

BULLETIN 26 – 6TH SEPTEMBER 2020

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

We shall from this week onwards be printing this Bulletin on our Sunday Message and Readings sheets, if they arrive in time from the printers! Those coming to Mass either on Sunday or in the week can take and use a copy, please take it away with you, don't put it back on the pile. We will continue to make them available on the Parish Website. The work in the Church House continues at a fair pace and I'm grateful to a few people who have made generous donations to help defray costs, but we need a lot more.

We also hope to be able to reopen our Hall in the middle of September, there are of course restrictions and various regulations that have to be adhered to, e.g. the Hall has to be cleaned and sanitised after each group letting has left, any volunteers? I would like to thank on your behalf John & Maddy Kelly who have managed the hall for us for many years, they are now having to give up this ministry through ill health, God Bless them both and I ask you to keep them in your prayers. I am pleased to say that Simon and Lucy Bedford have agreed to take on this role for us.

Please be aware that there are a worrying number of Scams at present, we have put details of some of the ones we know of on the parish website, stay safe.

God Bless you all,

Fr. John

OUR WORSHIP THIS WEEK

Sun 6	23 of the Year	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	Frederick White (RIP) People of the Parish
Tue 8	Birthday of BVM	1830 Rosary 1900 Mass	Mary Fitzgerald (INT)
Wed 9	St. Peter Claver	1000 Mass	Vic Potter (RIP)
Thu 10	feria	1000 Mass 1020 Adoration	John Hogan (RIP)
Fri 11	feria	1000 Mass 1020 Stations	Tess Hogan (RIP)
Sun 13	24 of the Year	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	Lucy & Jason O'Keeffe (INT) People of the Parish

GOSPEL REFLECTION

On 17 March 1912, Captain Lawrence Oates left the tent he shared with others on Captain Robert Falcon Scott's ill-fated expedition to the Antarctic. Oates had developed gangrene in his foot, and on his thirty-second birthday, he announced in the tent that he was "just going out for a bit", adding, "I may be some time." He never came back. He chose to sacrifice himself to give others a better chance of succeeding. History is full of examples of heroic sacrifices people have made for the sake of others, and to ensure their safety. In our own time, in the face of acts of terrorism, people have risked their lives to save others.

In recent years there have been stories on TV and in the press of atrocities committed by people which have caused terrible suffering for others. At the same time, we often hear of heroic efforts by those who put their own lives at risk – or even sacrifice their own lives – when trying to save others. We may consider their actions the highest expression of what it means to be human. These actions certainly resonate with Jesus'

statement that no one can have a greater love than to lay down his or her life for another.

Today we would consider highly irregular any group or organisation deciding to bypass the legal system and devise their own legal code. That, however, seems to be precisely what is being called for in Jesus' teaching in today's Gospel. To understand this particular development, it is necessary to reflect, not so much on circumstances for disciples during Jesus' life, or immediately after, but rather on the problems faced by the next generations of disciples around the time that Matthew's Gospel was written, which is thought to have been some time after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and its Temple in AD 70. There is scarcely a more important date for New Testament studies.

When the Temple was destroyed, Judaism changed for ever, because, with no Temple, there was no role for priests. So who was now in charge? This is when the Pharisees gained prominence. They restyled themselves as "rabbis", and declared that they alone were the authentic teachers of the Law of Moses. But another group of Jews proclaimed Jesus of Nazareth as the true teacher and fulfilment of Moses. This led to persecution, excommunication and banishment from synagogues for anyone following "the Nazarene". Understandably, many Jewish Christians began to wonder if they had made a mistake, especially when their former leaders persecuted them. It's against this background that Matthew wrote his Gospel, showing how Jesus was not just the interpreter, but the actual fulfilment of Moses. A practical consequence of all of this was that people who had been expelled from the synagogue, imprisoned and even physically punished for following Jesus were not likely to go to the courts run by the rabbis for justice – hence Jesus' words here on how the community must resolve conflict if authorities won't help.

So how did Matthew build the confidence of the Christians of Jewish background? He gathered statements that Jesus had made and by carefully choosing the order in which he put them, he could add an emphasis to Jesus' teaching that is not so evident in the other Gospels.

This is what he does in today's Gospel. Matthew understands that if there is a legal matter to be settled, involving a member of the Christian community, there is no point in taking it to the Jewish courts, so disciples are encouraged to try to resolve the matter with the brother or sister in question – putting themselves at the service of others. If that does not work, the disciple should call on another trusted member of the community as a witness to the accusation being made and the action proposed. Ultimately it may be that a member of the community will not listen, and therefore has to be treated as no longer a member of the community. Presumably that's what Matthew means by treating that brother or sister like a tax collector or a pagan. Matthew's programme of talking to another to resolve a problem, or involving another community member to be an impartial aid to resolution of a dispute, be a model for us today.

Contact Details -

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