

# SAINT ALBAN'S PARISH

Saint Alban's Church and Presbytery  
Conway Road, Pontypool, NP4 6HL

Chapel of Ease: Sacred Heart and St Felix  
Ellick Street, Blaenavon

PARISH PRIEST Canon Paul Millar

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No 13

## This week's Masses and intentions:

Saturday	6 p.m.	St Alban's	Tony O'Donnell, R.I.P.	1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent
Sunday	9 a.m.	St Felix	Tony McCulloch, R.I.P.	
	11 a.m.	St Alban's	People of the Parish	
	4p.m.	St. Alban's	Holy Hour	
Monday	9.30 a.m.	St Alban's	Margaret Salter, R.I.P.	
Tuesday	9.30 a.m.	St Alban's	Daniele Ferrari, R.I.P.	
Wednesday	9.30 a.m.	St Alban's	No Mass today	
Thursday	9.30 a.m.	St Felix	Holy Souls	St. Ambrose Bishop and Doctor of the Church
Friday	9.30 a.m.	St Alban's	Catherine & Michael Touhig, R.I.P	<b>Immaculate Conception of Blessed Virgin Mary</b>

## Next Sunday's Masses and intentions:

Saturday	6 p.m.	St Alban's	Harold Gregory, R.I.P..	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent
Sunday	9 a.m.	St Felix	People of the Parish	
	11 a.m.	St Alban's	Annie Doyle, R.I.P.	

Collection last Sunday: St Alban's: Plate: £125.50 Gift Aid: £115.00  
St. Felix: Plate £64.00 Gift Aid: £60.00

Counters: This week: L. Griffin & T. Hitchings Next week: L, Peters & T. Hitchings

Confessions. Canon Paul will also hear Confession after any of the weekday Masses on request.

Meeting this week: U.C.M. – Tuesday after 9.30 a.m Mass in the Presbytery.

Today is the first Sunday of Advent and there will be a **Holy Hour** at 4 p.m. in St. Alban's A good way to start our preparation for Christmas. Look forward to seeing you there.

Are you thinking about becoming a Catholic? Are you a Catholic who would like to know more about your faith? We will be starting an evening of talks and discussions in the New Year. Please contact Canon Paul if you are interested or would like more information

Christmas Prize Draw: Tickets are available at the back of the church. Please take some books and sell to friends and family. We have only 4 weeks to raise as much money as we can for the Church. Donations of prizes, including cash prizes of £100, £50 and £25 will be gratefully received and may be brought to the Sacristy. Thank you to all who have donated but we still need a donation of £50.

Torchlight Procession at Our Lady of Peace, Newbridge on the eve of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary - for peace in our world! 'Do whatever he tells you!' on 7<sup>th</sup> December starting at 7 p.m.

Repository: Advent Walk with Me - a journey for Advent and 2024 Diaries and Calendars are now on sale in the Repository, as are a wide selection of Christmas Cards and other Advent and Christmas items.

Year Books for 2024 are available in the Repository at a cost of £5. An invaluable resource containing lots of useful, information, e.g. liturgical calendar, contact details of Churches, Priests, Church Organisations across Wales

Flowers for our Churches for Christmas. Thank you to those ladies who do the flowers and work so hard throughout the year to make sure that our churches look beautiful. They always make a special effort for Christmas and Easter. Donations for flowers are always welcome but especially at these special times.

Our Parish website is now live again!!!! It might take a couple of days to get it up to date. Bear with us.

Please pray for the soul of Margaret Hodges who died recently. Her funeral will be at Gwent Crematorium at 3.30 p.m. on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> of December. May she rest in peace.

The Catholic Post: copies of this month's papers (December) are available at the back of the Church. A donation of £1 is suggested and can be placed in the Church donations slot in the wall box in the porch of St. Albans or in the basket provided at St. Felix.

**The Pope's Intention for December:** That people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation

**Preparation for the Sacrament of Holy Communion 2024** If you wish to enrol your child for the course of preparation for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion and they are in year 3 or above, please complete the form at the back of the Church and return it to Canon Paul this weekend.

**Preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation 2024:** If you are in Year 8 of Secondary School or above and wish to take part in the course of preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation, please complete the form available at the back of the Church and return it to Canon Paul by this weekend.

**November Dead List:** November is the month when we especially pray for our deceased. Most of our Masses during November will be offered for the Holy Souls. Please pick up an envelope at the back of the Church for the names of your dead loved ones and return it with a donation as soon as possible.

**Bereavement Befriending Group.** Our Annual Mass of Remembrance will take place next Saturday at 11 a.m. There will be light refreshments in the Hall afterwards. All welcome to come along

**Prayer for Vocations:** God our Father, you call each of us to follow Jesus, your Son, on the path he has marked out for us - the way of charity, service and fulfilment. May the homes and parishes of our Archdiocese be blessed with ever-renewed dedication to the work of building up your kingdom here on earth. May those whom you call to the priesthood and religious life faithfully give themselves to the service of your Church. Prompted and strengthened by your Holy Spirit, may we respond generously to the call to follow you each day and live out our vocation, to give you glory, for the good of those around us and for our own happiness. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen!

**Eastern Valley Foodbank:** The collection of food will be this weekend in both Saint Alban's and Saint Felix communities, but if you feel that you would rather give a cash donation then this can be placed in an envelope marked for this purpose and placed in the offertory basket

**Preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism:** If you are thinking about arranging your child's baptism there will be a meeting on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> of October in St. Alban's Church Hall at 7 p.m. with a second meeting on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> of November. Please let Canon Paul know if you are going to attend as it would be helpful to have some idea of the number who are interested.

**S.P.U.C. Annual Walk:** took place last weekend. If you have sponsored Lorraine and have not already given her your sponsorship money, please put it in a clearly marked envelope and leave it in the Sacristy. Thank you to all who have contributed.

**Fire Marshals:** As a faith community we have a responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each member especially during unforeseen circumstances such as fire incidents. The training video provides crucial guidance on how to effectively deal with such situations and how to carry out a safe evacuation procedure. In light of this, we ask for volunteers to step forward and embrace the role of fire marshals for our church. The dedication to this task will greatly contribute to the overall safety and peace of mind of all who gather in our church. Let us remember that as we come together in worship and fellowship, we also come together in unity and protection. By taking part in this training and offering your service as fire marshals, you exemplify the spirit of selflessness and care that defines our faith community. Interested? Please see Rob Abramczyk.

**Maryvale Institute, Birmingham-** Study part-time, by distance learning for a Bachelor of Divinity (BDiv) or a Licence in Divinity. The Maryvale Higher Institute of Religious Sciences (HIRS) is the only ecclesial institute of this

kind in the English-speaking world. The Ecclesiastical BDiv is a five-year part-time, collaborative-learning degree programme in Catholic theology providing a comprehensive exposition and analysis of Christian doctrine based on the study of the sacred Scriptures, the works of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church, and the documents of the Magisterium. The Licence in Divinity: Pathway in Catechetical Sciences is another qualification of the Holy See, distinct from an STL, it is a three-year, part-time, programme aimed at those in leadership positions in catechetics and in other positions of responsibility. Contact: Admissions tutor, Deacon Dr Harry Schnitker at: [researchcentre@maryvale.ac.uk](mailto:researchcentre@maryvale.ac.uk)

**Your weekly collection envelopes:** Gift Aid Scheme envelopes (with your names on them) are available (if you have not already collected it) in the Sacristy if you are in the scheme: If you are not already part of this scheme to further support our parish, please consider joining. All that is required is that you pay income tax of the amount equivalent to your weekly offering, sign a declaration and use a given box of envelopes for your collection.

**Planned Giving Scheme:** Many people appreciate having a set of envelopes as it helps them to keep track of their regular contributions to our parish. If you wish to have a set of envelopes but cannot join the Gift Aid Scheme please use a box of yellow envelopes at the back of the Church.

