

THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY
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**BULLETIN B 12 – 18TH FEBRUARY 2024
THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**

My Dear brothers and sisters,

We have begun the Holy Season of Lent, and what a blessed time these 40 days and nights can be for us who seek to come closer to Jesus through prayer, fasting and charitable giving.

This Friday is the Family Fast Day and is an opportunity to put into practice all three of those Lenten disciplines in one day. The Station of the Cross will be at 11.30am, The Lent Lunch follows at 12noon and we donate what we would normally spend on our main meal to Cafod.

**We God richly bless you this Lent
Fr. John**

Envelopes for the Cafod Family Fast Day are on the table at the Exit today.

TIMES OF MASSES & OTHER SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sun	18	First Sunday of Lent	1000 Solemn Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish Maura Conway (RIP)
Wed	21	feria of Lent	1000 Mass 1025 Adoration	Eileen Ryan (RIP)
Thu	22	Chair of S. Peter	1000 Mass	Ordinariate in USA
Fri	23	feria of Lent	1000 Mass 1130 Station of the Cross	Cafod
Sun	25	Second Sunday of Lent	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish

Arrangements for Lent

Lent Course – this year we will be using a course “We Dare To Say” about the Our Father prayer, which has been recommended by the Bishops of England and Wales. The course which runs for 5 sessions will take place on Thursday during coffee after morning mass. It begins this week. Please sign the sheet at the door so we know how many booklets to produce.

Silence – During Lent it would be good to encourage each other to pray, especially before mass. Silence is a precious thing these days, let us all endeavour allow others the opportunity to pray. Speak to God before mass, and to your friends afterward. We shall also make more use of the silent moments during the mass itself.

Adoration – this will continue on Wednesdays after mass, but again silence is golden and so during Lent the Rosary will not be prayed publicly, there is nothing to stop you saying the Rosary, but quietly.

Stations of the Cross - Will be lead on some Fridays during Lent, please refer to the weekly bulletin for date and time.

Confessions can be heard on Wednesdays after Mass or by appointment

GOSPEL REFLECTION

“People always say that I didn’t give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn’t true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. I was not old, although some people have an image of me as being old then. I was forty-two. No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”

It was in December 1955 that Rosa Parks, an African American woman, was arrested for refusing to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. Her fight against racial injustice began early in her life. “Back then,” she said in an interview, “we didn’t have any civil rights. It was just a matter of survival, of existing from one day to the next.” As a child she had seen the Ku Klux Klan riding by, and she had been afraid that her house would be burnt down. She decided that it was important for her to get involved and to challenge the authorities that introduced racial segregation. Her actions resulted initially in the Montgomery bus boycott and eventually in a legal ruling that segregation on public transport was unconstitutional. Her determination not to be seen as a second-class citizen brought about massive change in society. It was not without personal cost, though, as she was arrested and lost her job. In an interview in 1992 she said, “I had not planned to get arrested. I had plenty to do without having to end up in jail. But when I had to face that decision, I didn’t hesitate to do so because I felt that we had endured that too long. The more we gave in, the more we complied with that kind of treatment, the more oppressive it became.”

Today we hear of the time that Jesus spent in the desert, after being baptised. We learn that he goes on to Galilee and calls on the people to repent and believe in the gospel.

There is a strong theme of repentance in today’s readings, as well as a sense of the opportunity of a fresh start. In the first reading, we hear that when the flood is over, God creates a covenant with Noah, his descendants and all living creatures. In the second reading, Peter reminds his listeners that they are changed through baptism. In both the first and second readings there is a turning around that brings comfort and encouragement – a turning towards God and away from the things that keep us from God.

Another theme here is relationship. We are creatures in relationship with our neighbours and with all living creatures, as well as with God. We hear today how Jesus tells the crowds that the kingdom of God is close at hand. The kingdom is good news for all, especially those who are poor or disadvantaged, oppressed or enslaved. It is freedom – not to hurt, but to heal, not to divide, but to bring together.

The crowds listening to Jesus are invited to change direction – to create better relationships with each other, with God and with their neighbour. The kingdom is one of justice and of peace. Injustice keeps us all apart from one another; it divides and polarises us.

Sometimes it feels as if Lent could be a rather gloomy season, but it is also a time of blessing. It gives us time to reflect and it is a great opportunity to commit to change, to take a new direction in our lives, to make a fresh start. As Sr Laurentia Johns OSB writes, “From wherever we may have wandered through neglect, poor choices, stress, busyness, God never tires of calling us back.”

We first need to be aware of what needs to change. What is pulling us in the wrong direction, and how can we turn around?

It is not that we will never make mistakes or choose the wrong path. But as Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, “Holiness does not consist in never having erred or sinned. Holiness increases the capacity for conversion, for repentance, for willingness to start again...”

**LENT LUNCH
THIS FRIDAY – CAN ANYBODY HELP US BY PROVIDING SOUP?**

The Funeral of David Page will be at the Crematorium on Thursday 29th February at 2.30pm