

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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BULLETIN B 16 – 14TH MARCH 2021
FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT

My dear brothers and sisters,

We are now at the half way mark of Lent, and the church gives us a gift today to help us “Rejoice”. Today, for one day only, we are allowed to enjoy whatever luxury we have been denying ourselves in our Lenten observance. It’s also a golden opportunity for any who have lapsed from their Lenten efforts to begin again on Monday morning!

Today the world celebrates “Mother’s Day”. Actually this is another Christian day that the seculars have stolen. On the fourth Sunday of Lent in medieval times, everyone had a day off and they would return to their mother church where they were baptised and to thank God for their three mothers. Three? Yes, one our own mother who gave us birth and nurtured us, two our Holy Mother the church who gave us new life in the waters of baptism, and three Our Lady Mary our blessed mother who continues to guide us through our journey of life. It has long been the custom for the church to give her children a posy of flowers to take to their own mothers. A custom we shall continue this year!

We have started to plan for the culmination of Lent, indeed the whole Christian year. You will see below, a list of the services for Holy Week and Easter. We will continue to live stream all our services, during the Great Week, for those who need us too, but nothing beats being present in church for these celebrations! I know that many of you will want to come and so in order to continue to be Covid secure, those services **in bold**, will have to be pre-booked.

God bless you as you enjoy Laetare Sunday, Mother’s Day.

Fr. John

TIMES OF MASS AND OTHER SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sun	14	4 th in Lent	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Jim Birchall (RIP)
Tue	16	feria of lent	1900 Mass	Kay Hill (RIP)
Wed	17	St. Patrick	1000 Mass	Ireland
			1030 Adoration	
Thu	18	St. Cyril	1000 Mass	John Hogan (RIP)
Fri	19	St Joseph	1000 Mass	Patrick Wall (RIP)
			1030 Stations	
Sun	21	5 th in Lent	1000 Mass	Matthew Navin (RIP)
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Our reason for rejoicing today is not that we have made it to the halfway mark of Lent, but rather that today we hear readings that bring us the most incredible news we could ever hear. It’s as though the Church is asking us to raise our eyes and look to the future; to think of the extraordinary events that we’ll soon be celebrating, events that form the climax of the Church’s liturgical year, the suffering, death and glorious resurrection of our beloved Lord.

In the Gospel Jesus refers to an ancient story that would be well known to his Jewish audience. It tells how the people of Israel, while trudging through the desert on their way to the Promised Land, were beset by poisonous snakes that caused many deaths. Moses was inspired to fashion a snake in bronze and set it on a standard, promising that whoever looked up at it with faith would be healed.

Today Jesus declares that he himself, the “Son of Man”, must be lifted up just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert. As Christians, it’s hard for us to hear those words without our thoughts immediately switching to Calvary and to the cross of crucifixion. Upon it there hangs not a lifeless symbol, like the bronze snake, but the living, tortured body of God’s only Son, and there is a divine promise that whoever looks towards him in faith will enjoy eternal life.

The scene on Calvary speaks eloquently of how much God loves us. In the simple yet powerful words of John, the Gospel writer, “God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son.” Calvary is the supreme proof that our God is a God of love, a God who in the person of God’s Son came into this world not to condemn but to save. What Jesus came to save us from is sin. Sin – it’s such a tiny word, but, like an infinitesimally small virus, it represents a hidden enemy which is capable of causing catastrophic damage and, in the end, can leave us skulking forever in the dark instead of living in the joy of the light.

Today’s second reading reminds us that Jesus came not simply to save us *from* something, but to save us *for* something. That something is life as a son or daughter of God. Through the mercy, the goodness and graciousness of God we are transformed: we become, in the incredible words of St Paul, “God’s work of art”, destined to live “the good life as from the beginning [God] had meant us to live it”.

Perhaps we tend to think of ourselves more as disaster areas than works of art. But today we are being asked to think again. We are assured by God’s word that we are “God’s work of art”. If that is God’s vision, then can it inspire us, in our own small way, to live up to God’s expectations? Again, when we see goodness not in terms of keeping commandments but rather in terms of making a return of love to a God who first loved us, then what could give us greater joy than trying to live “the good life” as God has always meant it to be? If Sunday by Sunday we could bring to mind these truths, wouldn’t every Sunday be a “Laetare Sunday”, a day filled with gratitude and rejoicing for all that the Lord has done, is doing, will do in order to turn us into “God’s work of art”?

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER SERVICES

Sun	28	Palm Sunday	1000	Mass
			1800	Mass
Mon	29	Holy Monday	1000	Mass
Tue	30	Holy Tuesday	1900	Mass
Wed	31	Spy Wednesday	1000	Mass & Adoration
Thu	1	Maundy Thursday	1900	Mass of the Lords Supper & Watch
Fri	2	Good Friday	1200	Children’s Stations (Adults welcome)
			1500	Liturgy of the Cross and Passion
Sat	3	Holy Saturday	2000	Easter Vigil and First Mass of Easter
Sun	4	Easter Sunday	0900	Solemn Mass
			1100	Family Mass

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.