LENTEN PROGRAMME FOR 2023

Tuesday evening from 28 February to 4 April Food served from 7:30 - sessions finish by 9:00

SYCAMORE

Each year our Parish tries to offer a Lenten Program to help us deepen our faith. This year we are pleased to announce the return of Sycamore. The format comprises a light meal, short video presentations and an opportunity for small group chat. The material is curated by our own, and much beloved, London Priest Fr Stephen Wang, who now works in Rome.

"Living the Christian Faith in the World"

(1) CREATION, FALL, SALVATION -The goodness of creation. Suffering and sin. The gift of salvation.
(2) THE MEANING OF LOVE -What is love? How to love your neighbour. Knowing the love of God.

(3) FINDING TRUE FREEDOM - Is there such a thing as right and wrong? Where can we find moral guidance? How do you discover your true identity?

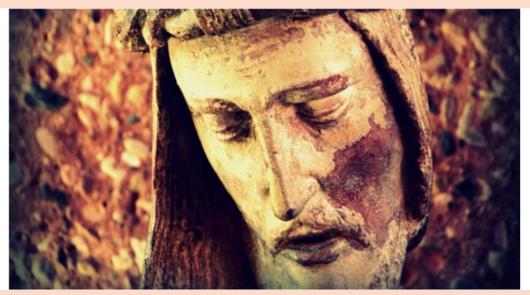
(4) FORGIVENESS, HEALING AND MISSION - Forgiveness and the Sacrament of Confession. Healing and the Sacrament of the Sick. Christian mission and the call to share our faith.

(5) THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH - The dignity of the human person and the right to life. Christian teaching about family and society. Speaking the truth and following conscience.

(6) THE CHRISTIAN VOCATIONS - The meaning of vocation. Marriage and family life. Ordination and consecrated life.

See http://www.sevrcparish.org.uk/ for registration or hand in completed form to Parish secretary

Thursday evening from 2nd March to 23rd March Refreshments from 7:00pm, talks at 7:30pm 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return'



With these words Ash Wednesday encourages us to return to the beginning, to take a step back and gain perspective over our lives and over our faith to prepare ourselves for Easter. Make the most of your Lent by coming to these Lenten talks and prepare well for Easter.

March 2nd: 'Getting the Most out of Lent'. Fr Matthew O'Gorman, Parish Priest of Corpus Christi, Brixton Hill, will base his talk on the powerful witness of St Catherine of Siena. How can she help us to get the most out of Lent?

March 9th: 'Signs of Hope in a broken world'. Sr Dr Gemma Simmonds CJ, Fellow of the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Theology, Cambridge. In a world rife with injustice and conflict how do we find hope this Lent?

March 16th: 'Consolation of the Cross'. Fr Lawrence Lew OP, Prior and Parish Priest of St Dominic's Priory, Haverstock Hill. He reflects on the consolations we receive from our Crucified Saviour.

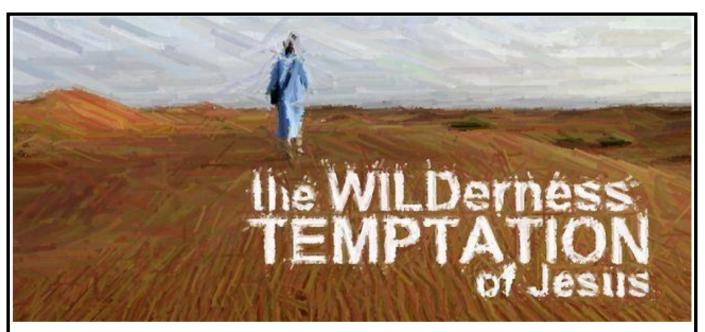
March 23rd: 'Preparing for Holy Week'. Fr Tom Lynch, PP of English Martyrs, Strood. Holy Week is the most important and sacred week for Christians throughout the world. How do we prepare for it?



PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

CHURCHES IN SEVENOAKS, OTFORD, BOROUGH GREEN AND WEST KINGSDOWN

Parish Newsletter



Today's Mass: FIRST SUNDAY of LENT (Year A)

Genesis 2: 7-9, 3: 1-7, Psalm 50, Romans 5: 12-19, Matthew 4: 1-11

The **Gospel** on the First Sunday of Lent is always the story of Jesus fasting in the desert for 40 days and being tempted by the devil. In this Year of Matthew (Year A) we hear St Matthew's account. The first temptation – to turn stones into bread – is tempting Jesus to rely on His own power rather than trusting in God to provide. The second temptation is to put God to the test. The third temptation is to idolatry.

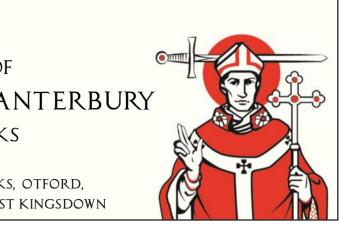
As we begin our 40 days of penitence and preparation for Easter, are we tempted to rely on ourselves rather than God? Are we tempted to complain if God doesn't arrange things as we would like? Are we tempted not to worship and serve God as fully as we ought?

The **First Reading** gives the story in *Genesis* of the origin of our sin and selfishness. If we are being honest, do we not accept that although we try to be good we sometimes give in to temptation? Our disobedience to God results in a break with our intimate relationship with him.

We acknowledge our sin in the well-known words of the **Psalm** (Psalm 50). The priest quotes the sentence beginning "O wash me more and more ..." when he washes his hands before the Eucharistic Prayer.

In the **Second Reading** St Paul, reminding us that the result of our sin is the ultimate rupture of our relationship with God - death, tells us that this situation has been undone by Christ's obedience, by His lack of sin.

Fr Davíd



26th February 2023

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

Sunday Mass times: Saturday 6:00pm

Adoration:

Monday

Tuesday

Sunday 8:00am (Latin) 9:15am (Children's Liturgy of Word) 11:15am 6:00pm

8:30am - 9:30am

6:00pm - 7:00pm

Weekday Mass times:Monday8:00amTuesday9:30amWednesday8:00amThursday12:00noonFriday8:00amSaturday9:30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

10:00am - 10:30am,

5:15pm - 5:45pm

Saturday



Granville Road, Sevenoaks TN13 1ER

Parish Office: Magdalena Wiacek Monday - Friday **9:00am - 12:00noon** Tel: 01732 454177 sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk **www.sevrcparish.org.uk**

Church contact:

Barry Authers

Tel: 01959 524362

sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk

High Street, Otford TN14 5PH

Western Rd, Borough Green

TN15 8AG

Fawkham Rd, West Kingsdown

TN15 6JP



Mass times: Sunday 9:30am (with Children's Liturgy of the Word) Wednesday 10:00am Holy Days of Obligation 10:00am Adoration: Thursday 7:30pm - 8:30pm Friday 11:00am - 12:00noon

ST JOSEPH'S BOROUGH GREEN

Mass times: Sunday 9:30am (with Children's Liturgy of the Word) Thursday 10:00am Holy Days of Obligation 6:00pm

Church contact: Antoni Offert Tel: 07513 041075 sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

ST BERNADETTE'S WEST KINGSDOWN

Mass times: Sunday 11:00am Friday 10:00am Holy Days of Obligation 11:00am Adoration: Wed 12:00noon- 1:00pm Church contacts: Jill & John Gobel Tel: 01474 853676 sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

ST THOMAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Park, Sevenoaks, TN13 1EH www.saintthomas.co.uk *Executive Head:* Mrs Katherine Sexton *Academy Principal:* Ms Geraldine Leahy *Tel: 01732 453921*

GOD LOVES HIS CHILDREN MASS ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN



CONTACTS & ORGANISATIONS

Parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Sevenoaks

Presbytery and Parish Office: 12 Granville Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ER Website: www.sevrcparish.org.uk Tel: 01732 454177

Parish Priest: Fr David Gibbons, KCHS davidgibbons@rcaos.org.uk Assistant Priest: Fr Peter Littleton peterlittleton@rcaos.org.uk Parish Deacon: Rev'd Neil Philipson neilphilipson@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Secretary: Mrs Magdalena Wiacek sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk Parish Office hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 12:00noon

Safeguarding Rep: Ken Baines sevenoakssg1@safeguardrcaos.org.uk The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator can be contacted on 020 7261 1606; in an emergency dial 999

