

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady

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BULLETIN B 32 – 4TH JULY 2021 THE 14TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My Dear brothers and sisters,

Those of you who were at mass last Sunday will have heard of the perilous state our finances are in. I was able to explain the main causes of this is not the expenditure but the income. Covid restrictions closed us down for about four months, and even when we opened for mass again we were not allowed to take collections, which means that what had been £12K the year before was now £4k. That we were and still are unable to hire the hall out means we lost another £10k. I gave out a simplified accounts statement and asked everyone to review their giving and we also made available standing order and gift aid forms.

I am grateful to those of you who responded so positively, and for those who were not with us I have placed some of the statements and other the forms in the porch for you to take. I am sure that together we can solve this problem and put our parish on a firmer financial position for the future.

God Bless

Fr. John

MASS TIMES THIS WEEK

Sun	4	14 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	Our FHC Children
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish
Tue	6	St. Maria Goretti	1900 Mass	Pete McEntee
Wed	7	feria	1000 Mass	Albert & Cherry Bridle (RIP)
			1030 Adoration	
Thu	8	feria	1000 Mass	Lilian Cingo
			1030 Adoration	
Fri	9	St Augustine Zhao Rong	1000 Mass	Fr. John Harvey (INT)
Sun	11	15 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Mary Fitzgerald (INT)

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

A hospital chaplain was at the bedside of Ron, a man who from the age of fifteen had fought a drug addiction. Sometimes succeeding, sometimes failing, he never gave up the struggle. The use of dirty needles had almost cost him his leg; now it was threatening his life. The chaplain had first met him a few days earlier and noticed with surprise a well-thumbed New Testament, sitting open on his bedside locker. Now, just before anointing him, he heard Ron make this moving admission: "If I die tonight, I know it's my own fault. I've brought it on myself. I reckon I'm a failure; but even if I die, I'll die still trusting in Jesus."

It's often said that nothing succeeds like success. Today's readings propose something rather different. They suggest that there are times when nothing succeeds like failure.

The Lord certainly does not begrudge us our successes. It's just that he doesn't want us to be carried away by them. Success can make us imagine that we've managed it without outside help. We might not say it in so many words, but we begin behaving as though we were, literally, self-made men and women. Success can blind us to the fact that we are utterly dependent upon the Lord: we can never earn anything from him. Our good deeds don't in some way put God in our debt. That is why weakness and failure are sometimes surer roads to God than strength and success.

Take St Paul, for example, who spoke to us in today's second reading. He achieved amazing things. From the moment the risen Lord appeared to him – he was actually on the way to Damascus and the rounding up of Christians there – from that moment, he was totally dedicated to Jesus. He became an apostle, spreading the name of Jesus and setting up new Christian communities to the ends of the then known world. Yet he openly admits that he had a weakness – a "thorn in the flesh", he calls it. We shall never know what it was, nor does that matter. The fact is that he had a chink in his armour, so to say, and it worried him. Three times he pleaded with God for help, and what reply did he get? "My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness." That encourages Paul to say, "I shall be very happy to make my weaknesses my special boast so that the power of Christ may stay over me." He adds, "For it is when I am weak that I am strong."

Then there is the story in today's Gospel. Jesus is God's only Son, and yet he fails, fails in his own home town (where perhaps he most hoped to succeed). They don't want to listen to him because they know him too well, or think they do. It must have been a disappointment and yet it was only a foreshadowing of what was to happen a few years later. He would be condemned to a brutal, utterly degrading death by crucifixion. There never was a greater apparent failure than that of Good Friday; yet that failure was the gateway to the glory of the resurrection and the salvation of the human race.

Today's Mass can be a source of encouragement. You and I have our weaknesses: it may be the number or the nature of our sins; it may be troubling doubts about the faith; it may be fears about our health; it may be worries about our children. Whatever it is, that is our "thorn in the flesh", but instead of dragging us down towards despair, it can inspire us to raise our head in hope. With St Paul, we can pray, "Lord, I am frail and inadequate, but I believe that my weaknesses give me a special reason to call on you to make me strong, so that, instead of sinking into despair, I raise my head in hope."

I wonder, did you notice that there was a kind of postscript to the Gospel story? We're told that Jesus could work "no miracle there" because of their lack of faith. So what about ourselves? Do we have faith? Do we really trust Jesus, despite everything? If we do, he has the power and the desire to help us, the power and the desire to make saints of the likes of you and me – even if it takes a miracle.