

# The Abbey Parish Newsletter

21<sup>st</sup> March, 2021 Fifth Sunday of Lent

Full details of times of Services are posted in the Abbey and the other churches in the parish

**Confessions: On request after 1205 Masses in Ashburton**

**Facebook page: search for Buckfast Abbey Parish**

Liturgical Calendar:

Monday	St. Benedict
Tuesday	Lent
Wednesday	Lent
Thursday	Annunciation of the Lord
Friday	Lent
Saturday	Lent

### "Oremus pro invicem"

Please pray for those who are sick:  
Geraldine Thompson Pat Hedges  
Margaret McAvoy Fred Cooke  
John Goulden

If you or someone you know would like to be included here, please contact Fr. Francis

Live-streaming of daily Mass and the Divine Office continues. You can view online in any of these places: [www.buckfast.org.uk/live](http://www.buckfast.org.uk/live)  
Youtube.com/c/BuckfastAbbey  
Facebook: @buckfastabbeyofficialsite

Phone line for prayer:  
call 01364 72768

Parish Priest: Fr. Francis  
Straw; 01364 645526;  
[parish@buckfast.org.uk](mailto:parish@buckfast.org.uk)

**On Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> March, the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, the Mass in Ashburton will begin at 10 a.m. rather than the usual 12.05 p.m. I apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.**

The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have welcomed the Prime Minister's suggestion of a National Day of Reflection on the first anniversary of the first lockdown, Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Bishop Mark has asked all parishes in the diocese to lengthen the time for which a church is open on that day, so that everyone has more opportunity to visit the church and pray about the many needs, hopes and sorrows which have emerged over the last year.

To this end, our church in Ashburton will be open this coming Tuesday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The usual Mass will be celebrated at 12.05 p.m. The thanks of the parish go to Geoff Pring and his team of stewards for making this possible.

Please pray for those whose anniversary occurs at this time:

Emilie Post; Violet Lloyd-Still; Br. Hilarion Mohn; Archbishop Francis Grimshaw; Aelred Hevett OSB; Elizabeth Daley; Ann Hood; Betty Gable; Maude Stafford; Clare Furnieux; Agnes Hodgson; Christine Sampson; May Grout; Mary Anne Daw; Dulcibell Russell; Stanley Allen; Edward Goddard; Dame Bede Wilson OSB; Isabel Andrews; Mabel Gardener; Rose Taylor; Arthur Baker; Alfreda Howe; Kathleen Furlong; Sr. Mary Kelly;

**May they rest in peace**

### Last weekend's collections

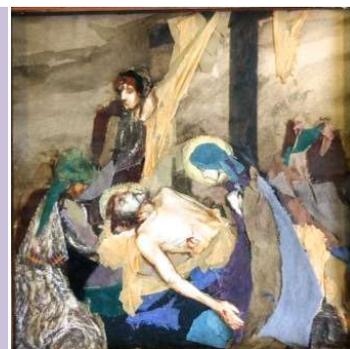
	Gift Aided	Online
Buckfastleigh 5 p.m. Sat	£10.00	£15.00
Abbey 9 a.m.	£31.00	£22.31
Abbey 10:30 a.m.	£68.72	£20.00
Ashburton 10:30am	£35.00	£58.30
South Brent 9 a.m.	£15.00	£24.62
Added value through gift aid	£31.31	£16.25

To donate on line, visit <https://www.buckfast.org.uk/donate> and scroll down to select which Mass you normally attend.

If you are self-isolating and need help getting food or medicine, please give Fr. Francis a call.

### Parish Stations of the Cross on Zoom

Fridays in Lent at 7.05 p.m.  
About 20 people enjoyed this last Friday, so if you would like to join them, click on: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8629636202?pwd=NkRka2QrTkE1dUpMUCtOWXVqYkxaZz09>  
or go to the Zoom website and use Meeting ID: 862 9636 2027 Passcode: 507713



In order to amplify the voices of women who often go unheard, SPUC has launched a petition as part of our Her Voice initiative.

### Women's rights?

When making decisions about abortion, our politicians ignore the voices of women who have been adversely affected by abortion. In the name of 'women's rights', they invalidate the experiences of those women whose stories show the harm that abortion can do.

We must call on Matt Hancock, the Health Secretary, to promise to listen to the voices of women who have been hurt by abortion and take their experiences into account when making decisions that will forever impact the lives of tens of thousands of women and their children.