**Donations for flowers for Easter:** Donations can be given to M. Vidler. The Ladies will be coming to do the flowers on Easter Saturday.

**Easter Offering Envelopes:** are at the back of the Church. The Easter Collection is your offering to the Priest and forms an essential part of his income.

**Hospital Chaplaincy:** Please note the following information when anyone from our community is admitted to hospital: If you are aware of routine procedures which will require your stay in hospital, and would like to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Holy Communion or the Sick please contact Fr. Lawrence so that appropriate arrangements can be made before your admission to hospital. At the present time it may not be possible to offer this ministry in hospital for planned procedures. In the case of emergency admissions, **the onus is entirely on the patient and/or family member** to note the following directives:

- In the case of Neville Hall, please ask staff to contact Father Carney, or you may do so directly on 01873 851051.
- In the case of the Royal Gwent, please ask staff to contact the on-call Catholic Chaplain.
- In the case of Panteg Hospital or The Grange, please ask staff to contact Fr. Lawrence or you may contact me directly.

**Holy Communion at home:** If you would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact Father Lawrence so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation:** St Alban's on Wednesday from 6.30 – 6.55 p.m. and by arrangement with Canon David.

**Holy Communion at home:** If at the present time, you feel unable to re-join the parish community for Sunday Mass (or weekday Mass when there are fewer people present), and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact Canon David so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

**Housekeeper** for the Presbytery, mainly for cleaning and ironing – 3 hours per week. Please see Fr. David for more details.

**Children's Liturgy:** if there are children in St Felix this weekend, there will be Children's Liturgy at Mass. Unfortunately, no one has volunteered to assist with restarting this in St Alban's at the present time.

**THE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP** is a small team of parishioners who offer confidential help and support to families or individuals who have suffered the death of a loved one. The team offer support to the bereaved throughout the whole of St. Albans parish. Would you be interested in joining the group?

**Baptismal Certificates:** These are required prior to the celebration of First Holy Communion, Confirmation or Marriage, so as to confirm membership of the Church. They are sometimes asked for by Schools or the Local Authority too, but always to confirm a spiritual bond with Jesus and his Church. Is this always why parents ask for a copy of a certificate? Or is it just for admission to school or a free bus pass? Remember that at the Celebration of Baptism you undertook a solemn promise before God to bring up your child as a Catholic, and this includes attendance at Sunday Mass and receiving the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion! As family, school and parish we work together for the spiritual development of your children! Don't deprive your child of getting to know the person of Jesus by forgetting your obligations!

**Caring for those who cared – The Work of the Clergy Welfare Board:** A retiring collection will be held in this Parish **this weekend**. This will be allocated to the Clergy Retirement Fund. Gift Aid envelopes are at the back of the Church so that the offerings of taxpayers may be increased by 25%. Please give as generously as you can.

**Qualities necessary?** To have been confirmed yourself. To have a desire to live a Catholic life and to be a witness to others. To recognise that you don't have all the answers but to have a willingness to deepen your own faith as you share it with others. To believe that you won't be left to run the programme on your own, but to have a commitment to work with others to support young people grow in their faith. Please pray and reflect on whether the Lord is calling YOU to help in the ministry of **Catechesis!**

**Christmas offering to your Parish Priest:** Thank you to all who contributed to this, and for the other gifts; all much appreciated!

**Christmas Offering to your Parish Priest:** Many thanks to everyone who has contributed towards this, and for the other gifts I've received over the Christmas festivities. It's most appreciated after a frugal year!

**Church cleaning at St Alban's:** There is a desperate need for help in cleaning our Churches. CAN YOU COMMIT to being on a rota once in six weeks? There is no minimum age (within reason!!) and neither is there a restriction on it normally being done by female members of the parish! Please sign the list at the back of the Church if you can help so that a rota may be made.

