

# Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady

Old Harlow, Essex CM17 0HA

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## BULLETIN B 43 – 19<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021 25<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – EDUCATION SUNDAY

My Dear brothers and sisters,

Today we have added an additional one off Mass, to Welcome Home those young people who have found the prospect of returning to regular Sunday worship challenging during the pandemic. One of the sad consequences of Covid has been the fear that has been generated not only amongst the elderly and most vulnerable but also among the youth and even children. So many lives, young and old have been blighted by this dreadful disease, peoples' livelihoods, education, family lives and communities have all been adversely affected. It is now time to rebuild our Parish Community, to re-establish the love and care that our Blessed Lord would have us share.

On Friday this week we shall be joining the thousands of communities around the UK and holding a Coffee Morning in our Hall for McMillan Cancer Support. We did this the year before the Pandemic and it was very successful, I hope that we raise a goodly amount again for this very worthwhile cause. As a parish priest I have seen at first-hand what terrific work these nurses do in caring not just for those suffering from cancer, but for their families too. Please do support this effort generously.

Next Sunday is Harvest Thanksgiving Sunday, the day when we thank God for His gifts in creation, not just our food but all that we enjoy. We remember all who work to provide for us, for all who care for the environment and all who are dedicated to see God's gift more equally shared. We shall have a Harvest Table on the Sanctuary, for your gifts that will be given to our Harlow Food Bank.

God bless you all,

Fr. John

Andy Thornton of the Harlow Food Bank has written:-

- **During the pandemic we gave out over 4,500 food parcels in Harlow**
- **The financial effects of COVID are still severe for many**
- **Our Store House is worryingly low on food to respond to this**
- **Your donations will help our neighbours weather the storm**

### TIMES OF THIS WEEK'S SERVICES

Sun	19	25 <sup>th</sup> in OT - Education	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1200 Children's Mass	– our young people
			1800 Mass	Antony MP Leaver RIP
Tue	21	St. Matthew	1900 Mass	Our Bishop Alan
Wed	22	feria	1000 Mass	
			1030 Adoration	
Thu	23	feria	1000 Mass	
			1030 Adoration	
Fri	24	Our Lady of Walsingham	1000 Mass	the Ordinariate
Sun	26	26 <sup>th</sup> in OT – Harvest	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	the Hungry

**Don't forget the McMillan coffee morning 1030am – 12noon this Friday 24<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

## GOSPEL REFLECTION

Pope Francis told the story of how, during Italy's coronavirus lockdown, a boy called Andrea and his family had been watching the Pope's Mass from the Santa Marta chapel in the Vatican online and had noticed that Francis had told the congregation to offer each other a sign of peace. The child was so concerned about the lack of social distancing that he wrote to Francis to tell him that he shouldn't have said those words because, in the time of the pandemic, people were not allowed to shake hands. Francis explained that Andrea could not have known that the members of the congregation merely bowed to each other without coming into physical contact. It says a great deal about Francis' own humility and simplicity that he could use this incident to praise the innocence and transparency of children, who react spontaneously without thinking about possible embarrassment to adults who might prefer diplomacy to truth.

We all know the story told by Hans Christian Andersen of a vain emperor who didn't like to admit that he couldn't see for himself the magnificent suit which he'd been conned into buying from some rascally tailors. As he paraded around in the supposedly magical suit, his subjects also didn't wish to appear foolish by admitting that they too couldn't see the apparently wonderful clothes. It was only when a child declared that the emperor was not wearing clothes that others had the courage to admit that he was right.

A Zambian proverb declares, "He who has a tongue does not get lost in the forest." In other words, if someone is lost, they should ask for directions from someone who knows the right path to take out of the forest. If Jesus' disciples had taken heed of the saying, they might have been less confused when Jesus foretold his approaching arrest, execution, burial and, most importantly, his resurrection. They could not understand what he was saying, but neither did they admit their ignorance and ask Jesus to explain.

When Jesus and his followers reached Capernaum, Jesus asked them why they had been arguing. The disciples were too embarrassed to give him a straight answer. They didn't want to admit that they had been fighting about who was the greatest among them. Jesus had probably overheard the dispute and knew the sort of mess that they had created for themselves – and also the irritation as they heard how important or unimportant they were in the eyes of their companions. So Jesus called a small child to himself and suggested that the little one could be an example to these grown men who certainly hadn't behaved like responsible adults. If they wanted to know the qualities he considered valuable, then they should try practising simplicity, humility, honesty. If they didn't understand, they should ask for explanations. If they wanted status, then they should be childlike, not childish.

Society declares that some people and postcodes and jobs are more important than others. How often do I listen to society rather than to Jesus, who ignores those unimportant distinctions? Young Andrea wrote to Pope Francis, informing the Pope that he'd made a mistake. To the youngster, other people's health was more important than Francis' papal status – and he had the courage to say so. His criticism was that of youthful concern and integrity – and Francis recognised it as such.

The disciples showed their immaturity by not asking Jesus questions which would later have a big impact on their lives. Then they argued as if they were in a pantomime, "I'm better than you are." "Oh no, you're not!" "Oh yes, I am!" Their behaviour was childish – and yet we can identify with them. How many moments do we have in the course of our daily life when the possibility of embarrassment prevents us asking the right questions at the right time? How often have we cared unnecessarily about someone's social status in the workplace or in society at large?

Humility shows us the world and other people with greater realism. Admitting that we don't understand something offers a learning opportunity. Recognising our mistakes is a chance to put things right. That is being *childlike* – honest and simple – not *childish*: trying to look wiser and more important than we are. Jesus came for "the least, the last and the lost". Where do I stand?

**St Mark's West Essex Catholic School**  
**Year 6 Open Evening Thursday 23rd September 2021 7pm - 9pm**  
**(Headteacher speech 7.15pm and 8.15pm)**