

BULLETIN 27 – Sunday 13th September 2020

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

In his briefing on the latest measures to fight Covid 19, the Prime Minister in explaining his “Rule of six” exempted Places of Worship along with pubs and restaurants etc. This means that there are no new restrictions in coming to mass and as long as we continue to comply with the guidelines, keeping a metre distance, wearing a face mask and using the sanitizers we are not in breach of any laws. The guidelines are set out in full on the parish website, the “Worship Procedure” button, now maybe a good opportunity to refresh your memory.

A really big Thank You to those who have been so generous in giving to our Presbytery Appeal. We have a long way to go but a good start has been made. One person who lives in Upminster wrote to me to say he attends mass each week via the live stream and on hearing my appeal was moved to send a donation of £50! I hope that if you haven’t been able to contribute to the Appeal yet, that you will feel able to do so soon. The Diocese will give us a loan for the shortfall but obviously the smaller the loan the better for our future.

God bless you all,
Fr. J

WORSHIP THIS WEEK

Sun	13	24 of the Year	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	Lucy & Jason O’Keefe (INT) People of the Parish
Tue	15	Our Lady Sorrows	1030 Rosary	
Wed	16	St. Cornelius	1000 Mass	Kay Hill (RIP)
Thu	17	feria	1000 Mass 1020 Adoration	Catherine Glover (RIP)
Fri	18	feria	1000 Mass 1020 Stations	Isabella Doig (INT)
Sun	20	25 of the Year	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish John Hogan (RIP)

GOSPEL REFLECTION

“Unless you each forgive... from your heart.”

We all probably take for granted the fact that there are seven days in the week. Yet no one really knows why there should be seven days. There are theories, of course, but none of them are certain. The seven-day week seems to have been used throughout the Mediterranean area and on into India. It is what it is. Yet the fact of the seven-day week seems to have suggested to the Jewish mind the idea of seven as a totality. In

the Old Testament, the Jewish scriptures, the creation takes place in seven days because this means there is no moment of time in which God is not concerned with creation. In the New Testament, in the book of the Apocalypse, the message is to seven churches, because seven represents all the churches.

So when St Peter suggests that we should forgive people if they sin against us “seven times”, he is not suggesting just a small number. Seven is the number of totality, so Peter thinks he is saying something profound about always forgiving. We forgive while we live. Christ replies by saying, “Not seven, I tell you, but seventy-seven times”, or “seventy times seven” in some translations. This multiplication is because mercy is not just for this life, for the time we have, the time of the seven days, but also for eternity. Eternity is unimaginable but we can think of it as time multiplied by time. So the Gospel story of the servant being led to judgement is our story, because if we do not forgive, how can we enter the world of forgiveness, which is heaven?

Christian morality is the morality of heaven. We are not just concerned with how we live with each other on this earth, but with the life of the world to come. The shape of this new world is determined by how we live in this world. It is present, too, in the sacraments, in prayer, in those moments of peace that God alone can give. What really connects us to heaven is mercy. Nothing in Christian thought makes sense without the idea of the forgiveness of sin. The incarnation is for the sake of the forgiveness of sin.

The servant in the Gospel parable is asked to be like God to his fellow servants by forgiving them. It is not just God saying, “I forgave you, therefore you should forgive others”, but God saying, “I forgive all human beings, but I wish to forgive some of them through you. Their debt to you is yours and theirs, but the forgiveness is mine. And I want you to be ministers of that forgiveness.”

In our world, politics, in essence, is the art of helping people to live together; and since all have sinned and owe each other debts that cannot be repaid, the work of politics should be seen as fundamentally a work of mercy and forgiveness. In offering mercy to the world, Christ has the key to every other good thing in this world. Mercy is not just a medicine to cure the disease of our sin, but is the divine nature, in the particular situation of our world. By sharing in this mercy, we share in the divine nature. We may or may not remember our sins in heaven; but in the vision of God, we would see that mercy is natural to God, and know that God would always offer forgiveness without reserve. Yet there quite simply isn't any forgiveness to those who do not forgive. That would be like trying to breathe in without breathing out.

And so any theory of politics, or philosophy of life, which has no room for mercy has missed the point of life itself and why God made us. Whatever we believe, we are living as God's servants among fellow servants. We are called to friendship with God, which is the fulfilment of service on earth, but we do not become God's friends if we refuse to be friends with each other. Forgiveness cannot be forced on us. God offers it, and we are to offer it with God, but it must be accepted. No one will accept forgiveness who does not want to share it with others. So it is in forgiving that we are forgiven.

Contact Details -

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