



St Joseph's Catholic Church

Arkell Avenue, Carterton, OXON OX18 3BS

Assumption of Mary 15.08.2021

Sat 14 Aug 6.00pm (Burford) People of Parish
St Maximilian Kolbe

Sun 15 Aug 9.00am (Carterton) Special Intention

The Assumption 10.15am Pat O'Neill, Anne Heaton GE

Mon 16 Aug 9.45am Holy Souls

Tue 17 Aug 6.30pm Mary Carroll A

Wed 18 Aug 9.45am Elaine Petherick A

Thu 19 Aug 6.00pm Stephen Hirst LD

Fri 20 Aug 6.00pm (Burford) Dom Michael Phillips LD
St Bernard

Sat 21 Aug 6.00pm Mass (Burford) Sheila Biggane A
St Pius X, Pope

Sun 22 Aug 9.00am (Bampton) Holy Souls

21st Sunday (B) 10.15am People of Parish

N.B. Live-streaming of 10.15am Sunday Mass

Details on website: www.stjosephscarterton.uk

Factoid. The creature that kills the most people every year is not the snake, shark or human, but the mosquito.

What is wrong from a Christian point of view with the following statement: 'the meaning of life is to give life meaning'?

www.stjosephscarterton.uk

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RC Archdiocese of Birmingham charity

(No 234216)



Please pray for those who have died: Rodney Forder, Joe Lambe, Pauline Leverett, Olive Harcourt, Chris Murphy, Joan Clements, Monica Owen, Kate Gargan, Angela Overton, Marie Drew, John Robinson, John Joseph O'Neill, Michael Jackson, Rose Lane, Mary Hannah, Robert Eszenyi, David Gotelier, Sue Hand, Graham Copping, Romy Sadler-Tomkins, Marie Whelan, Isalina de Freitas, Elaine Barry, John Pollock, Zena Miles, Dominic Lackschewitz- Martin, Susan Wiffen, Barbara Gianni, Gianfranco Formigli, Philip Buckingham, Dom Michael Phillips OSB.

Anniversaries: Martin Walsh, Isabel Hall, Fr Leo Targett, Mary Carroll, Elaine Petherick, Rebecca Phillips, Mary McKeever

Please pray for the sick, housebound and those in the armed forces suffering mentally and physically from the effects of war: Anne Gillick, Wendy Murray, Catherine Robinson, Peter Garfoot, Brendan Farrow, Phil Rice, Natalia Romanek, Pat Haddock, Mario Bugeja, Justin Family, Kathleen Fagan, Jen Thomas, Ann Heaton, Celia McCauley, Pat Hand, Rodrigo Bantug, Cynthia Brick, John Titcombe, Pat O'Neill, Antoinette Broad.

Parish Bank details for Standing Orders.

Natwest sort code 60-24-60 and account 43009530. Thanks to all who support the parish in this way. **Parish bank overdraft on 5 August 2021: £169,820.60. Would you be willing to 'sacrifice' collections permanently and set up a bank standing order (SO) instead? About 50 parishioners already do so. SO's are DIFFERENT from Direct Debits (DD). DD's allow the business in question to increase the DD you pay, whereas, it is ONLY YOU who can increase or decrease a SO!**

***Holy Communion.** Please let the parish priest know of children (7 or older) wishing to be prepared. September start.

The Assumption 15.08.2021

The Apocalypse of St John, also known as the Book of Revelation, is very difficult to interpret and impossible fully to understand, but it is significant that this passage has been chosen for the Solemnity of the Assumption. The Assumption describes how at the end of Mary's earthly life she is assumed body and spirit into heaven. Her body after death, therefore, did not experience decay in the normal way, but was transferred directly into heaven. Mary seems to be presented in the first reading as the woman of the Apocalypse bearing a male child, whom we identify as Jesus. Hence the voice shouting from heaven: *victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God, and all authority for his Christ.*

But Mary is also a figure of the Church as a whole, a model of someone who consents that God's calling should become a reality in her life: *fiat mihi secundum verbum tuum, may it happen to me as you have said*, she responds to Archangel Gabriel. We say *fiat voluntas tua / thy will be done*, in the Our Father. God has worked our salvation completely in Jesus Christ, but he has chosen to depend on the consent of human individuals such as Mary and the saints so that salvation might become a reality. God continues to depend on human beings, on you and me. Without our commitment the grace that Jesus has obtained cannot flow into the world as God intends. God relies on us so that his plan of salvation might come to fruition. It is a vast responsibility but not one that will crush us. We have the assurance of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

How to put this willingness into practice? Look at Magnificat. Four times Mary speaks of human relationship and disposition of the person who does God's will: "lowly handmaid"; "routed proud of heart"; "exalted the lowly"; hungry filled with good things".