**Confession** is one of the great Sacraments of love and healing. Through this Sacrament we receive God's deep, loving and absolute mercy when we turn to him and present our shortfalls, our failings, the little and the great things we have done wrong. The Church is often accused of being too rigorist and unrelenting, but what she presents to us is the ideal to strive towards. Not one of us is perfect and we all need the Sacrament of Reconciliation in this life to strengthen and renew us and to hear the words 'you are forgiven, it is forgotten, you are ALIVE'

**Could you help to clean our church?** The list of cleaners has been decimated by sickness and age. Would you be willing to go on a rota which would mean you would have to help to clean the church about once every 6 to 7 weeks. Please give your name to any member of the UCM.

**Crib Offerings:** The offering this year will be to support local homeless people. Amazing Grace Spaces is a charity that creates safe sleeping places for the homeless (sleeping pods). They are seeking funding to create as many safe sleeping places for rough sleepers in Newport as possible. As we recall this Christmas how there was "no room" for Jesus, Mary & Joseph, let's look towards providing immediate aid to the growing homeless population in Newport. Each sleeping pod costs £5,500. See the poster at the back of the Church or in front of the Lectionary for more details.

#### **Cycle of Prayer:**

**Eucharistic Adoration:** as we remember, this has been an important part of our spiritual lives in our parish for many years, and has been the source of many graces and blessings for those whose intentions have been brought before the Lord in prayer. During these challenging times, to be still in the presence of the Lord is an oasis of peace and prayer, and affords us the opportunity to not just pray for one another, but particularly for all who are affected by the virus in any way; that all may recognise the part which each one of us should fulfil in reducing the impact of the virus in our community. At the current time, we have Adoration for one hour every Monday after Mass; can you spend an hour in prayer before the Lord?

**"Instructions for my Funeral Mass":** Ever wondered how to let your family know your wishes? This leaflet, produced by the Catholic Church in England and Wales, helps to help make it easier for our family or our friends to arrange our funeral at what will be a sad and difficult time for them. Too often the issue of death is considered a taboo subject in our secular society. But in the light of our Catholic faith it is one which we should all have the confidence to face as the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead on Easter Sunday transforms our understanding of death. Faith tells us, that through our baptism we already share in that risen life of the Lord. This is a bond that nothing - including death - can ever destroy. Please consider asking for a copy from the back of the Church. The cost is only £1 each and will help to ease the burden on our loved ones.

Let's not forget that we also have a wide selection of cards for all occasions: on the stand there is a range of cards for birthdays, birth and baptism of children, engagements, weddings and anniversaries. On the shelves there are Mass Bouquet cards for various occasions, sympathy and anniversary of death Mass cards, get well and thanksgiving cards. Why not take a look, and support your parish!

**Sacristan at St Alban's:** Fr David has outlined the need for help in the Sacristy, for example by helping to keep the linens in order, the drawers tidy, and to generally assist with the preparation of liturgies in the Church especially for big celebrations. But not one person has offered to help... It is an essential responsibility of the parish that help is provided in this important area, and a failure to do so implies that you do not care... Can you help?

**Sacristy Library:** The bookshelves in the Sacristy have now been sorted and are available to those who would like to borrow a book during their adoration hour. There are books on scripture, prayers and devotions, reference and stories of saints. All we would ask is that the books are returned to where they were taken from at the end of your adoration.

**Your financial support for our parish:** Thank you to those who have reviewed their contributions recently; it is much appreciated! There are still some **Gift Aid Scheme** envelopes in the Sacristy for collection. If you are not already part of this scheme to further support our parish, please consider joining. Please talk to Canon David if you can support our parish in this way. There are also envelopes available in the Sacristy for the **Planned Giving Scheme**. Many people appreciate having a set of envelopes as it helps them to keep track of their regular contribution to our parish. If you wish to have a set of envelopes but cannot join the Gift Aid Scheme please ask Canon David for a box from the Sacristy. Finally, if you haven't reviewed your financial contributions recently, please do consider doing so, as our community depends on the regular and generous donations of every parishioner. Please pick up your box from Canon David. Thank you for your regular contributions to support our community.