

BULLETIN B 11 – 7TH FEBRUARY 2021

5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Thursday is the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, who is the Principal Patroness of our Diocese. The day is also dedicated as the World Day for the Sick. Our Holy Father Francis has sent a message to all Catholics for this day and we have posted it to our website. Our Lady's prayers are more than ever needed for our world as we continue to fight our way through this pandemic. We rejoice in the rollout of the vaccination process in our land, this is seeming to take effect, but we are a small minority compared with the world's population that longs for a vaccine to alleviate their suffering.

With lent soon upon us, Ash Wednesday is 17th February, it's time to think how we as individuals will keep lent this year. I know what you're thinking "nothing much left to give up this year!" So remember Lent is the season of growth, and the traditional ways that Christians have used for centuries is: Prayer, Fasting and Alms Giving. More about this next week, but it's not too early to start thinking and praying about your observance of Lent this year.

The Diocese have warned us this week, "We have become aware of increased activity from local authorities, who are showing an interest in the measures that you have in place to provide and maintain a Covid secure environment in your Churches." I believe that our measures are effective and make us secure against Covid. I have asked Deacon Michael to review our procedures. One thing I am a little concerned about is that we **MUST NOT CHAT IN THE PORCH** before Mass, nor linger in the Church chatting after mass. Please, please when you arrive for mass and see someone else in the porch, other than the steward, please wait until they have gone into church. At the end of mass the Deacon says "Go in Peace..." and that's exactly what we **MUST DO**.

Please help me on this, and maybe I can give up moaning for Lent!

God bless you all.

Fr. John

TIMES OF MASS THIS WEEK

Sun	7	5 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
Tue	9	feria	1900 Mass	Jim Birchall (RIP)
Wed	10	St. Scholastica	1000 Mass	Isabella Doig (INT)
			1020 Adoration	
Thu	11	Our Lady of Lourdes	1000 Mass	for the Sick and Suffering
			1020 Adoration	
Fri	12	feria	1000 Mass	John Hogan (RIP)
Sun	14	6 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish

GOSPEL REFLECTION

We are all looking for something. We all want to be happy. For children, happiness may simply be the experience of having their needs satisfied, being made to feel good, safe, secure. As we grow older, these needs become more complex. We need to succeed, to be recognised, to occupy our own place in the world. Every person lives this process of development, each in his or her own unique way. Of course, we are limited by the particular circumstances in which we find ourselves. For some, the limitations take the form of poverty, or health, or education, or the constantly changing face of world history. Nevertheless, we all want to be happy and to make the most of the hand we have been dealt.

Today our scripture readings help us to explore these deep human longings in the light of God's word and God's plan for us. If we know the story of Job, maybe we can recognise his changing fortunes as typical of the human condition. For reasons he doesn't know or understand, his life has become unbearable. Who is to blame? As far as he knows, he has been faithful to all the demands of the Law, so he refuses to accept

that his troubles are a punishment from God. But he also knows the goodness of God and so he refuses to blame God for all that has gone wrong in his life. In the end, he simply has to surrender and entrust himself to God's loving mercy.

On the other hand, St Paul is able to view the world in the light of the Good News of Jesus Christ. He sees that this is the final answer to everyone's quest for happiness, starting with himself, and so he commits himself to sharing this Gospel with everyone, whatever it might cost him.

In today's Gospel we find Jesus responding with love and compassion to those he meets. They know that Jesus can help them, whatever their need might be. They come to him from all around the town bringing people who are sick and those possessed by demons, and Jesus cures them all. But in his night-time prayer, Jesus realises that his mission goes beyond this little seaside town. "Everybody is looking for you," he is told by the disciples and Jesus knows the truth that "everybody" is more than this local population – it is the whole of humanity, for all time. He has to move on. His mission for the salvation of the world is just beginning. Although "everybody" is looking for an immediate resolution to their problems, this is symptomatic of their deep, inner longing for happiness, and ours.

The issue for us is just the same as ever. Like Job, we puzzle over the difficulties of life. Why do we suffer, especially when we try to do what we believe we should be doing? Why do some people seem to have an easier life than others? Is there really a God? If so, does God not care about what is happening to us? As Christians, we believe that Jesus Christ is God's answer to all our questions. St John reassures us that "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life." And so, like the people of the time of Jesus, we are among all those who are "looking for him". We need to hear his voice. We need to know that he is close to us. We need to feel the power of his healing touch. And it is here that we find the one who, risen from the dead, reassures us, "Don't be afraid. I have overcome the world. Know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time."

Now, like Paul, we have been commissioned to go out and share the Good News of our faith: Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and he lives in the hearts of all those who believe in him. He enables us to live in the hope of eternal life, where suffering and death, pain and sorrow will be no more. But this is not a "pie in the sky", "happy ever after" ending; it is rather a challenge to get on with building God's kingdom here and now. Together, strengthened through prayer and the celebration of the sacraments, we will discover the happiness for which we are all searching.

A Prayer for the Sick

Watch, O Lord, with those who wake, or watch, or weep tonight, and give your angels charge over those who sleep. Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ. Rest your weary ones. Bless your dying ones. Soothe your suffering ones. Pity your afflicted ones. Shield your joyous ones. And for all your love's sake.
Amen.

A Prayer to Our Lady – Health of the Sick

Virgin, most holy, Mother of the Word Incarnate, Treasurer of graces, and Refuge of sinners, I fly to your motherly affection with lively faith, and I beg of you the grace ever to do the will of God. Into your most holy hands I commit the keeping of my heart, asking you for health of soul and body, in the certain hope that you, my most loving Mother, will hear my prayer. Into the bosom of your tender mercy, this day, every day of my life, and at the hour of my death, I commend my soul and body.

To you I entrust all my hopes and consolations, all my trials and miseries, my life and the end of my life, that all my actions may be ordered and disposed according to your will and that of your Divine Son.
Amen.