

BULLETIN B 15 – 7TH MARCH 2021 THE THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Firstly, let me say how wonderful you are! The Cafod Appeal last week raised £299, which was a tremendous achievement especially as many are still in lockdown. I am delaying sending the cheque till after this Sunday, as I know of a few who still want to contribute.

We have had a really tough time trying to sort out the telephone in the presbytery which has resulted in having to have a new number. This is very inconvenient, the old number is in many directories and peoples address books, but the alternative would have been very expensive, we would have had to pay 26p per minute for incoming calls – I kid you not!

New Telephone number – 01279 434203 – please change your address books and phone contact list now!!

In this year dedicated to St. Joseph, many are keeping a novena to him from 10th March until his feast day on 19th March. I give details below of a series of masses with an address at Our Lady Immaculate Chelmsford, these will live streamed, link below. There is also a prayer to St. Joseph reproduced below for your use especially during the novena.

Next Sunday, fourth in lent, is also Mothering Sunday, there will be a small gift for the mothers among us at the morning mass.

God bless you all

Fr. John

TIMES OF WORSHIP THIS WEEK

Sun	7	3 rd in Lent	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Fr. Ivor Morris, Ord. (RIP)
Tue	9	feria of lent	1900 Mass	Eileen & Alex Walsh (RIP)
Wed	10	feria of lent	1000 Mass	Elsie Harrigan (INT)
			1020 Adoration	
Thu	11	feria of lent	1000 Mass	Brian Bamforth (RIP Recent)
			1020 Adoration	
Fri	12	feria of lent	1000 Mass	Joanne Gow (INT)
			1020 Stations	
Sun	14	4 th in Lent	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Jim Birchall

NOVENA OF MASSES IN HONOUR OF ST JOSEPH 10TH-18TH MARCH

Our Lady Immaculate Church, Chelmsford

Pope Francis has made this year “the Year of St Joseph.” To celebrate this, there will be a novena of Masses in preparation for his feast (19th March) at Our Lady Immaculate Church, Chelmsford. These will be at 7pm each day from 10th March - 18th March at OLI church. You can watch the Mass via the church livestream link - tinyurl.com/OLIchelmsford . During the Mass, there will be a short homily about St Joseph and the Mass will include the novena prayer. If you would like to send petitions for the novena, please send them to: St Philips Priory, 178 New London Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 0AR.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O Saint Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires. O Saint Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession and obtain for me from your divine Son all spiritual blessings through Jesus Christ, Our Lord, so that having experienced here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers. O Saint Joseph, I never weary of contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms. I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Hold Him close in my name and kiss His fine head from me, and ask Him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath. St. Joseph, patron of departing souls, pray for me. Amen.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

“Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.”

The Old Testament has what may seem a surprisingly small vocabulary, which means that the same word can mean many different things. This is one reason why translations of the Old Testament can be so different from each other. Remarkably, the Hebrew word for “word” is a good example of this. It can mean “word” or “thing”. In the Hebrew mind, “words” are “things” – they have just as much substance as any other “thing”. This is not so odd as it might seem. Although few of us may have noticed it, we do something similar in English with “thing” and “think”. A “thing” is something you can think of.

In Hebrew the word has a special power in the sense of God’s words. Human beings use words to describe things, but God uses words to bring things into being. So in the first reading today, we have the famous Ten Commandments, except the word for “commandment” is actually the word for “word”; it is really ten “words”, rather than ten “commandments”. Yet we speak of the ten “commandments” rather than the ten “words”. With God, a word is both a commandment and a statement of fact. God’s words come true. Sin will end for those who enter heaven and even for those who reject God, sin will be limited. The frustration of the evil will is the greatest of punishments in hell. God does not allow us to sin for ever. We should not think of God’s commandments as human laws, which may or may not be obeyed. In the end God’s kingdom will come and God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven. We see this in the story of the cleansing of the Temple in the Gospel.

In today’s Gospel reading, Christ cleanses the Temple in Jerusalem. When he is challenged about his actions, he responds with these words, “Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.” His victory is guaranteed and the resurrection is the sign of that victory. Even though the historic Jerusalem Temple will be destroyed, the risen Christ and the Church which is his body will triumph. The destruction of the Temple and the death of Christ are caused by sin, but Christ will triumph over sin and death. In purifying the Temple now, Christ shows that his resurrection is about creating a new life.

This is one reason why the Church continues to sing the Old Testament psalms. The psalms speak of victory, often in militaristic terms, and this can seem strange and even offensive to our way of thinking. The key is that the victory is not ours but God’s. God will win, and God does not need us to bring about that victory by force. Instead we are called to believe and hope in God’s victory, the victory we prepare for by prayer. Much will be destroyed before that victory comes, but what is destroyed, the Lord can raise up again, as Christ says later in John’s Gospel: “Now the will of him who sent me is that I should lose nothing of all that he has given to me, and that I should raise it up on the last day.” We see so much degradation and ruin in the world, often caused by human sins, but there is nothing that falls that cannot be raised again, until we come to the place where the true temple stands for ever.

If God is going to win, then what is our role in God’s victory? It is quite simple: we are called to believe and hope in that victory, and by love share the fruits of that victory with others. There are signs of the kingdom to come here on earth, and there are small victories over evil, which can give us hope and protect us from despair. While we live on earth as Christians, we live in the temple because we are the temple, which is why we are called to purify ourselves to keep the temple pure. This is why self-examination is the foundation of all progress. If we fight injustice, or prejudice, we must start by considering our own injustice, to be constantly trying to overcome our own prejudices, and we must be honest here, even if it is painful for us to do so. We will fail if we rely on our own power, but we can remember that Christ is with us; he will teach us the truth and set us free.

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