

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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BULLETIN B 39 – 22ND AUGUST 2021
21ST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear brothers and sisters,

What a wonderful weekend we had last week in celebration of our parish feast, the Assumption of our Lady. The masses were very well attended, and with what joy did we sing “Hail, queen of heaven”. The Strawberry Tea was also a great success, I was delighted to see so many of our parish family enjoying each other’s company as they munched on some exceedingly good cakes, strawberries and cream, tea / coffee / and Pimms! Thank you to Tricia and Cheryl and all who helped them. Thank you to Mary Fitzgerald for organizing the raffle. We raised £643 over the afternoon for our much needed church funds, not bad for enjoying ourselves.

In answer to the often asked question, “when’s the next event” in that I am hoping that we can take part in the giant Coffee Morning on Friday 24th September. You may remember we did this back in 2019, before pandemic. This will be in aid of McMillian Nursing, who do such wonderful work with those suffering with cancer. Book the date now and if you can volunteer to help run the event, let me know.

God bless you all,

Fr. John.

TIMES OF MASS THIS WEEK

Sun	22	21 st in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	John Hogan (RIP)
Tue	24	St. Bartholomew	1900 Mass	NHS Hospitals
Wed	25	St. Louis	1000 Mass	Alfred Corbyn (RIP)
			1030 Adoration	
Thu	26	feria	1000 Mass	
			1030 Adoration	
Fri	27	St Monica	1000 Mass	
Sun	29	22 nd in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	Anne Ross (RIP)
			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.

CAFOD responding to multiple emergencies across the world

CAFOD is responding to significant crises across the world this week. We are working with local Church organisations in Haiti to deliver emergency aid to people affected by the catastrophic earthquake and tropical storm. In the tragic situation in Afghanistan, we are working to ensure the safety of our local partners and their communities. We are supporting local aid workers to deliver urgent food and water supplies to hundreds of thousands of people facing extreme hunger in Tigray in Ethiopia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria. You can read more about how we can all express solidarity with our sisters and brothers affected by these emergencies on the CAFOD website: <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Emergencies-news>. Your compassion, generosity and prayers have helped us to stand together and enable us to continue to support communities in these difficult times. Thank you.

Loving Lord,

For those who have died, give them eternal rest. For those who are bereaved, comfort and console them. For those who are hurt, heal and strengthen them.

Lord God, enable us to help our suffering brothers and sisters in whatever way we can. Heavenly Father, be with us now and always.

Amen.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Judas Iscariot is an enigmatic character. Why did he betray Jesus? Was it just the money? Did he stop believing in Jesus? Or was it disillusionment? The famous passion play which is staged every ten years at the German village of Oberammergau takes this latter view. Judas did believe: he believed Jesus was going to inaugurate the new glorious kingdom of God expected by the Jews. But he thought Jesus was being slow to act. Judas grows weary of following Jesus. He takes himself off and starts thinking, "Why should I continue to follow him?... I am tired of believing and waiting... I wish to share his reign. It fails to materialise, and what is forthcoming – dread and suffering. Who feels like sharing those with him? Not I! Not I!" But after Jesus is condemned to death Judas falls into despair. He throws back the thirty silver pieces and says to himself, "How kind he has been toward me! How gently he comforted me when dark dejection oppressed my soul! How he warned me, when I was already harbouring this shameless betrayal. And I, this is how I have rewarded him... Not a disciple any longer."

One of the most poignant events in the Old Testament is when old Joshua assembled God's people at Shechem, just before he died. He wanted to hear them make a decision, an irrevocable decision, either to serve or to desert God: to make their decision and then to stand by it for life. And to his joy he heard them echo his own vow, "We have no intention of deserting the Lord... We too will serve the Lord, for he is our God."

One of the most poignant events in the New Testament is towards the end of the sermon Jesus preached about the bread of life, when he declared that, "Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world." Some of his followers said, "This is intolerable language. How could anyone accept it?" And many of them left him. Then came that most heart-breaking moment when Jesus turned to the twelve apostles: "What about you, do you want to go away too?" Like Joshua he calls for a decision. And Peter spoke for them all, "Lord, who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God."

Many Catholics today find some Catholic teaching difficult. St Paul, in the second reading, instructs wives to obey their husbands. That will strike some as "intolerable language", and indeed in Catholic marriage vows brides have never promised to obey their husbands. But before we get too annoyed with St Paul, let us notice his next words: "Husbands should love their wives just as Christ loved the Church and sacrificed himself for her." Jesus never made unreasonable demands on the Church, nor must husbands make unreasonable demands on their wives. Rather must a husband sacrifice himself for love of her. And they form one body. This was breakthrough teaching on the status of women and marriage.

We may question other teachings of the Bible or the Church, but a closer study of them can sometimes alter our perceptions. In the end, if we question its teachings, or the Church is beset by scandals and we are let down by our priests, then, like those early followers of Jesus, we may even come close to leaving him. So what is it that holds us in the Church? Perhaps, for some, it is the response of Peter, "Lord, who we shall go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God." We may sense the truth of these words; and when it comes down to it, what keeps many people close to Jesus is love for him. We may love him because of the Church; and sometimes, perhaps, it may seem we love him despite the Church.

Judas, of course, was the exception among the apostles. And there are many real saints doing God's work today. There are those whose lives have been transformed after being converted to Christ and who, coming into the company of Christ's faithful people, have discovered this to be true: "You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God."