### Sign and share

Please sign and share this petition by clicking on the link below and together we can ensure that Matt Hancock and others in power cannot ignore the voices of women who have suffered as a result of abortion. <https://citizengo.org/en-gb/200963-tell-health-secretary-stop-ignoring-women-hurt-abortion>



With each day that passes, it feels as though we are regaining a little more of our "old" life. This week the children in Meldon (our three to five-year olds), had a Pirates' Day and all came suitably attired ... including the staff. The children did lots of "yo, ho, ho-ing" and some had to walk the plank (more than once) for making off with the pirate gold. There were pirate hats to make and doubloons to count, not to mention the home corner to play in which had become a galleon. It is when you see your colleagues in stripey shirts and jaunty bandanas, readying themselves for the day ahead, that you can't help a little feeling of "Yep, this is more like it!" And when you see them at the end of the day, well pleased with the day's learning but looking a little bedraggled and heading off home for a well-earned tot of rum, you hope it will be the first of many (pirate days, not tots of rum...).

Musical instrument lessons are well underway once more, with our children having the opportunity to learn drums, singing and piano in addition to the music learning with the whole class. The enthusiasm with which these lessons have been taken up suggests that the children are keener than ever to learn whatever they can, having been restricted for much of the past year.

Also, this week, for the first time in exactly a year, we included attendance rates in the newsletter as, all too soon, we will be held to account for such things when inspections re-start. Whilst inspections are not to be savoured, when they resume in full force, they will be a sign that true "normality" is returning. It may be a long path ahead, but I truly hope we all keep to the rules. The life we once knew seems tantalisingly close, but what is emerging is still very fragile and could be snatched back in a moment if the "data" does not go the right way.

Speaking to Crux about the state of the crisis 10 years into the conflict, Giampaolo Silvestri, secretary general of the AVSI Foundation, which carries out development and humanitarian projects in Syria, said that "fighting in Syria for the most part is over, but the bomb of poverty has exploded."

With roughly 80 percent of the population living under the poverty line, "it's an enormous problem," he said, adding that in his view, small reconstruction projects must begin in rural areas, supporting schools, hospitals, and other essential services.

Similarly, Flavia Chevallard, AVSI's representative for Syria, said the decade-long war has caused "an enormous economic crisis," as well as Syria's isolation from the international community. Things were already difficult when Lebanon's financial crisis began, and the coronavirus pandemic has compounded the situation, she said, adding that the cumulative impact has been "catastrophic."

"There's been a fast devaluation of the local currency: the Syrian pound lost three quarters of its value during 2020, and prices of basic items increased 200 percent. This means that people are not able anymore to get enough food, many people tell me that they cannot even afford bread anymore," she said. With the bulk of the population living in poverty, "the needs are incommensurable in the whole country," Chevallard said, noting that in areas where AVSI is active, such as Aleppo, Damascus, and portions of the country's northeast and northwest, "the situation is very critical."

"There is another perception that I feel people have in the Western world, and it's that in the Middle East people is used to war and violence. This is not true," she said, adding, "Very often people here ask me if I knew Syria before the war, and they talk about their life before."

"It's touching to see how people are still shocked by how the war arrived and destroyed their lives, as anybody in Europe would be," she said, noting that at the moment, "hope is unfortunately rare after ten years of war and no signs of an improvement."

Syria's pre-war population of around 22 million has been drastically reduced or scattered. Some 6.7 million are internally displaced, most of whom are living in camps, and an additional 5.6 million are living abroad as refugees, roughly 93 percent of whom have relocated to neighboring Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey.

Since December alone, nearly one million people were driven from their homes in Syria's north as fighting lingers, with UN agencies warning the battle for the Idlib province could turn into a bloodbath.

Squeezed by international sanctions, crippled by the loss of many of its hospitals and schools, and burdened by the coronavirus pandemic, Syria also faces an enormous humanitarian crisis in which some 13.4 million people required some form of assistance as of January 2021. According to the UN, more than 12 million people in Syria struggle to find enough food to get through a single day, and some 500,000 children are chronically malnourished.

You can help the people of Syria by donating to Aid to the Church in Need: <https://acnuk.org/get-involved/donate/>

### **Marriage Matters:** Reflections on the Sunday readings.

Unconditional love

Love is called to be unconditional, not 'counting the cost', not 50/50, but both giving 100%. Today's Gospel reminds us a rich harvest is only possible when a single wheat grain falls on the ground and dies. Our loving efforts, trials and difficulties in marriage are ways of 'dying' to a lifestyle contrary to what God is calling us to.

### **Hee, hee!**

Things people actually said in court:

Q. What is your date of birth? A. July 15th. Q. What year? A. Every year.

Q. What gear were you in at the moment of impact? A. Gucci sweats and Reeboks.

Q. This myasthenia gravis, does it affect your memory at all? A. Yes. Q. And in what way does it affect your memory? A. I forget. Q. You forget? Can you give us an example of something you've forgotten?