***SAINT ALBAN’S PARISH***

Chapel of Ease: Sacred Heart and St Felix

Ellick Street, Blaenavon

Saint Alban’s Church and Presbytery

Conway Road, Pontypool, NP4 6HL

**PARISH PRIEST Canon Paul Millar**

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**No 77**

**This week’s Masses and intentions:**

Saturday 4.30 p.m. St Felix People of the Parish **8th Sunday of Ordinary Time**

 6 p.m. St Alban’s

11 a.m. St. Alban’s Jaqueline Rowlands, R.I.P.

Monday 9.30 a.m. St. Alban’s Ann & John Smith, R.I.P.

 1.30 p.m. St. Alban’s Rosary and Adoration

Tuesday No Mass today

Wednesday 12 noon St. David Lewis

 6 p.m. St. Alban’s David Bedford, R.I.P. **Ash Wednesday**

Thursday 9.30 a.m. St. Felix Holy Souls

Friday 12 noon St. Alban’s Joan Cowley, R.I.P.

**Next week’s Masses and intentions:**

Saturday 4.30 p.m. St Felix People of the Parish **1st Sunday of Lent**

 6 p.m. St Alban’s

11 a.m. St. Alban’s Thanksgiving

**Collections** December **Gift Aid** £1642.00 **Non Gift Aid** £857.35

 January **Gift Aid** £1390.00 **Non Gift Aid** £808.70

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

**Meetings this week**:

U.C.M. Monday after Rosary and Adoration in the Presbytery

PAC Monday at 7 p.m. in the Presbytery

Faith Exploration: Wednesday after the 6 p.m. Mass in the Presbytery

First Communion Class Friday at 4.30 p.m. in the Sacristy

We have started the **Offertory Procession** at the 11 a.m. Mass on Sunday, There is a list at the back of the Church for volunteers. Please sign if you can help and we will make a rota.

**Parish Advisory Council**: There will be a meeting on Monday at **7 p.m.** in the Presbytery. Will all those who have put their names forward please attend.

**Wednesday is Ash Wednesday,** the beginning of the Lenten Season. Mass will be at 12noon in Usk and 6.00pm in Pontypool. Ashes will be Blessed and distrusted at both Masses. Please remember that Ash Wednesday is a day of Fast and Abstinence.

**Adoration** on Monday from at 1.30 p.m. to 2 p.m. with Rosary. All are welcome.

**Book of Intentions:** If you have a special intention or concern please put it in the book in front of Our Ladies Altar and it will be prayed for at adoration.

**Deanery Mass**

There will be a Deanery Mass for the Jubilee Year at St. David's Church, Cwmbran (NP44 1TT) on Thursday, 13th March 2025, beginning at 7:00pm.

**Day of Reconciliation**

A Day of Reconciliation will be held at Belmont Abbey on Saturday 15 March.  Led by Dom Alexander Kenyon (Prior of Belmont) the day will run from 10am – 3.15 and include spiritual talks, confessions and Mass.  The cost is £40 per person including lunch.  For further information please contact Andrew Grant at andrewgrantDL@gmail.com

**Holy Communion at home:** If you are sick or housebound or know of anybody who would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact Canon Paul so that arrangements can be made.

**Walk with me Booklets for Lent**

These booklets are a prayer and scripture journey for the Lenten Season. Copies are available at the back of the Church, price £1 a copy.

**Year Books** have arrived and are available from the Repository at £4 each. They are an invaluable resource containing lots of useful information, e.g. liturgical calendar, contact details of Churches, Priests, Church Organisations across Wales and beyond.

**The Catholic Post:** copies of this month’s papers are 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 basked provided at St. Felix.

**Fr. Peter McClaren** is the Roman Catholic Chaplin of the Grange Hospital. If you or a family member are in the Grange and would like to receive the sacrament of Eucharist and/or Confession please contact him on 07561 469 343

**Archbishop Mark’s newsletter for March** is available from the Diocesan website rcadc.org

Please note that there will not be a Mass this coming Friday, The Weekday Mass for the rest of Lent will be on Tuesdays at 12noon.

Stations of the Cross

During Lent there will be Stations of the cross on Friday Afternoons at 3.00pm alternating between the Priory and St David Lewis. This Friday the Stations will be in the Priory followed by refreshments.

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

**CymFed Flame Congress** Cardiff-Menevia Youth will be joining 10,000 others at Wembley Arena on 15th March 2025 for the CYMFed FLAME Congress! We’ve secured a limited number of seats at just £31 per person, which includes transportation (please bring your own packed lunch). Seats will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis and are only fully confirmed upon payment of the ticket price (you will receive an email with payment details once you have booked). The event is open to young people from Year 9 (typically 14 years old) to university age. If you would like to attend, please sign up through link: <https://forms.gle/6bD2kM3hfQv2sFjC9> or scan QR code on poster by Friday 21st February 2025.

**100 Club:**  Would you like to take part in 2025? The cost is £1 per month which can be paid monthly or c £12 for the year. The Prize is £25 per month. If you are interested please put your contribution together with your name in an envelope and give it to Treena or leave it in the Sacristy before the 19th of January

Please note that this will only go ahead if there is sufficient interest to make it viable.

**Holy Communion at home:** If you are sick or housebound or know of anybody who would like to receive Holy Communion at home, please contact Canon Paul so that arrangements can be made.

