

**Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady**  
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**BULLETIN B 37 – 8<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2021**  
**THE 19<sup>TH</sup> IN ORDINARY TIME**

My dear brothers and sisters,

We continue to progress, by little steps, back to pre-Covid normality. This week we are able to restore, at long last Congregational singing. Hymn books will again be available, at the end of mass please leave them on the pew near the side exit as you leave. It is important that you continue to wear your face masks in church, especially if you are going to sing.

Next week is of course our big day, our patronal festival. I do hope that as many as possible will be at mass to celebrate together as a Parish Family. The Strawberry Tea from 3.00pm that afternoon promises to be an excellent opportunity to have fellowship with each other. There are a few tickets left, so if you haven't yet bought yours this Sunday is your final chance.

God bless you all,

Fr. John

**TIMES OF MASS THIS WEEK**

Sun	8	19 <sup>th</sup> in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1200 Baptism	of Nathan Fernandez
			1800 Mass	Barbara Vernem (INT)
Tue	10	St. Lawrence	1900 Mass	Joseph McGuckin (RIP)
Wed	11	St. Clare	1100 Funeral Mass	of Vicki Evans (RIP)
Thu	12	feria	1000 Mass	Christina Shillibeer (RIP)
			1030 Adoration	
Fri	13	feria	1000 Mass	
Sun	15	Assumption of Our Lady	1000 Mass	Samuel Kitone (Baptism today)
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

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

**PRAYERS TO PREPARE OURSELVES FOR OUR LADY'S FESTIVAL**

Lord Jesus Christ, You have destroyed the power of death and given the hope of eternal life in body and soul. You granted your Mother a special place in your glory, and did not allow decay to touch her body. As we rejoice in the Assumption of Mary, give to us a renewed confidence in the victory of life over death. You live and reign forever and ever.

Amen.

Immaculate Virgin, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, we believe in your triumphant assumption into heaven where the angels and saints acclaim you as Queen of Heaven and earth.

We join them in praising you and bless the Lord who raised you above all creatures. With them we honour you. We are confident that you watch over our daily lives and we ask that you intercede for us now. **(mention your request)** We are comforted by our faith in the coming Resurrection and we look to you for prayers and comfort. After this earthly life, show us Jesus, the blest fruit of your womb, O kind, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

O Queen Assumed into Heaven, pray for us.

Amen.

## GOSPEL REFLECTION

One day in mid-1950s China, soldiers locked a village's parish priest, Père Luc, a Frenchman and member of the Society for the Foreign Missions, into the sacristy and went away, thinking that there would be no escape. They left a desecrated church, the shattered, empty tabernacle and the consecrated hosts scattered across the sanctuary. Yet, for a ten-year-old girl named Li, the soldiers' actions provided the opportunity for outstanding heroism. From his sacristy prison, her parish priest saw the child sneak into the ruined church building and go down on her hands and knees. Unseen by the soldiers, Li crawled into the sanctuary, where she picked up and swallowed a single host. She repeated this for several days, knowing that she risked her life.

One morning, a soldier entered the church, saw Li crawling around and shot her in the back, killing her. The soldier was so appalled at his own act that he released the parish priest and gave him time to bury Li. "Sir, if in every town there was such a little girl, no soldier would ever fight for the Communists," he said, before driving the priest to the border and safety. When Li's story hit the world's Catholic media, she became an iconic example of someone whose love for Jesus' presence in the Eucharist was more important than life itself.

In some of the Gospel stories, we can understand the confusion of the people who listened to Jesus. They had known him since he was a child, had watched him play and learn alongside their own children; together they had attended the local synagogue and travelled to Jerusalem for the celebration of the major Jewish festivals. The same people knew Mary and Joseph, and had spent time with them at the well and at the market, and they may have visited Joseph's workshop. They could probably list all the relatives who lived in Nazareth and the outlying villages. How could Jesus claim to be special, to have heavenly origins? It didn't make sense.

In the scene in today's Gospel, they have just heard Jesus declare that, through him, they could enjoy eternal life. Surely eternal life was in God's gift, so was this young man saying that he was equal to God, with whom Jesus said that he had a unique relationship? They complained to each other about these unlikely claims. Yet Jesus persisted. He declared himself to be "the living bread", which they must eat if they wanted to live for ever. Was he inviting them to cannibalism? Were they listening to a madman or to a blasphemer? No wonder they were confused. Jesus' listeners thought that they knew him, but they didn't. To use a familiar saying, they were guilty of judging a book by its cover: they saw the man but couldn't understand his message. This isn't really surprising: two thousand years later, we are still discovering its meaning, sometimes also arguing about it and sometimes, like Li, finding it more precious than life itself.

Very few people, if any, can say that they really know us at the very depths of who we are and what we can become. Before Li died protecting the Blessed Sacrament, her parents probably thought their daughter extraordinary only because she was special to them and they loved her so much. As her parents, they probably thought that they knew her – but surely they hadn't seen her as a future heroine and martyr? The people of Jesus' home town certainly didn't see his presence among them as a life-changing event. How many of them thought deeply about his claim that he was "the bread of life" and their route to eternal life? Instead of listening to his words, they rejected them and turned away from Jesus.

What about ourselves? Think about the times of lockdown in the Covid-19 pandemic. We discovered that people we'd never really known or noticed performed acts of incredible generosity and kindness. Local heroes and heroines seemed to be popping up everywhere. Perhaps we'd never previously realised that our neighbours and even complete strangers had such amazingly big hearts. Time and again, we heard of and saw people who put their own lives on hold in order to care for someone else. They put themselves second and others first. Were we inspired and encouraged by such goodness? Did it help to make our own life worth living? Isn't it wonderful to look more deeply than usual into someone else's heart and to expose the buried treasure?