Adoration Barry Authers adoration@sevrcparish.org.uk

Altar Servers (St Thomas's) Catherine Ingram Ingramfamily15@yahoo.com

Catenians Social club for Catholic men Aiden O'Mahony aidan.omahony@btinternet.com

Children's Liturgy of the Word, Sunday Mass Sevenoaks, 9:15am Mass: Mark O'Prey sevenoaksclow@rcaos.org.uk Otford, 9:30am Mass: Magdalena Wiacek sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk Borough Green, 9:30am Mass: Fiona Newton - fionanewton321@btinternet.com

Choirs

Music Group: Lonnie Christophers lonniechr@hotmail.com Traditional Choir: Barbara Page 01732 454729 Borough Green: Chris Hurll chris.hurll@outlook.com

Church Cleaning (St Thomas's) James McSharry jamesmcsharry@hotmail.com

Church Flowers Kate Travers katetravers521@hotmail.com

Confirmation Programme Gabrielle Ellis sevenoaksconfirmation@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Finance Committee Secretary: Mary Scott 3maryscott@gmail.com

FirstHolyCommunion & Reconciliation Programme Fr Peter Littleton: peterlittleton@rcaos.org.uk

Gift Aid: Sean Corrigan sevenoaksgac@rcaos.org.uk

Holy Trinity Committee Secretary: Barry Authers sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk

Lectio Divina Kathie Gonzalez 01732 761253

Listening to you (Bereavement Support) Third Monday, 10:30am in Parish Room Ronnie Campbell 01732 452988, Sarah Harrison 01959 522357, Kate Travers katetravers521@hotmail.com and Ann Livingston annlivingston@hotmail.co.uk Loaves and Fishes Foodbank Isabelle Mercer: h.imercer@btopenworld.com

Mothers' Prayers Mondays, 11:30am at Star House, Star Hill Road 01959 532505

Baby & Toddlers Group Tuesdays 10:00am - 12:00noon, Parish Centre Mary Hunt 07890 229794

RACET (Rural Africa Children's Education Trust) MaryAnn Perasso 01959 522337, www.racet.org

Readers, Ministers & Welcomers Rota (St Thomas's) Andrew Pembroke st.thomas.rota@gmail.com

Repository

Saturday 6:00pm, Sunday: 8:00 am, 11:15am Sophie McBrien sophiemcbrien@yahoo.co.uk

RCIA

For adults becoming Catholic Andrew La Trobe andrew.latrobe@gmail.com

Retreats Catherine Roger c.rodger@btinternet.com

St Bernadette's Committee Secretary: Jill Gobel jill.gobel@btinternet.com

St Joseph's Committee Secretary: John Foley johnandmariefoley@gmail.com

The Pilgrims For retired parishioners Jackie Pembroke 01732 450197

Scripture Fellowship Reading a Gospel together Andrew Wilkinson andrewwilkos@gmail.com

St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) Paul Boyle 07796564018 Kathie Gonzalez sevenoakssvp@gmail.com

Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM) West Kingsdown UCM: Monica Biggs mmdbbiggs@outlook.com

Webmaster Barry Authers sevenoakswebmaster@rcaos.org.uk

10

PARISH NOTICES

Contents this Week Pages 3-4 Parish and other Notices Mass Intentions Page 5 Page 6 Today's Mass Readings Page 7 Sunday Message Page 8 **Clergy Support Fund** From the desk of the Parish Priest Page 9 Page 10 **Contacts & Organisations** Page 11 Mass Activity for Children

TODAY

Lent

Purple vestments are worn in Lent, there are no flowers or other decorations in church, and the *Gloria* is not sung on Sundays. The Gospel Acclamation changes to a Lenten form, to avoid the word beginning with 'A', which we won't sing even on Feasts or Solemnities until Easter. This reflects the penitential aspect of this season, as well as its preparatory nature, as we prepare for Easter.

The time now commences for fulfilling the Easter precept (which ends on Trinity Sunday) of making your Confession and receiving Holy Communion. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1389 says

The Church obliges the faithful to take part in the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and feast days and, prepared by the sacrament of Reconciliation, to receive the Eucharist at least once a year, if possible during the Easter season. But the Church strongly encourages the faithful to receive the holy Eucharist on Sundays and feast days, or more often still, even daily.

