

BULLETIN 29 – 27TH SEPTEMBER 2020

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Next Sunday we shall be keeping Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday. We are all asked to bring a gift for the Harvest table, which will be set up in the Sanctuary. Gifts of food, preferably tinned or dry can be brought after Stations on Friday.

If you wish to donate some of your own produce, maybe something you have grown, or a cake or jam etc this is welcome. There are also Cafod Harvest Appeal envelopes which you may wish to donate money instead/as well.

This year has been a particular trying time for all of us, many of us have experienced “empty larder days” and we now know exactly how people who have to go without feel. Maybe this will prompt us all to help them.

God Bless you all

Fr. John

TIMES OF MASSES AND OTHER SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sun	27	26 of the year	10:00 Mass	People of the Parish
			18:00 Mass	Departed friends & family of Birchall
Tue	29	SS. Michael, Gabriel & Raphael	10:30 Rosary	
Wed	30	St. Jerome	10:00 Mass	Tess Hogan (RIP)
Thu	1	St. Therese	10:00 Mass	Catherine Glover (RIP)
			10:20 Adoration	
Fri	2	Guardian Angels	10:00 Mass	John Hogan
			10:20 Stations	
Sun	4	27 of the year	10:00 Mass	Raluca (INT for Peace)
			18:00 Mass	People of the Parish

REFLECTION 26th Sunday.

This week’s gospel from Matthew continues on from Father John’s homily last week in which the overall message was the magnitude and generosity of forgiveness that Jesus professes. All of, through his magnitude and generosity, can successfully attain eternal happiness in heaven - those who are lifelong Catholics and those who repent in the last moment. I thought it was a wonderful example that Father John used talking about Dismas who at the last seconds of his life asked for forgiveness and was granted it, and this is certainly the way it will be for all who do likewise.

Next week we greet the month of October, a time that the Church dedicates to Mary, Mother of God, and I thought now would be a good opportunity to remind ourselves about this most fundamental and important part of our prayer life. From a personal perspective I have a very close allegiance to Mary to whom I have prayed intensively for help for others, some of whom you know: those who were sick; those who needed that something extra special, including three couples who were trying for a baby; and those who simply needed mental support with their lifestyle in this our chaotic existence. On so many occasions I can attribute the success of these prayers to Mary and her intercession. For that reason, I remain in awe of her and her Son Jesus, *ergo* my devotion to her remains wholehearted.

To paraphrase from the 2017 edition of *How to Pray the Rosary*, from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception of the BVM – ‘It is interesting how many times we say to somebody ‘I love you’. We do this so much that in some ways it might appear to become repetitive, but it can only seem to be such, because telling someone they are loved can never be routine or boring. When praying the Rosary, we express our gratitude to Jesus and Mary by calling to mind the tremendous sacrificial Love that they have for us. The act of praying the Rosary moves the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary to pour out countless graces upon us. Expressions of love from us are reciprocated by gifts of love from heaven. Blessed James Alberione explained: ‘The Rosary is the easiest way to honour God and the Blessed Virgin. It is the surest way to triumph over spiritual enemies, the most suitable way to progress in virtue and sanctity.’

Now for some history. Why October when May is the more traditional month known to most?

October’s dedication is primarily due to the fact that the liturgical feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is celebrated annually on October 7. It was instituted to honour the Blessed Virgin Mary in gratitude for the protection that she gives the Church in answer to the praying of the Rosary by the faithful. It had been a devotion of the faithful for several centuries, due to the influence of St Dominic, a priest who founded the Dominican order in the year 1215. He

received a vision from Our Lady who showed him a wreath of roses, representing the rosary she told him to say the Rosary daily teach it to all who would listen, and eventually the true faith would win. Dominic was one of the first people to begin to pray the Rosary he spread devotion to it and used it to strengthen his own spiritual life. His feast day is August 8th.

The Church chose October 7th because a great victory took place on that day in 1571. That year, the Church in Europe faced a seemingly hopeless challenge. The Muslim Turks had already conquered the Middle East, slaughtering millions and forcing the survivors to convert to Islam. Pope Pius V called on the Christian princes of Europe to rally to defeat the Islamic threat. In addition, he called on Rosary confraternities in Rome and all over Europe to undertake special processions and public recitation of the Rosary, asking the intercession of the Blessed Mother. What ensued was the famous Battle of Lepanto. As Christians all over Europe prayed for Our Lady's intercession, the Turks surrounded the Christian ships. But the European fleet broke through to attain victory. Europe was saved. Pope Pius established an annual commemoration to honour Our Lady of Victory, and his successor, Gregory XIII, decreed that the first Sunday in October would be the feast of the Holy Rosary. The decision to designate October as the month of the Rosary apparently stems from the Church's desire to extend its thanksgiving to Our Lady for victory in the Battle of Lepanto from one Sunday to a whole month.