Garden/ grounds around presbytery, church and hall: Maintenance

Apart from the memorial garden the grounds may appear to have an 'unkempt' character. They do. Apart from greatly reducing the time and money spent on maintenance (!) this is deliberate. I have gradually come to a better understanding that a lack of interference in maintaining what is largely a piece of unimproved grassland can foster a greater profusion of natural processes and species than for example systematic, frequent mowing of the grassland in the interest of neatness. It does require a willingness to be criticised, since others tend to equate 'unkempt' with neglect. My favoured regime of maintenance is mowing, probably by strimmer, once a year not before October, to allow late flowering species like scabious to finish flowering. The cut grass needs to be removed to avoid the danger of soil fertility increasing through the grass acting as a mulch. Why keep the fertility low? Since many plant species in limestone land depend on low soil fertility to flourish. That may be counter-intuitive but is accurate.

Two examples: **ivy and anthills.**

There is a lovely, luxuriant and unclipped mass of **ivy** as you drive into the church car park. Ivy flowers late in the summer and yields nectar for a great range of insects. Moreover the black ivy berries are a source of food for birds, particularly towards the end of winter. The temptation would be to cut the ivy back strongly, but in the process one deprives insects and birds of a precious food source.

In the front garden the grass contains **anthills** which have been allowed to accumulate over several years. Some are now six inches tall or more. Research, which I believe is far from complete, on the ecological significance of anthills suggests that they contribute to greater diversification of species around them. Plants may colonise areas around them perhaps sheltered by the hill which may not otherwise occur. Furthermore it is known that woodpeckers which feed on ants are attracted to anthills. Anthills are admittedly problematic when it comes to mowing the grass, and is one reason why I suggest that once-yearly strimming with removal

of cut grass afterwards is perhaps easiest. Using a mechanical lawnmower on wheels inevitably involves greater damage to the anthills.

Background to St Joseph's plot.

They say that Carterton has been '**expanding inwards**' over many years, principally since the origin of the settlement in the early 20th century was tied up with the Homestead Movement. It involved parcels of land of an acre and more being sold for dwellings with the understanding that buyers would be able to support themselves by engaging in small scale market gardening, the keeping of hens and growing of tomatoes and grapes for the London market. When many of these plots became redundant or surplus to requirements, and pressure for housing increased in recent decades, they were often sold to developers, hence the saying. It seems to me probable that our field is the last small unimproved plot in central Carterton not to be built on. Last year children from St Joseph's Catholic School have planted more than a dozen native species tree whips around the periphery of the field.

The parish owns about an acre of what I suspect is unimproved grassland. In the roof of the church and hall, a Grade 2 listed building, (originally agricultural barns, part of Rock Manor Farm, which predates the settlement), we host a breeding colony of about fifteen or more pairs of swifts. We are gratified to have been able to retain this colony despite the replacement of both roofs over the last ten years. We have achieved this by creating in the gables and underneath the eaves new alternative nesting holes for the birds, which they have used. In 2020 in the grassland, which is only mown about once a year, I counted more than a dozen species of **butterflies** including for the first time marbled whites and a largish number of gatekeepers (there are more than eleven large buddleia shrubs). 2021 seems to have been a good year for butterflies and large numbers of peacock, whites and gatekeepers have been observed in addition to red admirals, painted ladies and small tortoiseshells. There are flowers, though species are limited, including cowslips, bird's foot trefoil, knapweed, increasing clumps of scabious and rampant lady's bedstraw. There are plenty of bees of different species, and this year I have noticed what may be masonry bees nesting in a crevice/hole on the outer wall of the hall. There are also many grasshoppers in the grassland.

The area is significant in being practically the only small parcel of land in central Carterton which has not been developed for housing. The wildlife interest may be limited (although we have foxes, a semi-resident Muntjac deer, hedgehogs, toads, many slugs and snails and thirteen species of butterfly including the common blue, gatekeepers and marbled whites), but the amenity value of the space for parish and community is significant. Ed Munday of the local wildlife trust, BBOWT, has recently visited and we intend commissioning a **wildlife survey** of our property as a first step to developing a long term **management plan**.

A very practical consideration is that we have space for **parking**. Even quite large numbers of cars (25 or more in the car park and field) can be accommodated. Experience shows that where there is insufficient space for parking at a church, it is difficult to attract parishioners.

The parish has an **overdraft** of £170,000 and obviously one could be tempted to sell land for housing to extinguish the debt and establish some sort of parish trust fund for the future. I believe that this would amount to short term gain and long term pain. One would no longer be able to use the field for parish 'functions' (events) or be able to use it for a marquee at a wedding or allow scouts to use it for camping (requested for September 2021), there would be inevitable noise or disturbance from the residents of new houses and the elimination of one of the last green spaces in central Carterton.