Day for the Unemployed

Catholic teaching cannot tolerate indifference about unemployment, or ever condone the use of unemployment as an economic tool. Please pray for the Unemployed today, perhaps invoking the aid of St Joseph the Worker.

Second Collection

The Second Collection today is a diocesan collection for the Clergy Support Fund. See page 8 for more information. Use the special envelopes to Gift Aid your donation.

Supply priests

The Franciscan Capuchin friars and Fr Bryan Wells are again assisting today.

11:15am Mass

The Music Group lead the music.

THIS WEEK

Tuesday: Sycamore

The first session of the course which was very popular until the pandemic stopped it, from 7:30pm in the Parish Centre. See the back page for full details.

Wednesday

is the Feast of St David, Bishop and Patron of Wales. Dydd Gwyl Dewi Hapus to our Welsh parishioners.

Wednesday: The Pilgrims

All 'senior' parishioners are invited to Stations of the Cross - led by Jackie Pembroke - on Wednesday at 12:30pm in St Thomas's.

Fr David's Diary

Fr David has two meetings at diocesan HQ this week. On Wednesday there is a meeting of Archdiocesan Trustees, Consultors and Deans. On Thursday there is a meeting of the Council of Deans.

Friday: CAFOD Lent Fast Day

This Lent, your donations to CAFOD's Family Fast Day Appeal will help families fighting the climate crisis and ensure that our Church network can quickly respond to emergencies, like the recent earthquake in Syria and Turkey. The Second Collection next Sunday will be for CAFOD. Please join in praying for CAFOD's development and emergency response work all over the world.

PARISH AND OTHER NOTICES

Friday: World Day of Prayer

The theme this year is *I have heard about your faith*, written by the women of Taiwan. The Borough Green Service is at St Joseph's at 11:00am. The Sevenoaks Service is at St Nicholas Church of England Church at 2:00pm. Both are followed by refreshments.

LENT

Sycamore:

'Living the Christian Faith in the World'

Tuesdays from 7:30pm in the Parish Centre. See the back page for further details.

'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return'

A series of talks on Thursdays, refreshments from 7:00pm, talk at 7:30pm, beginning on March 2nd. See the back page for further details.

Stations of the Cross

At Most Holy Trinity on Thursdays in Lent at 7:30pm. At St Joseph's on Fridays at 6:00pm. At St Bernadette's on Fridays at 7:30pm. At St Thomas's on Fridays at 8:00pm. You can also pray the Stations - from each church - at home via the Parish website.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

At St Thomas's on Mondays after the 8:00am Mass, until 9:30am and on Tuesdays 6:00pm - 7:00pm. At Most Holy Trinity on Fridays from 11:00am - 12:00 noon. At St Bernadette's on Wednesdays 12:00 noon - 1:00pm.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Confessions are heard in St Thomas's on Saturdays 10:00am - 10:30am and 5:15pm - 5:45pm. A priest will always hear your Confession before Mass (if there is time) or after Mass.

'Renewed in Hope'

The Archdiocesan Spirituality Commission is offering a Retreat experience for individuals in Lent 2023. Drawing on the Sunday Mass readings it will help participants to find fresh ways of living and working in hope. It is based on a weekly email with a link to a 20 minute video, in which the Archbishop will introduce the theme and a witness will speak of the relevance in their daily life. All you have to do is to sign up at <u>http://eepurl.com/hVT7Dv</u> and set aside space for reflection.

NOTICES

Confirmation 2023

Attention all parents whose children are currently in Year 7 or above: Registration for this year's Confirmation Programme is now open. Please register online at <u>www.sevrcparish.org.uk</u>. A welcome meeting for parents, candidates and catechists will be held on Wednesday 24th May 2023 from 7:30pm-9:00pm in St Thomas' church. In the meantime, parents are asked to sign-up for and attend the parish *Lent Sycamore Programme* (see details in this Newsletter).

