

JESUS PRINCE OF PEACE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In recent months, one of the quotes from Saint Carlo Acutis, a recently canonised young saint, which I have found particularly helpful is this:

"Sadness is looking at ourselves; happiness is looking towards God."

I have found that when I keep my eyes on Jesus, it becomes so much easier to look forward in hope and in love. Daily Adoration each morning with Fr Tom and many of the lay faithful has been a real gamechanger for me. I am deeply grateful to him and to all those who attend. I would love to see you there too, if you are able to make it.

Reflecting back over the past six months, when Bishop Philip asked me to pick up the mantle from Fr Jeremy following his retirement, I was very aware that this would be a challenging task. I am extremely grateful to the administration teams and to so many of you who have been so supportive, particularly in the early days. When faced with new challenges, it can be easy to focus on our weaknesses rather than reaching out to God's grace, which is always offered to help us. Surrender to God is often the only way forward — and there has certainly been room for God to act over these past six months!

I thank God for our wonderful clergy: Fr Joe, Fr Mark, Fr Andrew, Fr Tom, and Deacon Nick. Each has taken on greater responsibilities, and by leaning into their particular gifts, they have strengthened our pastoral area.

Fr Joe and Fr Tom are developing greater opportunities for healing ministry, which has been so important as we welcome new people into our churches. Recent healing services have also been well attended with many taking up the opportunity for individual prayer for physical, emotional and spiritual healing.

Fr Andrew is kindly overseeing our Pastoral Area Transitional Finance Committee, made up of skilled volunteers from each of our parish communities.

Fr Mark has been a tremendous support in our evangelisation work in our schools and continues to generously take on extra duties when needed.

Deacon Nick has been sharing his gift of preaching across several of our churches and hopes to expand this ministry after Easter.

Our administrators, and you, the lay faithful, have also taken on greater responsibility for the building of the Kingdom of God in the Southeast Hampshire Pastoral Area. This shared working is bearing real fruit, with a clear cultural shift towards becoming more invitational, more missional, and deeper in our own lives as disciples of Jesus Christ. Let us pray that the Lord continues to bless and direct all that we do.

In this letter, I hope to communicate what is happening in our pastoral area as we move towards becoming one canonical parish, to share some of the wonderful evangelisation work taking place, and to highlight the many opportunities to make Lent a truly fruitful season for each of us.

As clergy, we have added extra Masses during Lent, particularly to assist those who work. You would be very welcome to join us at daily Mass.

Becoming One Canonical Parish

Over the past three years, as a Pastoral Area, we have been exploring the 10-year plan shared by Bishop Philip. From the beginning of this process, we as clergy chose to be proactive. As Canon Gerard shared:

"It is better to be agents of change rather than victims of change."

This has involved representatives from all our churches, schools, and hospital communities coming together, with regular consultation and opportunities for everyone to share what is important to them, along with their ideas and hopes for the future.

I have shared these developments in a recent letter to Bishop Philip, which can be found on our Pastoral Area website, along with the minutes from our Pastoral Area meeting on Saturday 24th January.

Although we chose the new name for our parish, "Jesus Prince of Peace", nine months ago, certain canonical processes still need to be completed, which are currently underway. As one person explained to me:

"It's a bit like buying a house. You can agree, but the paperwork takes longer than you expect."

It is hoped that this canonical process will be completed by Pentecost this year, when we will once again hold a Mass at Oaklands on the afternoon of Saturday 23rd May. Please do put this date in your diary.

What Will Change?

For many people, I envisage that very little will change in their day-to-day experience. We will continue to discern what activities are best done locally within our church communities and what is better done together across the parish.

Priests will continue to serve specific communities as they do now, with the Pastoral Coordinator becoming the overarching Parish Priest. (This role is currently held by me in all churches, with the exception of St Patrick's, St Thomas's, and St Joseph's.)

In terms of finances, there will be both a central bank account for the new overarching parish and local church accounts for day-to-day matters. The details of how this will operate will be clarified and shared by our Transitional Finance Team, in whom I have complete confidence. I am grateful to Yvonne Hands and Ellen McCarthy, who will oversee this from an administrative perspective.

Evangelisation

Please see overleaf the wonderful newsletter prepared by Josie Higson, our Pastoral Area Coordinator for Evangelisation. I am deeply grateful to her and to the team of over 40 evangelists who continue to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to those whom the Lord is calling.

Our work in Oaklands School last term has been particularly fruitful, and I am very grateful to the staff and students there for their commitment and generosity. This year, we have over 50 young people enrolled for Confirmation, the largest number for many years!

Lent

Please also see the many wonderful opportunities available to help each of us enter more deeply into Lent and prepare ourselves for Easter. Thank you to all who have offered these opportunities.

