

THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY
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BULLETIN B 29 – 16TH JUNE 2024
11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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THIS WEEK'S SERVICES

Sun 16	11 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Solemn Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish
Wed 19	feria	1030 Funeral Mass	Mary McNamara (RIP)
Thu 20	St. Alban	1000 Mass	Willie Lamsbey (RIP)
Sun 23	12 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Solemn Mass 1800 Mass	Davidson Philip Damias (INT) People of the Parish

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The General Election. This week the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have launched a set of informative resources to help us think about our election choices. It covers pro-Life issues as well as the criminal justice system, education, poverty, the environment, refugees and migrants. The Bishops remind us: *"We are not merely the passive recipients of politics but active citizens. An election is the best time for us as Christians to speak out, to get involved, and to lead."* The resources include suggested questions for candidates, links if you want to go deeper, and actions we can take to make a difference. You will find everything at: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/election24/>

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Brentwood Catholic Children's Society

is pleased to host their first Charity Tribute Night featuring ABBA Chique at the Mill Hall Arts & Events Centre in Rayleigh on Friday 12th July from 7.30 to 11pm. Please spread the word among friends and family, join them at this special anniversary event and get ready to dance and sing along to your favourite <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/abba-tribute-night-tickets-849314000037> Please keep your e-ticket to show on entry to the venue. All details can be found on the BCCS website: www.bccs.org.uk/get-involved/events/ If you have any questions about the event, please email Julie jabbott@bccs.org.uk.

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ORDINATION OF FR. DAVID WALLER AS BISHOP OF THE ORDINARIATE 22ND JUNE 11.00AM IN WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL – ALL ARE WELCOME.

This is a major event in the life of the Ordinariate, please do pray for Fr. David as he prepares to become Bishop David. Our Novena continues this week. You can download the Novena prayers from our website.

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On Saturday 22nd June, the Eve of the Vigil of the Feast of St John the Baptist, please pray and fast for the end of abortion and euthanasia. This is the last monthly day of prayer and fasting for life before the General Election. An election which could well result in an even more pro-abortion government than we have currently had. Your prayer and fasting is urgently needed. "And the people of Nineveh believed in God; they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least...God saw their efforts to renounce their evil ways. And God relented about the disaster which He had threatened to bring on them, and He did not bring it." (Jonah 3:5,10) Please Invite others to join the day on Facebook, <https://www.facebook.com/events/1037436687798327/>

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GOSPEL REFLECTION

If you ask any English man or woman “of a certain age”, or indeed perhaps people from elsewhere, what name they would associate with the word “mustard”, it’s likely that they’d reply, “Colman’s”. The English firm of Colman’s has been famous since the nineteenth century and their bright yellow adverts for “Colman’s Mustard” were everywhere and reflected the colour of their spice. In the early days the mustard was sold as a powder which was then mixed with water into a paste. When they were at table the diners would scoop some mustard onto their plates and dip into it as they wanted. Since it was so strong, they didn’t need much, which gave rise to a story that Colman’s made their profit, not from what was eaten, but by what was left on the plate. Whatever that story, it’s certainly not likely that any of us today would associate a tree with the stuff we have at dinner or put on our hot dogs.

Jesus, like the prophets before him, used images that were familiar to the people of his time. They grew crops, looked after sheep, tended olive trees and grape vines and so on.

In today’s Gospel the two parables are about seeds. From something small, something wonderful can grow. Obviously, Jesus knew about mustard. it was used throughout the Roman Empire and, in fact, the word “mustard” itself comes from Latin. Of course, in Palestine it would have been a darker spice than our yellow. It’s not too far-fetched to imagine Jesus being served it at a meal, say at the house of Zacchaeus the tax collector, or when he was invited to dinner by the Pharisees. Whatever the reality, it was clear that he knew his listeners would understand the imagery of the mustard seed growing into a tree.

There’s a point to note here; Jesus is not being literal in this parable. The mustard seed is not the smallest, nor the mustard tree or shrub the largest, although it can grow to 20 feet tall, or about 6 metres if you prefer metric. He’s using a poetic device to show the contrast between the tiny seed of God’s kingdom sown on earth which will grow to something immense in the fulness of time.

At the end of the parable Jesus echoes the imagery we heard in the first reading, from the prophet Ezekiel, when he says that the birds of the air will live and find shelter in the shade of the tree. In one of his talks our late Pope Benedict XVI had a lovely image of people who were looking for God being like birds perching on the tree of the Church where its members had already built their nests.

It might be presumptuous, but we could extend something to the parable of the mustard tree by way of a warning. If you’ve read or even heard about a book by C.S. Lewis called *The Screwtape Letters* you’ll know it was about a series of imaginary letters from Screwtape, a Senior Devil, to Wormwood, a Junior Devil, advising him on how to tempt people away from the “Enemy”, which is the name he gives to God. In one letter Screwtape tells Wormwood that by encouraging factions within the Church he can turn them into people who have the characteristics of what he describes as “the self-righteousness of a secret society or a clique.”

If we go back in our parable to the birds in the tree, we know from nature that there can be trouble. The jolly little robin redbreast will fight any other robin that comes on his territory. The large plump wood pigeon will chase his lesser companions away from a scrap of food. And so on. The factions that St Paul found in the Christians in Corinth who shouted, “I am for Cephas”, “I am for Apollos”, nearly drove him to distraction and he exclaimed in exasperation, “Is Christ divided?”

We can also be tempted into factions where our airs and pomposities make us feel superior to our brothers and sisters. If we can’t show charity to one another, what chance have we of offering welcome to the other birds who come to our tree seeking shelter?

In today’s Mass let’s ask our loving Lord to give us his healing Holy Spirit to bind us together so that we can love one another as he loves us.

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The Episcopal Ordination of Fr. David Waller in Westminster Cathedral on Saturday 22nd June at 11.00am. All are invited to the service and are very welcome. Fr. John has three tickets for the Reception in the Cathedral Hall afterwards, first come first served.
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