Friday Penance

The Bishops wish to remind us that every Friday is set aside as a special day of penitence, as it is the day of the suffering and death of the Lord. They believe it is important that all the faithful again be united in a common, identifiable act of Friday penance because they recognise that the virtue of penitence is best acquired as part of a common resolve and common witness. The law of the Church requires Catholics on Fridays to abstain from meat, or some other form of food, or to observe some other form of penance laid down by the Bishops' Conference (Canon 1251). The Bishops have decided to re-establish the practice that this penance should be fulfilled simply by abstaining from meat and by uniting this to prayer. Those who cannot or choose not to eat meat as part of their normal diet should abstain from some other food of which they regularly partake.

A Day with Mary

At St Dunstan's, London Road, Southborough on Saturday 1st April. Starts at 9:45am, and ends at 5:05pm. A day of instruction, devotion and intercession based on the message given at Fatima in 1917, including a Homily on Our Lady by our own Fr Peter.

F

From the Desk of the Parish Priest THE OLD TESTAMENT 1

or Lent I propose to examine some important Old Testament texts and so this week I start at the beginning, with the beginning of *Genesis* (which of course means beginning) and with the story of Creation, the beginning of the universe.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

(Genesis 1: 1-5, English Standard Version) etc.

The trap is to think that this is an attempt at a scientific explanation of the universe written thousands of years ago by people who didn't know any better, and therefore write it off and dismiss it as ancient mumbo jumbo. This is what critics of religion do: they use a false premiss (that this is ancient science) and then dismiss religion as equally meaningless. If we are to successfully argue with such people we must have a clear – and correct – understanding of the Creation account and other Old Testament texts.

The important point is that this is *theology*, not ancient science. Indeed, it is literary writing written in a prescientific era. Clearly this cannot be history; there can be no record of what happened before humans appeared. The fundamental message is that God is in charge: there is only one, supreme God and he created the world with all its inhabitants.

What is unique about this understanding is the belief in monotheism, that there is only one God. All the surrounding nations and religious systems – Greeks, Egyptians, Babylonians, etc – believed in multiple gods. The Mesopotamian belief in a creator god who had to fight a hostile monster, and the sun, moon, and other heavenly bodies worshipped by other near Easter religions, are all absent. In *Genesis* the heavenly bodies are part of God's creation and subservient to him.

Interestingly the account of Creation in *Genesis* doesn't explicitly state *why* God created the world. The purpose is, however, implied in the position of mankind in God's plan. The creation of mankind is the last of God's creative acts and is evidently the climax of the whole account. The previous days of creation – light, day and night, plants and animals – are provided for human use: the plants and animals are for our food (*Genesis* 1: 28-31).

Above all human beings are created in God's image and likeness (*Genesis* 1: 26-27). What exactly this means has been endlessly debated, but we can say that it sets human beings apart from all other creatures, and puts mankind in a special and unique relationship with God himself.

Another clue to God's purpose in Creation is given by the repeated statement at the end of each day (or stage of creation): *"and God saw that it was good"*. This is rather like a master craftsman assessment of his handiwork, but the word 'good' also implies usefulness (to human beings) and moral goodness. The subsequent chapters of *Genesis* portray mankind as being rather stupid, prone to rebellion against God, and responsible for bringing evil into the world. It is not mankind which is described as good, but God's creation, his work as a craftsman.

The most commonly accepted hypothesis of creation or existence these days is the Big Bang theory (interestingly, when I was a student many years ago it was still being hotly disputed). There is nothing in *Genesis* which is inconsistent with that theory of physics. The Big Bang cosmological model describes how the universe expanded and how planets etc were formed, but it tells us nothing about before the Big Bang or about the universe's purpose or meaning. For that we have to understand the Judaeo-Christian concept found in *Genesis* 1 that the one God created the universe and, within it, created - and gave a special place to - Humanity.

CLERGY SUPPORT FUND



ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK 59 Westminster Bridge Road London SE1 7JE

Psalm 71. 'Do not reject me in my old age, nor desert me when my strength is failing'.