Let us remember to slow down and listen to the Lord's voice, who is calling each of us into a closer relationship with Him through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

God bless,

Fr James

Good News from Alpha

This autumn, the Alpha Course has been running across five sites in our Pastoral Area. Courses for adults have taken place at Sacred Heart Church, St Michael's Church, and St Thomas More School, with approximately 50 adults taking part. In the parish settings, guests were welcomed with tasty meals before watching each Alpha video. Guests appreciated the warm, welcoming environment and the opportunity to hear and share each other's life experiences. As the weeks went by and conversations deepened, guests shared that Alpha had helped them make new friends as well as grow in their faith.



The Holy Spirit Day, a day of peaceful prayer and reflection on the role of the Holy Spirit, was for many guests a powerful, moving and transformative moment. This comment from one of our guests encapsulates the experience of many: "Really enjoyed my time on Alpha. The Holy Spirit Day was particularly moving, but found every session to be enlightening, a learning experience and at times an awakening to some of the questions I'd been reflecting on."



We also ran two Alpha courses for young people - one in Sacred Heart Church, as the first part of the Confirmation programme, and the second in Oaklands School. Approximately 50 young people attended across both courses. In Oaklands School we were blessed to work collaboratively with other Christian churches connected with the school.

The Youth Alpha Series covers the same content as for adults but with a fast-paced youth-focussed approach. Discussions were led by young people who had themselves been on an Alpha course and students responded respectfully, creating a safe environment to share their thoughts and beliefs. Both groups came together for their Holy Spirit Day, where they enjoyed games, pizza, and of course, the opportunity to connect with God and welcome the Holy Spirit. Young worship leaders from One Church also joined us, helping the young guests to relax and connect with God through worship. Many of these students will continue their faith journey through the Sacrament of Confirmation, and we look forward to celebrating with them in June. We hope that the deep and genuine sharing of faith will continue for all participants.

We look forward now to Spring Alpha, which will run from the first week in March in Hayling Island, Cosham and online. If you would like to try Alpha, whether you are new to questions of faith or have worshiped God for many years, a warm welcome awaits! For further information, email alpha@jesusprinceofpeace.org.uk.

Jesus Prince of Peace

Weekday Mass Schedule for Lent (check newsletters for changes and more information)

<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Church</u>
Monday	7:00am 12:30pm	Sacred Heart Queen Alexandra Hospital
Tuesday	9am 7pm	St Colman's Station Masses (Rota)
Wednesday	7:30am 9:30am 10:15am 10:30am 12:00pm	St Colman's St Joseph's St Michael's St Patrick's Sacred Heart
Thursday	7am 10:00am 10:00am 10:30am	Sacred Heart St Thomas's St Edmund's St Patrick's
Friday	9:30am 10:30am 12:00pm 6:30pm 7:00pm	St Joseph's St Patrick's Sacred Heart St Colman's St Josephs (Polish)
Saturday	12:00pm	St Michael's

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Monday – Fri 7:30am-8:30am Monday 9am-5pm Wednesday 10:45am-11:30am Friday 10am – 12noon Saturday 5.30pm-6pm Sunday 5pm-6pm	Sacred Heart St Colman's St Michael's St Joseph's Sacred Heart St Colman's
Stations of the Cross	Thursday 9:30am Thursday 9:30am Thursday 4pm Friday 10am Friday 6pm Friday 6:30 (Polish) Friday 7pm 27 th February , 13 th and 27 th March Saturday 5pm	St Edmund's St Thomas's St Patrick's St Joseph's St Colman's St Joseph's St Michael's Sacred Heart
Saturday Mini-Retreat Days in Lent	11am Lives of the Saints Talk / Meditation 11:30am Adoration and Confessions Noon Mass 12:30pm Rosary 1pm Shared Lunch	St Michael's
Lectio Divina Bible Timeline Bible Study (The Psalm) Bible Timeline Bible Study	Monday 5pm-6pm Monday 6:45pm Monday 7:45pm-9:15pm Tuesday 10.15am (begins 24 th February) Wednesday 7pm	St Colman's Sacred Heart Zoom (St Michael's) St Michael's St Patrick's
Ecumenical 'Talking Jesus' Lenten Course	Mondays 7.30pm Thursdays 11am (after mass) at	All Saints', Catherington St. Edmund's
Rosary	Tuesdays 6:45pm	Sacred Heart
Sacrament of Reconciliation	Tuesdays 6-7pm at Station Masses Saturday 11.30am Saturday 5pm-6pm Saturday 5:30pm Sunday 10am	Rota (check newsletters) St Michael's Sacred Heart St Coleman's St Patrick's
Spring Alpha Courses	Mondays 7pm-9pm Tuesday 7pm-8:30pm Thursdays 7pm-9pm	St Colman's Online Hayling