But what does the Rosary do? It reminds us that Jesus loved us so much that he died on the cross for us.

The Rosary tells the story of Jesus' life in four parts: the Joyful Mysteries; the Sorrowful Mysteries; the Glorious Mysteries; the Luminous Mysteries. Catholics have been given a very special gift in the Rosary. Between May 13 and October 13, 1917, Our Lady appeared to three children (Lucia de Jesus, aged 10, and her cousins, Francisco and Jacinta Marto, aged 9 & 7) near Fatima in Portugal. Mary asked the children to pray the Rosary for world peace, for the end of World War 1, for sinners and for the conversion of Russia.

During the last apparition on October 13, in the presence of about 70,000 people, the Lady told them that she was "Our Lady of the Rosary" and asked that a chapel be built in her honour on that site. After the apparition everyone present witnessed the miracle promised to the three children in July and September. The sun appeared as a disc that gave off various colours and could be looked at without difficulty. It spun like a fireball and looked as if it would fall to the earth.

Mary gave the children three secrets. Lucia, who later became a Carmelite nun, and died in 2005 at the age of 97, revealed the first secret in 1927, concerning devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The second secret was a vision of hell. Pope John Paul II revealed the third secret in 2000; it spoke of a "bishop in white" who was shot by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows into him. Many people linked this to the assassination attempt against Pope John Paul II in St. Peter's Square on May 13, 1981. The feast of Our Lady of Fatima on May 13 was approved by the local bishop in 1930; it was added to the Church's worldwide calendar in 2002.

St. Bernadette was born in Lourdes in France. One Thursday, February 11, 1858, when she was sent with her younger sister and a friend to gather firewood, a very beautiful Lady appeared to her above a rose bush in a grotto called Massabielle. The lovely Lady was dressed in blue and white. She smiled at Bernadette and then made the sign of the cross with a rosary of ivory and gold. The beautiful Lady was God's Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. She appeared to Bernadette 17 other times and spoke with her. She told Bernadette that she should pray for sinners, do penance and have a chapel built there in her honour. The Feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes Feast day: February 11. As a result, Lourdes is now the largest Christian site of pilgrimage in the world.

These were just some of the appearances of Mary here on Earth, and the message is always the same, that this beautiful combination of vocal prayer and meditation that centres upon the greatest gospel mysteries in the life of Jesus Christ, and secondarily the life of his mother Mary, is one of the greatest prayers that we can make. At these difficult life-threatening times of COVID-19 which cause stress in all our lives in a multiplicity of different ways, the Rosary is one way of finding a few moments of peace in our lives. I beg you to take the opportunity to say even just one decade, if that's all you can do, every single day throughout the month of October for our deliverance from the current situation. Here at the Assumption of Our Lady we pray the Rosary at 10:30 every Tuesday morning. Sadly, not many join us physically, so there is ample space for those of you who feel you would be able to make it. Those that can't you can of course join us by live - streaming. This is important so that we are united in our prayer, united in our faith and united to Mary her Son Jesus and Almighty God.

ROSARY WHIRLWIND BRITISH ISLES
OCTOBER 2020 – FOR FAITH, LIFE AND PEACE

October is traditionally the month dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. Once again Catholics across England, Wales, Scotland and the Isles are invited to take up their rosaries for an intensive Rosary Whirlwind Mission as we pray together for Faith, Life and Peace during these difficult and uncertain times.

This can take place wherever people are situated. I would encourage you to publicise the Rosary Rally on your websites and in your parish and chaplaincy newsletters, so that as many people as possible can take part.

The Rosary Rally has four main components:

- Invitation to a nightly online Rosary at 8 pm led from different locations

- On Tuesday 13th October – Feast of Our Lady of Fatima of the Holy Rosary - you are encouraged to arrange a joint Rosary in your parish or local setting. Please be aware that these groups should be no more than 6 people and should be arranged to be in a protective social bubble so that social distancing can be maintained. The rule of 6 may change as government guidelines re COVID-19 change.

- Saturday October 31st October – Eve of All Saints – National Rosary relay from 9am to 9pm – Dioceses are invited to take an hour – The Diocese of Brentwood has been allocated -11am to 12noon as our slot – you are invited to pray the rosary sometime during this hour before we hand on to the next Diocese.

- Culmination of the Rosary Mission – Sunday 1st November – Feast of All Saints – Bishop John Keenan, Bishop of Paisley, will lead a thanksgiving Rosary at 8 pm from St. Mirin's Cathedral, Paisley. Participants are invited to join with him that evening from their homes. To register please follow the link: www.rosaryonthecoast.co.uk or for more information please contact Antonia Moffat, Outreach Coordinator at the National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham: antonia@walsingham.org.uk

Bishop Alan