

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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BULLETIN B 38 – 15TH AUGUST 2021
THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY

My dear brothers and sisters,

A very Happy Feast Day to you all. Our special day, our Feast of Title is today and now that the lockdown restrictions have been lifted, we are able to celebrate with our "Strawberry tea". This afternoon is much more than a fund raising event, I hope that it will be an occasion when we can sit and chat with each other. So many of us have had a hard time during the last 18 months, its time now to meet up and catch up. We have a number of new parishioners who have joined our parish family and it will be good to share with them.

We are now able to take a Collection during Sunday Mass. The Stewards will collect up the centre aisle and then down the sides, so there is no need to stretch over others. It will be safer if you do not pass the collecting bags, just let the stewards deal with it in a gloved hand.

God bless you all on this special day,
Fr. John

TIMES OF MASS THIS WEEK

Sun	15	Assumption of Our Lady	1000 Mass	Samuel Kitone (Baptism today)
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish
Tue	17	feria	1900 Mass	Alfred Corbyn (RIP)
Wed	18	St. Helena	1000 Mass	Gloria Birchall (INT)
			1030 Adoration	
Thu	19	feria	1000 Mass	Elish McKevitt (RIP)
			1030 Adoration	
Fri	20	St Bernard	1000 Mass	Anne & Ed Ogrodnik (RIP)
Sun	22	21 st in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	John Hogan (RIP)

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.

MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known
that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help

or sought thy intercession, was left unaided.

Inspired with this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins my Mother;
to thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful;

O Mother of thy Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions,
but in thy clemency hear and answer me.

Amen.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Alternative and complementary medical treatments have been used for years. Although there are different kinds, and some remain controversial, one of their key principles has won widespread approval: that human beings should be treated in a holistic way, taking into account the unity of the whole person – physical and spiritual – in the quest for health and well-being. Human beings are more than a physical body to be treated. From their own experience many people would agree that unconditional love is a powerful healer, which is why doctors today are less inclined to treat symptoms with drugs when counselling and loving support may be more deeply effective.

What does this have to do with the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which we are celebrating today? The clue is in the words of Pope Pius XII when he explained it and spoke of Our Lady being “assumed body and soul into heavenly glory”. At the heart of this teaching is the belief, reflected today by holistic medicine, that human beings comprise a body and soul, united together. Human beings are not just a body, nor are we simply a soul. The Hebrew word *shalom* is an ancient Jewish greeting. Often translated “Peace”, as when Jesus says, “Peace be with you”, the word has a richer meaning: Jesus is offering total well-being, harmony, wholeness.

Sadly, our human experience is that we do not live in perfect harmony within. There is an inner struggle. Sometimes we get torn apart. St Paul expressed his own experience: “I cannot understand my own behaviour. I fail to carry out the things I want to do, and I find myself doing the very things I hate.” He talks about his “unspiritual self”. St Peter speaks of “selfish passions that attack the soul”, and James warns that when we have “wrong desires” these give birth to sin. In other words, in this life our bodies and souls are not in perfect harmony together. Our struggle between good and evil, our wrong choices, sins and even death, are a consequence of what the Church calls original sin, explained by St Paul in today’s second reading as coming from Adam.

Mary, by contrast, was “preserved from all stain of original sin”: her body and soul were in perfect harmony. Consequently both her body and her soul were raised up in the kingdom. She never experienced the dislocation we do, like St Paul failing to carry out the things he wished to do. Mary wished to do only the will of God and she perfectly carried out the things God wanted her to do. She is the one person other than Jesus who can stand by every deed of her life. She lived without guilt, regret or reproach. She could enter eternity, body and soul, without need of repentance. She is, as Elizabeth told her, “Of all women... the most blessed”.

The extraordinary vision of St John in today’s first reading, a vision of conflict, in which Satan, in the guise of a dragon, tries to kill the crowned woman’s son – as Herod tried to kill the infant Jesus – ends with the acclamation, “Victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God, and all authority for his Christ.” We struggle in life; we sin and suffer, do our best, seek to be at peace, often fail, but the promise is that God will give us the final victory. We lose some battles but with God’s strength we also experience victories, and the outcome is guaranteed. St Paul strikes the same note of triumph when he speaks of “the end” when Christ “hands over the kingdom to God the Father”. All enemies (all that spoils our wholeness) will be destroyed, even death.

We are summoned at Mass to lift up our hearts to this final triumph, which Jesus won on the cross. Yes, we are called like Mary to do the will of God, to believe God’s promises, but rather than being depressed by failure we know Christ’s unconditional love for us will make us whole. Words from one of our Eucharistic Prayers, “May he make of us an eternal offering” to God, echo the words of St Paul, “After that will come the end, when [Christ] hands over the kingdom to God the Father.” We shall then be ready to be offered as a gift to the Father. For at the resurrection of the body we shall be united perfectly, body and soul, like Our Lady in her glorious assumption.