

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady

Old Harlow, Essex CM17 0HA

Tel: 01279 434203

<http://www.catholicchurchoftheassumption.co.uk/>

BULLETIN B 36 – 1ST AUGUST 2021 THE 18TH IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear brothers and sisters,

The response to the Strawberry Tea has been very good, to date we have sold 54 tickets, but we still have a few more left if you haven't yet bought yours. Now we need some volunteers to bake cakes, please have a word with either Cheryl or Tricia. There will be a raffle on the day and prizes have already been donated. Many thanks to you all for your support.

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Victoria Evans. Her funeral mass will be Wednesday 11th August at 11am. Do please pray for her family at this time.

The Choir are recruiting at present, they usually rehearse once a month in church, if you would like to join them please have a word with Simon.

God Bless you all

Fr. John

TIMES OF MASS THIS WEEK

Sun	1	18 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	John & Eileen Love (RIP)
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish
Tue	3	Feria	1900 Mass	Holy Souls
Wed	4	St. John Vianney	1000 Mass	Parish Priests
			1030 Adoration	
Thu	5	Dedication of St. Mary Major	1000 Mass	Phyllis & John Lindley (RIP)
			1030 Adoration	
Fri	6	Transfiguration of the Lord	1000 Mass	World Peace
Sun	8	19 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1200 Baptism of Nathan Fernandez	
			1800 Mass	Barbara Vernon (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.

At this time we remember the devastation caused in Hiroshima and Nagasaki when the atomic bombs were dropped, on 6 and 9 August 1945, and we pray that nuclear weapons will be abolished so that they can never be used again.

In his message, 'A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace', Pope Francis asks, 'How many resources are spent on weaponry, especially nuclear weapons, that could be used for more significant priorities such as ensuring the safety of individuals, the promotion of peace and integral human development, the fight against poverty, and the provision of health care'. Pope Francis calls on us to 'strive daily, in concrete and practical ways, to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another'.

In this country we have an active Catholic peace movement in Pax Christi. Their website suggests many ways we can all promote peace in our daily lives. There are activities for families to do at home, including a 15-minute peace liturgy for young children. <https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday-2021/>

Pax Christi needs our support to keep going. If you'd like to make a donation, small or large, here is the link: <https://tinyurl.com/yxfcw67x> Cheques payable to: Pax Christi.

Pax Christi, St Joseph's, Watford Way, London NW4 4TY Tel: 0208 203 4884

GOSPEL REFLECTION

The United States has recently observed National Junk Food Day. Many people may have been delighted to celebrate it in style. But doctors and nutritionists would be among those who recognise that burgers, crisps and fizzy drinks lack much of the fibre, vitamins and minerals we need to stay healthy. A regular diet of pizza and coke can soon pile on the calories, clog the arteries and sap us of energy. Junk food may fill us up, but it leaves us nutritionally starved. All the same, junk food remains universally popular. All that tasty sugar, salt and fat can be very attractive to people. It can have an almost addictive effect, according to researchers. The pleasure centres of the brain become desensitised after a while, requiring us to eat more and more of it to achieve the same effect.

It would be wrong, however, to judge anyone for their eating habits. People often have to work long hours, and the time it takes for shopping and preparation can make healthy eating an unaffordable luxury for some. Advertisers know how to exploit people's tiredness, vulnerability and low self-esteem. Keeping to a healthy regime requires discipline, which is easier for anyone self-valuing enough to invest in their own future well-being – but for those who have little money to spare and apparently not much to look forward to in life, instant gratification may seem more appealing.

Many people were as vulnerable and hard up in Jesus' day. Springtime was a time of particular hardship. So when Jesus fed five thousand people with bread that seemed to appear from nowhere, word soon circulated around the lakeside villages of Galilee. Within hours, so we hear in today's Gospel, crowds arrived from all directions, asking for more of this free food. You don't really want me, Jesus remarked sadly, you just want all the bread you can get.

It was Passover time, the feast of Unleavened Bread, a time of year for remembering the exodus from Egypt, when Moses fed their ancestors with manna in the desert. It made it all the more exciting to hear how Jesus was feeding thousands of people – could he be another Moses? However, as Jesus points out, it was not Moses who gave them bread from heaven – it was God. "I tell you most solemnly," Jesus says, bread that is truly life-giving can only come from God. And he himself is that source of spiritual well-being. "I am the bread of life," he says. What a startling statement that was! Manna from heaven had been a pledge to their ancestors that God's promises would come true: the provision of daily bread had taught them to trust God to save them from dying in the wilderness and bring them to the Promised Land. Now Jesus was claiming to be that pledge of God's love; to be the fulfilment of God's promise of life and salvation.

Some people still complain of feeling empty inside. Often it is a sense of dissatisfaction. They might be deceived into thinking that the latest gadget, or the trendiest look, will make them happy. Indeed, for some, life becomes a never-ending round of acquiring and disposing. In our second reading St Paul talks of "illusory desires". In his day, people's lifestyles left them craving something lasting and of worth. In some cases, people's lifestyles still do. Nothing, however, will ever fill that gnawing emptiness except the kind of nourishment which comes from God. Jesus makes that plain in today's Gospel. When we gather in company with one another and with Jesus, we are being invited into relationship at its most intimate and lasting. We savour something of the divine life of heaven. Hearing the word of God, we are renewed; consuming the body and blood of Jesus, we are recreated. Changed to become like Jesus, we, too, can become bread for the world.

Many people still have to work very hard to provide for themselves and their families. Jesus urges us to work for our spiritual maintenance as well, for food that rejuvenates the inner self. Terrible though it is that people still go hungry in this day and age, hunger of a spiritual kind can be healthy if it makes us deeply desirous of Jesus. Today, perhaps, we may recognise that hollow place within us all and come looking for the only one who can satisfy it. Come to me, Jesus is saying, you have no need ever to be hungry again.