

THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY
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BULLETIN B 16 – 17TH MARCH 2024
THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

My Dear brothers and sisters,

As we enter the last week of Lent we turn our attention to the Lord's Passion and Cross. To this end we veil all pictures and statues, this helps us to focus and celebrate the tremendous events of our salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Below you will find the times of the special services for Holy Week and Easter.

There are various opportunities to make your confession before Easter, see Reconciliation times below, or you can make an appointment with me.

God bless
Fr. John

TIMES OF MASSES & OTHER SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sun	17	Fifth Sunday of Lent	1000 Solemn Mass 1800 Mass	Matthew Navin (RIP) People of the Parish
Mon	18	feria of Lent	1130 Funeral Mass	Cynthia Cooper (RIP)
Wed	20	feria of Lent	1000 Mass 1020 Adoration	Eileen & Vincent Martin (RIP)
Thu	21	feria of Lent	1000 Mass	Dennely Family (RIP)
Sun	24	Palm Sunday	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	Doig Family (INT) People of the Parish

RECONCILIATION SERVICES

Mon	18	7.00pm	Epping
Tue	19	7.00pm	Holy Cross
Wed	20	1020am	Assumption of our Lady
Sun	24	6.00pm	Our Lady of Fatima

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Michael Heath is a British cartoonist. He's been working for many years and his cartoons have appeared in all sorts of publications. Any topic is a source of inspiration to him. It could be political, social comment or even religious. In one drawing Michael has Jesus standing with a crowd of people round: him, men, women and children. To one side of the picture there's a rather puzzled-looking disciple who is being accosted by a very self-important looking man who says to the disciple, "I wonder if it's possible to see him privately". He clearly thought he shouldn't be with the riffraff and deserved a one-to-one interview.

So many people wanted to see Jesus that he hardly had time to rest. Perhaps we could pick out a few episodes in the Gospel stories about some of the various people who wanted to see him. By that I mean the ones who valued him and not the religious leaders who hated him and wanted him dead.

There's the story of Bartimaeus who was blind and begging by the roadside. When he heard Jesus and the crowd go by, he yelled out "Son of David, have pity on me." He was so loud and insistent the crowd told him to shut up. He was embarrassing them. But he took no notice and shouted even louder. Jesus gave him back his sight and Bartimaeus became one of his disciples.

Then there was the woman in a crowd who quietly touched Jesus' clothes, knowing she would be cured of her illness. Another was the courteous Roman centurion who asked for just a word from Jesus to cure his servant. When Jesus went to the town of Tyre on the coast, he joined in a battle of wits with the Greek woman who pleaded for her daughter's health. Jesus said he couldn't give the children's bread to dogs. Quick as a flash, the woman replied that even dogs ate the crumbs from the master's table. And perhaps the boldest of all was the group who tried to get their paralysed neighbour into the house where Jesus was staying. The crowd blocked the doorway, so they decided to take the roof off and lower the man in via the direct route.

What all these people, and so many more, had in common was that they wanted Jesus to do something for them. But what about Jesus himself? Who looked after his needs? Today's Gospel reading is a bit strange; it's in two parts, which don't seem to be connected, but it might give us a clue as to what Jesus is thinking. The Greeks who spoke to Philip were clearly very polite. Perhaps Philip wasn't used to such courtesy because he seemed not to know how to deal with them. He had to go and ask advice from Andrew and the two of them went to Jesus. We don't know whether Jesus even met the Greek visitors, because his reply is concentrated on the events that he knows are waiting for him and which trouble his soul.

Next Sunday is the start of Holy Week. We know this is the most solemn part of the Church's year. As the week unfolds, we find that Jesus, who has done so much good for everyone, is himself left almost friendless. In Gethsemane, when he is in agony, his closest apostles fall asleep and give him no comfort. He is betrayed by one of his own; the disciples run away when Jesus is arrested. Peter denies he even knows him. The crowd which cheered and waved palms when he entered Jerusalem now turns nasty when they find he's not going to drive the Romans out. Shouts of "Hosanna" become "Crucify him". Jesus is degraded and mocked by the soldiers. The religious leaders vent their hate on him and Rome condemns him unjustly. Jesus accepts all this suffering for our sake. As we heard in the reading from the letter to the Hebrews, "he became, for all who obey him, the source of eternal salvation".

Of course, we can't be physically with Jesus as we remember and re-enact the events of so long ago during Holy Week, but by opening our hearts as we proceed from Passion Sunday, through Holy Thursday and Good Friday, we can share in the joy of the risen Lord on Easter Day. If we let him, the Lord will write his law of love within our hearts.

LITURGY AND WORSHIP IN HOLY WEEK AND EASTER

27th Wed in Holy Week	1100 Chrism Mass in Brentwood Cathedral
28th Maundy Thursday	1900 Mass of the Last Supper & Watch of Prayer
29th Good Friday	1200 Stations of the Cross 1500 Liturgy of the Lord's Passion and Cross
30th Holy Saturday	1900 Easter Ceremonies and First Mass of Easter
31st Easter Sunday	1000 Solemn Mass

NB There will be no evening Mass on Easter Day