

THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY
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**BULLETIN B 14 – 3RD MARCH 2024
THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**

My Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we shall be having a visit by one of the Comboni Missionary Sisters who will come and tell us about their work. There will be an opportunity for us to respond by making a contribution to their work, please see the basket for retiring collection.

There will be no Lent Course this Thursday.

We God richly bless you this Lent

Fr. John

TIMES OF MASSES & OTHER SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sun	3	Third Sunday of Lent	1000 Solemn Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish June Warner (RIP)
Wed	6	feria of Lent	1000 Mass 1025 Adoration	David Page (RIP)
Thu	7	feria of Lent	1000 Mass	Fr David Skeoch (RIP)
Sun	10	Fourth Sunday of Lent	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish Eileen & Alex Welsh (RIP)

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.

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

40 hours devotion

40 hours of Continuous Eucharistic Adoration during Lent (night and day except during Mass) will take place on the weekend of 16-17 March at St John Vianney Catholic Church, 1 Stoneleigh Road, Clayhall, Ilford IG5 0HE, starting with Mass of Exposition and Procession of the Blessed Sacrament at 7am on the Saturday and ending with Benediction at 11pm on the Sunday. All are welcome to take part in this very special devotion.

The next “Enquirers’ Evening” for those considering or interested in a **vocation to the priesthood** is on Tuesday 5 March at Brentwood Cathedral. The speaker will be Deacon Frank Westcott. For further information please contact Fr Mark Swires: vocprom@brcdt.org

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Everywhere we go, we are bombarded with messages to buy. Advertising hoardings loom over our streets, at bus stops and train stations. Adverts pop up on our computer screens, as we scroll through our phones or as we stare at the television. Hawkers loiter outside major tourist attractions like the Eiffel Tower. Museums and art galleries have their shops.

We have been conditioned to consume. An experience often only seems valuable if we have a souvenir to help us to remember it. Our worth is too often measured in the possessions that we have accumulated, regardless of the consequences to our earth, or to those who are exploited in the manufacturing, sale or purchase of these goods.

Those who have the power continue to prop up a system that benefits a few. There is no escape for most of us, who are trapped in this cycle as we try to navigate our way through life as best we can. This is not a new phenomenon as we can see in today’s Gospel. Even the Temple has been turned into a place of commerce. Animals are being sold for sacrifice. Money changers are welcoming pilgrims from all over the place and changing their money so that they can buy what they need to worship. And yet, Jesus drives all of these people out of the Temple. Why? Does he feel that people should not be able to get what they need to offer the appropriate sacrifice? Surely not.

Here in the Temple, we have a captive audience. People who need certain items, and people who can provide them. The situation is ripe for exploitation. There is nothing to stop the moneychangers and the pigeon-sellers from charging whatever they want, no matter what the people can afford. For pilgrims and other worshippers to give glory to God, they must take part in this system that is designed to take advantage of them. Instead of helping people to draw closer to God, the merchants’ motive was personal profit and gain. Not only was this, but the area where the traders had set up the place set aside for Gentiles (non-Jews) to pray. How could they concentrate on their prayer and worship while surrounded by the hubbub of this marketplace?

This is what Jesus is taking a stand against. He could not allow the exploitation of those who were trying to draw closer to God. He could not accept the hollow gestures, the lip service to religion being offered by those benefiting from this exploitation. He could not have earthly priorities preventing all people from coming to know God. Instead, he turns the tables, prophesies the destruction of the sanctuary and proclaims that he will raise it all up again in three days.

So what does this mean for us today? We know that when Jesus spoke of raising up the sanctuary after three days, he was talking of himself. Through the resurrection he has made all things new.

And yet, our world is still filled with exploitation. We still see people who put profit before other people and before their relationship with God. We might not be able to fully break down the systems that enable this, but perhaps we can each try to turn the tables in our own small way. By living a life where we do not seek our own glory, but the glory of God; by standing up and speaking out when we see greed and unjust practices; by not seeking our own benefit or recognition, but by working together with others for the good of all; by stepping away from the endless need to consume; by stopping, being present and appreciating what we already have; by enabling others to draw closer to God, rather than putting barriers in their way.

As Saint Paul says, the crucified Christ is the wisdom of God. A wisdom which is beyond our imagining. It follows then, that all that we are encouraged to hold dear by the world around us – money, wealth, status – becomes unimportant. True wealth is found in our relationships with others, with Creation, and with God, rather than in chasing the next new purchase. So let us not pay lip service in our worship of God or make hollow gestures. Let us try not to seek our own gain, but to support others in their journey towards God. And let us follow Christ in our lives, seeking always to turn the tables of exploitation and injustice so that all may glorify God by their lives and actions.

*Further information on **A Day With Mary 2024 Pilgrimages to Fatima (7-14 June) and Italy (4-12 September)** is available at www adaywithmary.org or email adwmary.uk@gmail.com*