

As part of a slow process of normalisation, the **Sunday 10.30am Solemn Mass is now being celebrated publicly again.** If all goes according to plan it is the intention to celebrate Masses once more at 8am and 9am on Sundays from May 2nd. We hope to restore the 7.15am daily Mass when restrictions are lifted in June – until then, whenever the church is open there should be a steward present. **We are very grateful to those who give so generously of their time enabling the church to remain open.**

At present, the confessionals in church are not being used for the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** but please feel free to ring at The Rectory door at any reasonable time and ask for a priest to hear your confession in the house parlour.

**A prayer for a happy death by Saint John Henry Newman:**

*"My Lord and Saviour, support me in that hour in the strong arms of your sacraments, and by the fresh fragrance of your consolations. Let the absolving words be said over me, and the holy oil sign and seal me, and your own Body be my food; and let my sweet Mother, Mary, breathe on me, and my angel whisper peace to me, and my glorious saints smile upon me; that in them all, and through them all, I may receive the gift of perseverance, and die, as I desire to live, in your faith, in your Church, in your service and in your love. Amen"*

**There is now a new way to contribute.**



Three **"digital collection plates"** will be found in the church. They can be used to make donations using contactless or chip and pin (and directed to specific areas of your choice). We are finally catching up with the technology! The provider suggests those who intend to use the facility regularly should go online in advance to **DONA** and register the card (they will also have the option to complete a Gift Aid declaration).

**Our refurbished Website is now online. Do take a look at:**  
**[www.sjrcc.org.uk](http://www.sjrcc.org.uk)**

New sets of **Weekly Offering Envelopes** are available at the back of church. If you cannot find a set in your name or would like to begin to give in this simple, regular way, please contact the parish office. 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 set out below:-

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

**St James's  
Roman Catholic Church**  
– *Spanish Place* –

22 George Street, London W1U 3QY



**THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER**  
**18th April 2021**

The link for all streamed events is

**<https://www.youtube.com/c/StJamessSpanishPlace>**

Readings (and other material) can be found at **[www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com)**

**TODAY'S LITURGY**

***Acts 3:13-15,17-19***

*You killed the prince of life.  
God, however, raised him from the dead.*

**Lift up the light of your face on us,  
O Lord.**

***1 John 2:1-5***

*He is the sacrifice that takes our sins away,  
and not only ours, but the whole world's.*

***St Luke 24:35-48***

*So you see how it is written that the Christ  
would suffer and on the third day  
rise from the dead.*

**Music at 10.30am**

Missa Maria  
Magdalene  
Lobo

Aurora lucis rutilat  
Lassus

Regina caeli  
Webbe

Praeludium in G  
Bruhns

**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](mailto:spanishplace@sjrcc.org.uk)

Web: **[www.sjrcc.org.uk](http://www.sjrcc.org.uk)**

## The Rector writes . . . . .

There is hardly ever any reaction to what I preach or write but my personal reservations about cremation, which I shared at the beginning of last Sunday's homily, have evoked several responses. It is permissible for a Catholic to be cremated – that is absolutely clear – but my own reaction to the rite at a crematorium is to feel that as a body is removed from sight there is something penultimate about the experience, whereas at a burial there is no doubt that this is the endgame. Our Catechism states: *“the bodies of the dead must be treated with respect and charity, in faith and hope of the Resurrection”*. It goes on to say: *“the Church permits cremation, provided it does not demonstrate a denial of faith in the resurrection of the body”*. For us, the human body is nothing less than *“the temple of the Holy Spirit”* and should be treated with respect in death as in life. In the case of cremation the Church asks that ashes should be treated with the same integrity as a corpse and that they should be buried as a single entity (the increasingly common practice of scattering ashes or dividing them is forbidden to Catholics).

This (literally) morbid train of thought was occasioned by the death of the Duke of Edinburgh (on whose soul may our Lord have mercy) and the constant media references to someone (in this case Prince Philip) having *“passed away”*. Language is important as it reveals fundamental attitudes and it does seem that we have reached a point where many find it hard to face up to death as the fundamental reality it is. Where society has only a tenuous hold on the Christian verities it is easy to see why the vocabulary which is used to express the ending of a human journey has to be anaesthetised. People live, and people die. They do not slip away into the next room (as a piece of prose often used at funerals suggests) but they face a direct and personal judgement in the presence of the One who created them and to whom they must now give explanation. Death is both the climax of each human life and also its most profound crisis as the natural human reaction is to hold on to what we know rather than launch out into the deep – which is the very thing Christ asked of his disciples (Luke 5:4). We serve no one, most particularly the dying and the bereaved, by attempting to soften the devastating reality of death.

But *“death is transformed by Christ. Jesus the Son of God, also himself suffered the death that is part of the human condition. Because of Christ, Christian death has a positive meaning”* (Catechism). It is only if we take death seriously, as the Eternal Father did in allowing his own Son's life to collapse into a grave, that we can begin to enter into the Easter life revealed in the post-Resurrection appearances of Jesus. It is only when with Saint Thomas we touch (in our case by faith) the wounds in Christ's body that we can hope to see the radical change and direct continuity which will mark our individual share in the Paschal Mystery. *“Anyone who*

*knows Easter cannot despair”* (Dietrich Bonhoeffer). In Christian devotion, as well as its theology, the crucifix is central and irreplaceable. Here is the fullest statement possible of God's identification with his creatures in taking into himself the fear associated with dying and the disintegration experienced in death. The wounds in Christ's body are life-draining and yet they become the source of an unimagined release of new life.

Resurrection is not resuscitation. We are not here talking of bodies being given an added time bonus (as with Lazarus) in a return to what has been. Death in all its finality has to be accepted before we can begin to make the words of Teresa of Avila our own: *“I want to see God. In order to see him, I must die”*. In this light we can comprehend Francis of Assisi's designation: *“Blessed are you, my Lord, for our sister bodily death”*. Death has to be faced if we are to live well. Euphemisms help no one, least of all those about to make their last journey. As Catholics we have a wonderfully consoling liturgical pattern to accompany the dying and we believe that we can continue to support and influence one another beyond death through the charity of prayer, expressed most powerfully in the Eucharist. Let us ask for the grace to be able to say with Saint Paul: *“for me, to live is Christ and to die is gain”* (Philippians 1:21).

Christopher Colven

## NOTICES

Next Sunday is **Good Shepherd Sunday** and we have a mandatory second collection for the training of priests for the Westminster diocese. There are donation envelopes at the back of church. Please be as generous as you can – we need more priests: we need well-formed priests.

This Sunday at the 7pm Mass the first group of our young people will receive the **Sacrament of Confirmation** – the second part of the cohort will do so next Sunday (25<sup>th</sup> April) also at 7pm. Please keep these teenagers (and their families) in your prayers at his time: they are our future and each one of them an encouraging sign from God to our parish community.

It is forty years since Monsignor Miles undertook a major refurbishment of Saint James's. The work done then has stood the test of time but there are areas which are beginning to look a little tired. In a building of such quality as ours great care has to be taken in any kind of restoration and this means that anything envisaged would not be cheap. **In this special year of devotion to Saint Joseph** we would like to make a start on his statue and its surrounds, and then over coming years to look at Saint James's Shrine and the Martyrs Chapel. Anyone interested in supporting this project please contact the parish office.