- The second collection this week is in support of the Clergy Support Fund for the Archdiocese of Southwark. This important fund provides care and support for priests in their retirement and old age, and at their time of ill health, after their lifetime of service and devotion to Christ, His Church and His People.
- In 2022, the Clergy Support Fund provided care to 73 retired priests, at a cost of £1.33 million. With the number of priests over the age of 65 steadily increasing, so too will the financial obligation to the Archdiocese. Whilst priests can retire from active parish ministry when they reach the age of 75, many continue to serve their communities, working in our parishes, schools, hospitals and chaplaincies.
- Your donations to this worthy fund ensure a dignified retirement for all of our priests.
- You can make a donation
 - ✓ by putting money or a cheque (payable to RCAS Sevenoaks) in the Second Collection
 - ✓ online at <u>https://rcaos.org.uk/donate/csf</u>
 - \checkmark using the QR code
 - ✓ by telephone Monday Friday 9:00am 5:00pm: 020 7960 2504
 - ✓ making a bank transfer to the Parish Account (put Clergy Support as the reference)

I kindly ask that you pray for our sick and elderly priests, and consider making a donation to this worthy fund.

Thank you for your generosity of heart.

Metropolitan Archbishop of Southwark



MASS INTENTIONS ALL MASSES ARE AT ST THOMAS'S CHURCH UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

SUNDAY 26th February FIRST SUNDAY of LENT

	•	-
6:00pm	(Sat)	Dec'd members: Watson & La
8:00am	(Latin)	People of the Parish
9:15am		Sick & Retired Priests
11:15am		Julia Pert RIP
6:00pm		Anne & George RIP
9:30am	Otford	Sick & Retired Priests
9:30am	Borough Green	Jon Le Sbirel
11:00am	West Kingsdown	Families struggling economic
Monday 27 th	Feria	
8:00am		Good intentions of the donor
Tuesday 28 th	Feria	
9:30am		Recovery and good health of
Wednesday 1 st March <i>S DAVID, B Patron of Wales</i>		
8:00am		Derek Merger RIP
10:00am	Otford	James & Carmela Gibson RIP
Thursday 2 nd	Feria	
10:00am	Borough Green	Good health of Jim Mitchell
12:00noc	on	Nigel Jenkins RIP
		and consolation of Beatriz 8
Friday 3 rd Fe	eria	
8:00am		Fr William Cunningham RIP
10:00am	West Kingsdown	Sr Thaddeus RIP
Saturday 4 th	Feria	
9:30am		In loving memory of Canon Jo
SUNDAY 5 th March SECOND SUNDAY of LENT		
6:00pm	(Sat)	Rita Lewis RIP (anniversary)
8:00am	(Latin)	Marie Stevenson RIP
9:15am		Conrad Waite RIP (birthday)
11:15am		People of the Parish
6:00pm		Sr Thaddeus RIP
9:30am	Otford	Silvia Milverton RIP
9:30am	Borough Green	Mary Etheridge RIP

11:00am West Kingsdown Canon Michael Bunce RIP

	Recently departed
& Landon families	Sarah Boyle
	Kathleen Connolly
	Rest eternal grant to them, O
	Lord
	For your prayers
	Departed anniversaries
nically	Mary Colton, John Winzinger, Patrick Connolly, Harold Batty, Michael Molloy, Eldon Write, Arthur Knowles, Frances Brooks, Evie Bell, Michael
nor's family	Neville, Amy Wilkins, Mary Porteous, Carmela Galuszka, Eugenie Hopkins, Freda Mead, John Cooney, Rev. Noel
of Donald D'Souza	Lewnz, Christopher Spellacy, Anothony Aftergutt, Frances Davies, Pauline Vorasour
	Eternal rest grant unto them
RIP	The sick
	Angela Brunning, Tony Barrett, Frank
	Eastbrooke, Lynne Stanley, Veronica
ell	Williams, Yvonne Bollen, Peter
	Ringham, Ann Steven, Lilian Spragg, Jane Tabor, Ken Holmes, Mary Scott,
riz & family	Sean Cloke, Ann Farren and all in
	care and nursing homes
Р	2
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	LATIN ANTIPHONS

n John Bailey

Entrance

Invocabit me, et ego exaudium eum; eripiam eum, et glorificabo eum, longitudine dierum adimplebo eum.

Communion

Non in pane solo vivit homo, sed in omni verbo quod procedit de ore Dei.