

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady

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BULLETIN B 28 – 6TH JUNE 2021 CORPUS CHRISTI – THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

My dear brothers and sisters,

Today, the solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, more commonly known as Corpus Christi, is a wonderful way of gathering together the themes of Easter. The Eucharist has been described as the source and summit of our Christian life. It is the way that we are fed and sustained along life's way, the food for our journey through life and to eternal life with God. On this feast it is the custom of the Church to give thanks for all the graces that we have received through the real presence of the Lord Jesus and to ask his continual blessing on our life going forward. Many churches throughout the world on this day have a procession of the Sacred Host culminating in Benediction. As a token of this we shall have a small procession (inside the church) and a period of Adoration and Benediction.

It is so good to see that Coffee after Mass on Sunday's has taken off, it's such a lovely way of catching up with old friends and meeting new ones. Do join us if you have time.

A new frontal on the Altar has been gifted to the Parish by the Ordinariate group, many have commented on its beauty. The tapestry used is full of symbolism, explained thus:-

Aragon Tapestry is a multi-coloured Indo-Portuguese design of the 18th Century, although its various component features date from a much earlier period and all of them have symbolic significance. The birds have a symbolic significance, they are the mediators between Heaven and Earth and in early Christian art they signified saved souls. The elegantly decorated urn, a container for oils and perfumes, signifies St Mary Magdalene, one of the most popular of Christian saints and consequently much depicted in Christian art. Amongst the many flowers in the design it is possible to distinguish the Blue Iris, a floral symbol of the Virgin Mary and the Thistle, a symbol of the Passion of Jesus Christ and the sufferings of the Christian martyrs. Finally, the grapevine symbolises abundant life in the Church through Christ the true Vine and the grapes, the Eucharist.

God Bless you all
Fr. John

TIMES OF MASS THIS WEEK

Sun	6	Corpus Christi	1000 Mass & Benediction - Ken Pittuck (RIP) 1800 Mass People of the parish
Tue	8	feria	1900 Mass Clodagh Casolani (RIP)
Wed	9	feria (of St. Joseph)	1000 Mass Vocations 1020 Adoration
Thu	10	feria	1000 Mass Mcloughlin Family (RIP) 1020 Adoration
Fri	11	Sacred Heart of Jesus	1000 Mass Joan Bridle (RIP)
Sat	12	Immaculate Heart of Mary	1000 Mass Ray Parks (INT) 1300 Wedding of Emma Loader & Billy Limby
Sun	13	11 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Pontifical Mass – People of the Parish 1800 Mass Nora Green (RIP)

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Fr. John will be available to hear confessions in church: - Tue 6.30pm and Wed 10.30am or by appointment. We are now allowed to use the confessional room but face masks are to be worn.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

“I’ll believe it when I see it” is a phrase frequently used in the context of people changing their patterns of behaviour. How often have you heard it in a discussion about how someone who is known to be of distinctly dodgy character has turned over a new leaf (to use another well-known and well-worn proverbial saying)? Of course, the implication is that there is little chance of the person in question ever changing. In the ancient world, when reading and writing were reserved to a very small and well-educated group of scribes, visual signs and symbols were used more often than written statements. Very often the sacrificing of animals accompanied a formal agreement between traders. One example was when an animal was slaughtered and the carcass cut in two, with the halves of the animal laid on the ground. Then the parties to the agreement would walk together between the halves of the animal, effectively stating wordlessly, “May I end my days like this animal if I do not keep my half of the bargain.”

Passover was, of course, the great Jewish feast commemorating – and spiritually renewing – the freeing of the Israelites from Egypt, their crossing of the Red Sea and their forty-year journey through the desert, and year after year this was commemorated. Today’s Gospel takes us to Mark’s account of Jesus giving Passover a whole new meaning on the night before he died.

There are three Passover celebrations in the Gospel of John, but only one in each of the other three Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. In these three, Jesus celebrates Passover on the night before he dies. It is important for us to realise that the way the ancient Jews marked out days was from sunset to sunset, so the Last Supper technically took place on the same day as Jesus’ death. At this meal, begun after sunset, Jesus does two remarkable things which are quite plausible in his own language. He takes bread – an essential ingredient of Passover – and he says, “This *is* my body.” Then he takes a cup of wine, saying, “This *is* my blood... which is to be poured out...” We are used to these words, echoed at every Mass, but, to Jesus’ disciples, these were unusual words for Passover. What we might miss, though, is that Jesus’ disciples do not sound surprised in the least.

In Aramaic, Jesus’ own language, similar to Hebrew, the verb “to say” is also the verb “to do”. We’ve actually heard this many times from the beginning of the book of Genesis. God said, “Let there be light”, and there was light. This continues throughout the creation narrative. When God says, “Let there be...” it *must* happen. So, when Jesus says, “This is my body... This is my blood,” he means it in reality. In Aramaic, there is no such thing as a figure of speech.

Oddly, we don’t get any indication of reaction here from his disciples, presumably because they knew exactly how their language worked and that Jesus spoke literally when he said, “This is my body... This is my blood.” We do, however, have a very clear idea of what people think when, in John’s Gospel, Jesus says: “I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.” Jesus does *not* mean “I am *like* living bread.” Clearly, Jesus’ entire audience knows what he is claiming – that he, personally, is living bread. Most cannot accept it; the Twelve, led by Peter, say, “Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God.” Peter never makes a greater or truer statement.

Back to the Last Supper and the Gospel text for today: Jesus, the living bread come down from heaven, is about to equate the surrendering of his own flesh and blood for the life of the world with the bread and wine which he now declares to be his body and blood. His gift is total. And Jesus even gives the bread and wine that is his body and blood to Judas Iscariot, and then, in John’s account of the Last Supper, tells him to go and do what he has come to do. The Eucharist is the guarantee that God has never, does not and will never hold back God’s love from anyone.