**Fr. Peter McClaren** has been appointed as Roman Catholic Chaplin of the Grange Hospital. If you or a family member are in the Grange and would like to receive the sacrament of Eucharist and/or Confession please contact him on 07561 469 343

**Adoration**: Beginning this week, there will be adoration of the Blessed Sacrament every other Monday from 1.30p.m.to 2 p.m at St. Alban’s, starting with the Rosary. All are welcome. There is a book of Intentions in front of Our Lady’s Altar for any concerns any parishioners might have. Please put them in the book and they will be included in the prayers at Adoration.

**Year Books for 2025** are late this year as they had to be reprinted because of the amalgamation of the dioceses of Cardiff and Menevia. We hope to have them in the near future.

**Crib Offerings**

Archbishop Mark has asked that this year’s Crib Offerings go towards the following causes:

Abroad: Aid to the Holy Land, through the Knights and Dames of the Holy Sepulchre and Friends of the Holy Land Home: Youth Ministry in the Archdiocese.

**U.C.M.**  We have had a U.C.M. group in the Parish for many years. It has been decided that the meetings will now take place on a fortnightly basis on Mondays starting at 1.45 p.m. We will begin each meeting with 15 mins adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with prayers followed by the meeting. As a group we assist the Parish Priest with the social aspects of the Parish in any way we can. We would welcome new members. Interested ? Please contact Dorothy Gane 01633 484263 or Treena Hitchings 01495 756598

The Archbishop’s newsletter for October is now available on the Archdiocesan website: <https://rcadc.org/welcome-to-the-archbishops-newsletter-for-october-2024/>

**The Catholic Post:** copies of this month’s papers (November) are 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 basked provided at St. Felix.

 **Christmas Prize Draw**: The Christmas draw raised £1156 towards Church Funds. There is a list of all the winners at the back of the Church. If you have not already collected your prize, please do so after the Masses this weekend. Thank you to all those who helped in any way.

**Church Cleaning**  Thank you to the 7 ladies who gave their time to make sure that our church is beautiful for Christmas. Thank you also to those ladies who will be doing the flowers on Monday. They always do such a good job. It is very much appreciated.

 **Parishioners Ideas to help support the Development of our Parish Community**. we would like to extend community events and to help subsidise costs we are considering making an application to the National Lottery Fund for all Wales. Please take a letter from the back of the Church for more information. Please complete the form and return it as soon as you can.

**Second Collection for Sick & Retired Clergy Fund:  This Weekend**

This weekend there will be a second collection for the Archdiocese’s Sick & Retired Clergy Fund.  The fund makes a vital contribution to providing our priests with a secure and dignified retirement.   If you would like to Gift Aid your donation, please pick up an envelope or leaflet at the back of the church.  You can also donate online by visiting the Archdiocese’s website [www.rcadc.org/donations/](http://www.rcadc.org/donations/)  or via the QR code (insert photo of QR code attached with this email)

**Mass of Remembrance** to remember and pray for the repose of the souls of our loved ones, especially those who have passed away in the last year will be on Saturday next, the 9th November at 11 a.m. in St. Alban’s. There will be light refreshments in the hall afterwards

**Padre Pio Mini Vinnies**: are a group of children in our school who think of ways in which they can help children who are not as fortunate as themselves. As it is Harvest time they have been collecting tins of food some of which they want to give to pensioners in our Parish which they hope will be accepted with kindness and love.

**First Communion 2025**: If your child is in Year 3 or above and you would like them to be prepared to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion next year – there will be an initial meeting for parents on Thursday at the Presbytery at 5 p.m. Please come along so that we can arrange dates and times.

**Preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism:** The next meetings will be on **this** Thursday 26th of September and Thursday 3rd of October at 6 p.m. in the Presbytery. If you wish your child to be baptised, please contact Canon Paul to express your interest.

**Do you need childcare provision for a nursery-age child (3-4 years old)?**  We're exploring the possibility of opening a nursery class and want to establish if there is sufficient demand.  The Local Authority won't fund nursery education in our school and so we are working with Willow Tree, a childcare provider, to offer nursery placements to children who will join our Reception Class the following year.   There is a fee for using the childcare provision but, where eligible, fees can be paid with childcare vouchers.

To register your interest or to ask questions about the nursery provision and childcare vouchers, please contact Hannah at Willow Tree - email: willowtreenurserycwmbran@outlook.com or call: 07949285597 Please see the poster at the back of the Church.

**Cleaning Rota** the Rota seems to have fallen into mis-use with only one or two groups fulfilling their commitment. So we will start afresh and I would ask that anyone who would be willing to go on the Rota would put their name on the form at the back of the Church so that a working rota can be made

**Resources for Catechists**: Are you a catechist in our church? Are you interested in guiding others on their faith journey? You can now receive a regular email with news and resources which will help you fulfil this role, sent directly from the diocesan director of adult religious education. To register your interest please register online: tinyurl.com/RCADC-CatForm. Let's grow together in our future formation

**Flowers for our Churches for Easter**: Donations to ensure our churches are beautiful would be very welcome and can be given to Priscilla or Margaret Vidler or put in the collection in a clearly marked envelope.

**Faith Exploration**: Are you thinking about becoming a Catholic? Are you a Catholic who would like to know more about your faith? Come and join us on Thursday at 7 p.m. in the Presbytery. The subject this week is ‘The Adventure of Prayer’

**Census Form**: In order to enable us to update our records I would be grateful if you would complete the parish census form with as much detail as you wish to disclose and return the signed form to the church or post it through the presbytery door. Please include and dependants for family members in your household. The forms are at the back of the Church.

**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.

**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 the this weekend.

**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.

**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. If you do pay tax and gift aid your donation the diocese can claim back 25p in the £1 at no extra cost to you.

**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.

**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?

**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’

**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!