

THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY  
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**BULLETIN B 15 – 10TH MARCH 2024**  
**THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

**My Dear brothers and sisters,**

**Today we celebrate Laetare Sunday, the Church gifts us this day to relax from our lenten fasting. It is also the traditional day when English Catholics celebrate Mothering Sunday, the special food for this day is Simnel Cake.**

**This week our Bishop Alan will be visiting the parish, it is always a great pleasure to welcome him to his parish here in Old Harlow. On this occasion he will be confirming four of our young people. I do hope that you will be able to turn out for the Confirmation Mass at 7.00pm on Wednesday. It is important to both welcome our Bishop and to support those who are receiving Holy Confirmation. There will be an opportunity to meet with the Bishop over Refreshments in the Hall after the Mass.**

**The Funeral Mass for Lady Cynthia Cooper will be on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March at 11.30am**

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

**PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE BEING CONFIRMED THIS WEEK**

**Thomas Arnold, Sofia Daniela Delle Grazie, Biyanca Etienne, Victor Uchenna Ndibe Okoye**

**TIMES OF MASSES & OTHER SERVICES THIS WEEK**

|     |    |                       |                               |   |
|-----|----|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Sun | 10 | Fourth Sunday of Lent | 1000 Mass<br>1800 Mass        | People of the Parish<br>Eileen & Alex Welsh (RIP) |
| Wed | 13 | feria of Lent         | 1900 Confirmation Mass        |   |
| Thu | 14 | feria of Lent         | 1000 Mass                     | Bill Gillett (RIP)                                |
| Sun | 17 | Fifth Sunday of Lent  | 1000 Solemn Mass<br>1800 Mass | Matthew Navin (RIP)<br>People of the Parish       |

**Confessions can be heard on Thursday this week at 9.00am 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.

## Vocations to the Priesthood

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](mailto:vocprom@brcdt.org)

### GOSPEL REFLECTION

*“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.”*

There are many examples in literature of people who, through the course of the story, move from despair to hope, selfishness to generosity, and darkness to light. Rarely do they do this entirely through their own efforts. Usually someone is rooting for them, encouraging them, or coaxing them towards something better. This persistent support empowers them, not only to do better for themselves, but also to do better for others.

In Charles Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*, Scrooge is shown a way of living that differs from his self-absorbed existence. He sees what might be if he let joy, light and generosity into his world. He responds, reluctantly at first, but later with uncurtailed joy. In Barbara Kingsolver’s *Demon Copperhead*, several good people refuse to give up on a boy born into a life of poverty, neglect and addiction, where circumstances seem to make bad outcomes inevitable.

In many cases, the path is not straight. Life is messy, and ups may be followed by downs. Characters resist support. Or they accept support but nevertheless encounter hurdle after hurdle. As in real life, there may be no fairy-tale ending. But it is usually clear that goodness makes a difference, and that even one good person can transform how another experiences the world. Indeed, those involved in young people’s services know that having “one good adult” is crucial in helping a young person to flourish. And surely this continues to apply in adulthood. Scrooge, after all, was no longer young when he accepted love from others in a way that enabled him to bring love into the world in turn.

In John’s Gospel, it is Jesus who has the power to transform the lives of those he encounters. This applies in the sometimes abstract, theological sense of salvation and in the concrete sense of how people live their lives.

John describes how people “have shown they prefer darkness to light because their deeds were evil”. They have avoided the light because they fear it will expose their wrong actions. In the first reading, we hear of “infidelity”, “shameful practices”, and the repeated resistance of the people when God sent “messenger after messenger” until it seemed “there was no further remedy”.

But as Paul tells us in the second reading, God persisted. “God loved us with so much love that he was generous in his mercy.” Even when we “were dead through our sins”, God brought us to life with Christ. Paul is clear, however, that we are not saved by anything we alone have done. We are saved through grace and faith, gifts from God given in Christ Jesus. He is that one good person who empowers us “to live the good life”. He is the one who John says was sent by God to save the world, empowering us to live by the truth “so that it may be plainly seen that what [we] do is done in God”.

Living the life God intended is impossible if we go it alone. That is why we open our hearts to Jesus as the one who brings light, grace and faith into our lives. Spending time in prayer and reflection, pondering on the scriptures, and celebrating our faith in community can help us experience the transformative light of Christ. This light is not just for us as individuals, even if we experience it through deeply personal prayer. Our life in Christ is not simply an “inward” or “upward” spiritual exercise. Just as we see the power of one good person on many a character in literature – and as we may have experienced in our own lives – so we are called to reach into the world.

Each of us is just one person, but our influence can be transformative if we are the one who brightens another’s day, offers a word of comfort, lifts another up, and treats our environment and every person with the respect they deserve as part of God’s creation. Our gestures do not need to be grand, although some of us may be in a position to do great things. Today, let us think of one way in which we might be one good person in the world.