

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady

Old Harlow, Essex CM17 0HA

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BULLETIN B 29 – 13TH JUNE 2021 THE 11TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear brothers and sisters,

It is with great pleasure that we greet our Bishop Alan as he visits the parish on Sunday morning, we are grateful to him for taking time out of his busy schedule to be with us. The Bishop will be with us for coffee in the hall and would be delighted to meet and chat with you then. Please remember to sit in groups of six.

We are also delighted to welcome Tony Rowley, former Head of RE at St. Marks School, Tony is in the final stages before being ordained Deacon on 24th July. He remains with us on placement until then.

Thank you so much to those who worked so well to make our Church, grounds and hall looks so fine for Bishop Alan's visit. Thanks also for those who contributed to last Sunday's second collection for Sick and Retired Clergy Fund. There will be a another second collection next Sunday for "Day for Life"

God bless you all.

Fr. John

TIMES OF MASS THIS WEEK

Sun	13	11 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Pontifical Mass – People of the Parish 1800 Mass Nora Green (RIP)
Tue	15	feria	1900 Mass Hollick Family (RIP)
Wed	16	St. Richard of Chichester	1000 Mass Isabella & Patrick McGee (RIP) 1020 Adoration
Thu	17	feria	1000 Mass Patricia Hayes (INT) 1020 Adoration
Fri	18	feria	1000 Mass Vic Potter (RIP)
Sun	20	12 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass People of the Parish 1800 Mass

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.

“Lourdes at your Local” Talent Show!

Do you think you could be worthy of Simon Cowell's golden buzzer?! We are looking for acts to share as part of our “Lourdes at your Local” Talent Show this Summer, which will be streamed online on Friday 30th July.

Whether it's singing, dancing, magic, comedy or anything in-between, if you have a talent to share with the diocese please email gabriellafusi@dioceseofbrentwood.org and be prepared to send a video recording no later than Friday 2nd July.

For more information on “Lourdes at Your Local” this Summer, please visit www.bcys.net/events

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Oscar Romero, the Archbishop of San Salvador, was brutally martyred while celebrating Mass in March 1980. He had been outspoken in his condemnation of poverty, social injustice, assassinations and torture used in the vicious war between left-wing and right-wing forces in El Salvador. In 2018, he was proclaimed a saint and martyr by Pope Francis, who praised his ministry among the most poor and marginalised people. But Romero wasn't always feted by the Church. On the one hand, he found himself frustrated in his efforts by a large number of his own clergy who collaborated with the oppressive government; and on the other hand, his ministry was undermined by a Vatican policy which refused his request to condemn the government's violations of human rights.

It would be easy to portray Romero as a lone voice, powerless in the face of implacable odds. But in fact, by means of his weekly Sunday broadcasts to the nation, he was able to make sure that his small voice was amplified by being received and welcomed by the ordinary people of El Salvador. His single voice resonated in the seeds of hope it planted in the hearts of those who longed for a better future.

The ministry of Oscar Romero is itself a parable of the mystery of the kingdom of God which Jesus announces – the kingdom which encapsulates humanity's deepest hopes. Jesus' first parable today tells us that just as seed grows without the knowledge or activity of the farmer who sowed it, so God's kingdom will grow in the same unstoppable way. The seed has an inner dynamic to grow and become a rich harvest. It's a wonderful expression of the power of God at work in our world, irrespective of human efforts either to encourage or to thwart that growth. It conveys absolute trust in God's power to achieve God's purposes and realise God's plan, which is the flourishing of the kingdom in all its fullness – a kingdom of love, justice, peace and freedom. The parable contains a hope-filled promise: the harvest time will come. This image of reaping the harvest is drawn from the prophet Joel, who affirmed his absolute certainty that, no matter what, God's plan will be accomplished.

Jesus' second parable expresses a related truth about the kingdom. This time Jesus draws imagery from the prophet Ezekiel, who spoke of God's kingdom becoming like a mighty cedar towering above all others, offering protection and security to all peoples, represented by the birds of every kind which can rest in its shade. Jesus uses the example of the mustard seed to respond to those who question his vision of the future greatness of the kingdom he is ushering in. Although the kingdom has only small beginnings – rooted in the life and ministry of one man, Jesus – just like the mustard seed, it has the potential of greatness within it and can become the biggest of all shrubs, able to offer welcome to all.

Oscar Romero knew how to "broadcast" – to scatter seed, to disseminate hope – even in the darkest of times. He trusted that God's plan, God's preferential love for those who are poor, would not be thwarted. He shared the conviction expressed by Martin Luther King that the moral universe – we might say the kingdom of God – always "arcs towards justice", even if, like the farmer, we don't understand how that happens. And he believed that the kingdom of God offers welcome to all – no matter how small or marginalised they might be. Romero knew that he had his own small part to play in scattering the seed, but he had the assurance that, ultimately, the work – and the victory – belong to God alone. This was the basis of his confident hope.

His famous prayer sums up the part each one of us is called to play in the growth of the kingdom: "The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts, it is even beyond our vision... We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise... We cannot do everything, and there is a sense of liberation in realising that. This enables us to do something, and to do it very well... We may never see the end results, but that is the difference between the master builder and the worker. We are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs. We are prophets of a future not our own."