

THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

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BULLETIN 34

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

We none of us know what's going to happen next week, let alone at Christmas. Yet we need to prepare to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord with as much festivities as we are allowed. I propose that there will be three Christmas masses; 6pm Christmas Eve, 9am and 11am on Christmas day. In order to cater for all who would like to join us in church for any of these masses we are asking that you book a place for yourself and any who are joining you. You can book either by signing the list in the porch or by letting Deacon Michael know your intentions. We are only allowed 61 in the church at any one time, it may be possible to live stream the mass into the hall where Holy Communion will also be given. It is vital that if you want to join us for the mass at Christmas that you pre-book.

Now that I'm resident in the Church House there will be an additional weekday mass, on Tuesday evenings at 7.00pm.

This Monday is All Souls Day and there will be an additional mass at 10.00am.

God bless you all

Fr. John.

MASSES AND SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sun	1 st	All Saints Day	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Margaret Ayrton (RIP)
Mon	2 nd	All Souls Day	1000 Mass	Holy Souls
Tue	3 rd	feria	1830 Rosary	
			1900 Mass	Holy Souls
Wed	4 th	S.Charles Borromeo	1000 Mass	Isabella McGee (RIP)
Thu	5 th	feria	1000 Mass	Holy Souls
			1020 Adoration	
Fri	6 th	feria	1000 Mass	Holy Souls
			1020 Stations	
Sun	8 th		1000 Mass	Thanksgiving for Churches Opening
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish

GOSPEL REFLECTION

"My dear people, we are already the children of God... Surely everyone who entertains this hope must purify himself, must try to be as pure as Christ."

In 1969 when Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin stepped out onto the surface of the moon, the universe seemed smaller and history was made. Looking at the first pictures of the earth from the moon, many people were filled with a sense of awe and wonder at God's beautiful creation. The first Boeing 747 flight happened in the same year. Since then, people travel to find work, to escape persecution, and those who can afford it go on

holiday. Flights have also made it possible to go on pilgrimage to holy places which were only in the dreams of the past. People desire to see and touch the holy and are fascinated by the relics of the saints. These experiences deepen our appreciation of the gift of God's creation and the wonder of the human person called to become a saint.

Each of us is called to be holy. What a wonderful calling! Last year St John Henry Newman was canonised. At the age of fifteen he became acutely aware of his own existence and that of God. He had the "thought of two, and two only, absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator". He had a heartfelt sense that this "would last into the next life, and that I was elected to eternal glory". The experience of the Creator made him feel very humble and so he wrote, "I thought only of the mercy to myself." This foundational event led him to search for the truth and to deepen the journey that began at his baptism.

The opening words of today's second reading are full of confidence: "Think of the love that the Father has lavished on us." We could ponder these words for hours in order to savour God's love. They emphasise our dignity since we are children of God and can look forward to the day when we will see God face to face. Then we will understand fully what we have only glimpsed in a shadowy way during life. As we walk by faith and not by sight, we catch hints and suggestions of God's grace and allow God to illuminate the path so that we can keep faith and carry the cross towards the resurrection.

A rich image of heaven is presented in the first reading. Gathered around the altar on which stands the Lamb of God, are the people from every tribe, nation and language. They sing the praise of God, perhaps singing the majestic hymn "Praise to the Holiest in the Height" which St John Henry Newman wrote and included in his poem *The Dream of Gerontius*. The people of all the nations are surrounded by angels who adore God and wear their white baptismal robes. Many have carried the cross of persecution and martyrdom and remained faithful to the end. St Maximilian Kolbe is greeted by St Francis, St Thérèse of Lisieux by St Teresa of Avila, and St John Henry Newman is met by St Athanasius, whom he studied all his life. We too are called to be saints to join their company.

Jesus said he is "the Way, the Truth and the Life". In the Beatitudes he reveals the attitudes which shape us to become saints. St Oscar Romero hungered and thirsted for justice. St Vincent de Paul and St Louise de Marillac were merciful to needy people and their work is continued by members of the SVP. Our Lady was pure in heart and able to live all the Beatitudes.

While baptism is the beginning of the Christian life, it is also the gift of a calling to become a saint. Each of us has a personal calling from God to be followed. For most people it is living out love in family life, in the everyday relationships of looking after children, loving one's husband or wife, and having time and care for ageing and elderly parents. For some, it is a calling to the service of priesthood, the consecration of religious life, and for others a committed single life which reaches out to others. God's call is always a call to go beyond ourselves in love. As St John Henry Newman said, "God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next." Walking by faith and led by God's kindly light, we can become saints.

ST JOHN HENRY NEWMAN AND THE FIRST VATICAN COUNCIL

2020 marks 150 years since the First Vatican Council and the solemn definition of papal primacy and infallibility. In this live streamed event Professor John Morrill, emeritus professor of history at the University of Cambridge, will take as his theme 'St John Henry Newman and Vatican I'. John will explore the reaction to the Council in the writings of Newman and set it in today's context.

The study day will take place on Saturday 21st November from 11 am. Due to coronavirus this will only be a live streamed event. To access go to www.ssppilford.org.uk and click on live stream remote services.