

## BULLETIN 15 – 12<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope that you are all keeping safe and continuing to follow the guidelines keeping us as a community as well as individuals healthy? There are a number of points I need to draw your attention to this week.

Many of you will have heard already the sad news that Jo Gallagher died on the 9<sup>th</sup> June, she had been cared for in a Nursing Home in Dagenham and received the Sacraments there in her final days. I said Mass for her last Monday and that was live streamed. The Funeral itself will take place this Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at 3.15pm in the Crematorium. Due to the constraints of the Coronavirus Rules only the close family may attend, Deacon Michael and I will take the service, so the parish family will be represented. There will be an opportunity later, when safe to gather, with a Requiem Mass and Burial of the Ashes, this will also be live streamed and as much notice as possible will be given.

I am delighted to tell you that Fr. Michael Butler is now free of the Coronavirus, so your prayers do work! He is in good spirits and very happy in his new home. He is now able to receive visitors, although the House continues to be out of bounds to visitors, provision has been made in the gardens. In order to arrange a visit please ring Julia on 01279 657933. The address for the home is: - Conewood Manor Nursing Home, 60 Dunmow Road, Bishops Stortford CM23 5HL. The Home do ask that you pre-arrange your visit.

Our Church is now open for individual Private Prayer and the opening times are given below in this Bulletin. We are grateful to the four volunteers who have come forward to help with this, we could do with more to help us so that we can extend our open times further, please let Deacon Michael know if you are willing.

I am able to hear Confessions now, but these must be in the open air, if you would like to receive this Sacrament please give me a call on 01279 429388 to arrange.

This Pandemic has brought out a lot of good in people and we all have stories of good neighbourliness and others going out of their way to help those in need. Sadly there are some for whom the vulnerability of others presents an opportunity to defraud them. Essex Police have alerted us a number of recent Scams and Cybercrimes. We have posted these on our website as they give useful advice on ways we can all protect ourselves, please pass this advice on to those who do not have access to the internet.

God Bless you all  
Fr. John

## CHURCH OPENING TIMES FOR INDIVIDUAL PRAYER

Sundays 11.00am – 12 noon  
Tuesdays 10.30am – 12 noon  
Thursdays 10.30am – 12 noon

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sun 21 – 12 of Year	10.00 Mass	People of the Parish
Mon 22 – Ss. John Fisher & Thomas More	10.00 Mass	Peter, & Emma (INT)
Tue 23 – feria	10.00 Mass	Brough Family (INT)
Wed 24 – St. John Baptist	10.00 Mass	Monica Hogan (RIP)
	10.30 Rosary	
Thu 25 – feria	10.00 Mass	Jim Birchall (RIP)
	10.30 Adoration	
Fri 26 – feria	10.00 Mass	Isabella MacDermott (RIP)
	10.30 Stations	
Sat 27 – of Our Lady	10.00 Mass	private (INT)
Sun 28 – Ss. Peter & Paul	10.00 Mass	People of the Parish

(Times in red will be live streamed)

## GOSPEL REFLECTION

*“Do not be afraid.”*

Imagine the scene: a busy supermarket on a Saturday morning. In the aisle between the counters there's a small child crying her heart out. She's obviously lost and, despite the comforting words of people who bend down to console her, she is very afraid: she finds herself in a noisy world which now seems strange and threatening, with people, like giants, pressing all around her. Suddenly her mother appears and scoops up her little one. At once the tears cease, the fears vanish – for the time being, at any rate.

Fear is one of our most primitive instincts. It's said that even a baby can experience fear, fear of falling, fear of being dropped, and throughout life, no matter how old we may be, we never manage to shake off all our fears. Each week when men and women, young people and children gather in church. There we sit, faces usually solemn, impassive and apparently carefree. But behind the masks there are real people and, doubtless, real fears and anxieties.

It is these real people with their real fears, you and me that our Lord is addressing in today's Gospel as three times over he bids us not to be afraid. Perhaps we could discern in that threefold “Do not be afraid” a reference to three kinds of fear that commonly trouble human beings.

First, hidden fears, the fears we cannot or will not or dare not share with others – fears about our health, our sinfulness, our future, our dear ones. And Jesus says, “Do not be afraid... everything now hidden will be made clear” – indeed, it is already fully revealed to our Father in heaven; he knows all, understands all and, through his Son Jesus, urges us not to allow fear to get the better of us.

Second, there is fear of dangers from outside: fear of war, the breakdown of law and order, fear of growing violence. And Jesus says, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul." We have a Father who cares for us. Think of two tiny sparrows; if one of those tiny creatures falls to the ground, the Father knows all about it. And he knows all about us, too, knows us through and through; and we matter to him; why, the very hairs of our head are numbered.

Finally, there's fear not unlike that of the little girl lost in the supermarket, fear that we're so small, so insignificant, so unimportant: we feel lost in the immensity of the universe, lost like a speck of dust amidst the billions of people who inhabit the globe, lost as a drop of water is lost in the ocean. We might not dare to say so, but sometimes we find it hard to believe that God, with this vast busy universe to look after, can afford us anything more than a token of divine attention. Jesus says again, "there is no need to be afraid": as he has told us, our Father knows what befalls tiny sparrows; and then he adds – surely with a gentle smile – "you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows".

"Do not be afraid": the words are especially powerful because the one who speaks them is our friend, who really knows us, who loves us and whom we love; he is a friend we can trust. Life without friends would be intolerable and it's in the light of all that human friendship means that we can cry out in the words of the old hymn, "What a friend we have in Jesus". It's he who brings us new heart today as, over and over again, he urges us not to be afraid. That doesn't mean that all our fears suddenly vanish but rather that they don't paralyse us, they no longer dominate our lives, because, like Jeremiah in today's first reading, we can say, "the Lord is at my side, a mighty hero". Each Mass brings not only an assurance that Jesus has proved himself our friend – even to the shedding of his blood – but also a promise that he takes away our final fear, the fear of what awaits us beyond death. He tells us that he will speak up for us before the Father, acknowledge us as his friends and so guarantee us a place in that home where all tears are wiped away and all fears finally disappear.