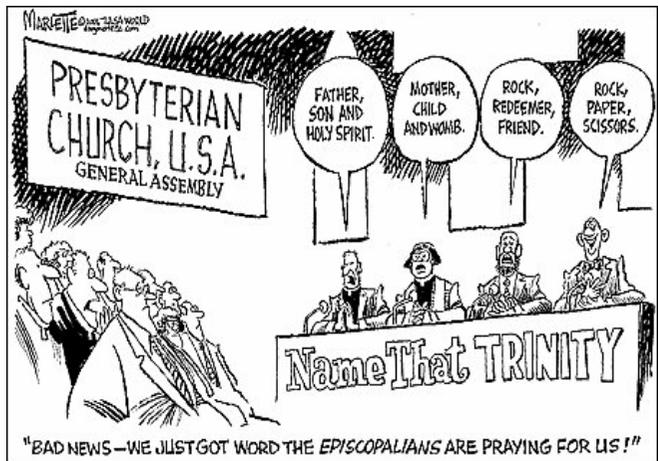
The feast of the Annunciation, now recognized as a solemnity, was first celebrated in the fourth or fifth century. Its central focus is the Incarnation: God has become one of us. From all eternity God had decided that the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity should become human. Now, as Luke 1:26-38 tells us, the decision is being realized. The God-Man embraces all humanity, indeed all creation, to bring it to God in one great act of love. Because human beings have rejected God, Jesus will accept a life of suffering and an agonizing death: "No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13).

Mary has an important role to play in God's plan. From all eternity God destined her to be the mother of Jesus and closely related to him in the creation and redemption of the world. We could say that God's decrees of creation and redemption are

joined in the decree of Incarnation. Because Mary is God’s instrument in the Incarnation, she has a role to play with Jesus in creation and redemption. It is a God-given role. It is God’s grace from beginning to end. Mary becomes the eminent figure she is only by God’s grace. She is the empty space where God could act. Everything she is she owes to the Trinity.

She is the virgin-mother who fulfills Isaiah 7:14 in a way that Isaiah could not have imagined. She is united with her son in carrying out the will of God (Psalm 40:8-9; Hebrews 10:7-9; Luke 1:38).

Together with Jesus, the privileged and graced Mary is the link between heaven and earth. She is the human being who best, after Jesus, exemplifies the possibilities of human existence. She received into her lowliness the infinite love of God. She shows how an ordinary human being can reflect God in the ordinary circumstances of life. She exemplifies what the Church and every member of the Church is meant to become. She is the ultimate product of the creative and redemptive power of God. She manifests what the Incarnation is meant to accomplish for all of us.





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ADVANCE NOTICE

THE FULHAM CHRISM MASS

Tuesday, 7th April at 11.00am

S. Andrew, Holborn Circus

**Principal Celebrant
The Bishop of Fulham**

Sunday Readings in March

1st March First Sunday of Lent

Genesis 2:7-9, 3:1-7; Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11.

8th March Second Sunday of Lent

Genesis 12:1-4; 2 Timothy 1: 8-10; Matthew 17:1-9.

15th March Third Sunday of Lent

Exodus 17:3-7; Romans 5:1-2, 5-8; John 4:5-42.

22nd March Fourth Sunday of Lent

1 Samuel 16: 1,6-7,10-13; Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41.

29th March Fifth Sunday of Lent

Ezekiel 37:12-14; Romans 8:8-11; John 11:1-45.

Rush Hour Recitals

These excellent recitals continue
throughout the month of March.

They take place on Monday evenings at 18.30.

PARISH CALENDAR FOR MARCH

Devotion of the Month: S. Joseph, Spouse of the BVM

✘ 1. FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

- 2. feria of Lent
- 3. feria of Lent
- 4. feria of Lent
- 5. feria of Lent
- 6. of Requiem
- 7. Ss Perpetua and Felicity, martyrs

9.00, 11.00 Parish and People

- No Mass today
- 12.30 Housebound
- 19.00 Bishop of Fulham
- 08.00 Peace in the Holy Land
- 12.30 Guild of All Souls
- 10.00 Persecuted Christians

✘ 8. SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

- 9. feria of Lent
- 10. feria of Lent
- 11. feria of Lent
- 12. feria of Lent
- 13. feria of Lent
- 14. feria of Lent

9.00, 11.00 Parish and People

- No Mass today
- 12.30 Our Musicians
- 19.00 Prisoners and their Families
- 08.00 Sufferers from dementia
- 12.30 The Holy Father
- 10.00 H M The Queen

✘ 15. THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

- 16. feria of Lent
- 17. S. Patrick, bishop
- 18. feria of Lent
- 19. S. JOSEPH, spouse of the BVM**
- 20. feria of Lent
- 21. feria of Lent

9.00, 11.00 Parish and People

- No Mass today
- 12.30 Ireland
- 19.00 Our PCC
- 08.00 Fathers and husbands**
- 12.30 RBK&C
- 10.00 The Society and FiF

✘ 22. FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

- 23. feria of Lent
- 24. feria of Lent
- 25. ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD**
- 26. feria of Lent
- 27. feria of Lent
- 28. of Requiem

9.00, 11.00 Parish and People

- No Mass today
- 12.30 Peace
- 19.00 Walsingham**
- 08.00 Perseverance
- 12.30 SSC
- 10.00 The faithful departed

✘ 29 FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

- 30. feria of Lent
- 31. feria of Lent

9.00, 11.00 Parish and People

- No Mass today
- 12.30 Our altar servers