

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady

Old Harlow, Essex CM17 0HA

Tel: 01279 434203

www.catholicchurchoftheassumption.co.uk/

BULLETIN B 44 – 26TH SEPTEMBER 2021 26TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – HARVEST SUNDAY

My dear brothers and sisters,

It was good to “Welcome Home” many of our children and young people at the one off special mass last Sunday, we hope that they will now feel comfortable to re-join our established parish mass.

Today we celebrate and give thanks for the Harvest. At this time there is much talk about possible shortages of food, empty shelves, and no turkeys for Christmas. Instead of us being scared, our response should be to show empathy with those in our world who experience food shortage every day of their lives. Today we bring our Harvest Gifts, they will later be taken to the local food bank here in Harlow. There will be a money collection for the food bank, so if you have forgotten to bring a food gift, you can still contribute. Thank you for your generosity

Talking of generosity many thanks for your contribution to Fr. Benito’s appeal for the mission of the Verona Fathers – you raised £360.

I will announce the figure raised for the McMillon Cancer response coffee morning at the end of mass today.

God bless you all

Fr. John.

First Holy Communions – this year’s course, delayed because of Covid, is nearing to an end and our children will make their Holy Communion for the first time on Sunday 17th October. The sessions for next year’s FHC will begin in February, there are application forms in the porch for the parents of year 3 and above children, and these should be handed to me over coffee on any Sunday.

COCERT IN OUR CHURCH – Sunday 24th October at 3.30pm - Works from Finzi, Messiaen, Stravinsky, Parry, Mozart, and many more – a choral exploration of European composers! Tickets £10 online www.sonarechoir.com, or from Fr. John, £12 on the door. £9 student.

TIMES OF THIS WEEK’S SERVICES

Sun	26	26 th in OT - Harvest	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	the Hungry
Tue	28	St. Wenceslaus	1900 Mass	Kay Hill (RIP)
Wed	29	St. Michael, Gabriel & Raphael	1000 Mass	in Thanksgiving
			1030 Adoration	
Thu	30	St. Jerome	1000 Mass	Fr. John Harvey (INT)
			1030 Adoration	
Sun	3	27 th in OT – Harvest	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Fr. John will be available to hear confessions this week
on Tuesday at 6.30pm or Wednesday at 10.30am

Or by appointment

GOSPEL REFLECTION

It is now decades since the Holocaust which took place during the Second World War. It has not gone away. Rather, it has become more and more present in people's minds, as though it has taken this long for its full significance to sink in. At first there was a series of war trials and then a stunned silence as people were desperate to build up their lives again. "Never again," we said, but then further genocides continued to happen, in Africa, in the Middle East, in the Far East, in the Balkans. No one seems to have answered the underlying enigma: how do people who have lived cheek by jowl contentedly with each other for years suddenly turn into mortal enemies?

It is not that everyone takes this path. There are heroic individuals who stand out against the storm of hatred. There are also others who go along with the prevailing wind because they don't want to be persecuted themselves. They collude out of fear, out of a desire for a quiet life or out of an even more selfish desire to take advantage of the property or possessions of those under attack. Under stress or in distress an unfortunate human reaction is to look for someone other than ourselves to blame for our sad situation. We find scapegoats. Down through the ages the Jews have sadly served such a role for many Christians, despite the Church formally denouncing such views. Anti-Semitism is still a force to be reckoned with today, but we also encounter discrimination against women, ethnic minorities, LGBT people and disabled people, among others.

Throughout the Gospels the disciples are often pictured as getting the wrong end of the stick. It is usually for very human reasons on their part. It is at times when they feel threatened, physically as in the storm at sea, but also when they feel their position of importance is being challenged. They are upset by the attempts of the twin sons of Zebedee to steal a march on the others in their claim to positions of celebrity in the kingdom, and they are keen to know what their rewards will be for being faithful followers of Jesus. Jesus uses such moments to bring them to a more accurate awareness of what being a disciple means.

In today's Gospel we have the story of a man who is not one of the disciples casting out devils in the name of Jesus. The disciples stop him because he is not one of them. Jesus replies that this is irrelevant. What matters is what the man is doing. If what he is doing shows support for the mission of the kingdom then they should rejoice that this work is happening. There is an echo of what Moses says to Joshua when Eldad and Medad are found prophesying though they have not been officially registered. As Jesus might say, it is not calling yourself a child of Abraham that matters. It is what you are doing with your life. By their fruits you shall know and acknowledge them.

Have we experience of being persecuted or bullied? Have we been the bullies and persecutors ourselves? Sometimes you can switch very quickly between the two roles. For example, a man who is treated badly at work might treat his wife and family badly at home. What will help free us from such roles and give us the freedom to treat everyone equally and with respect? Education is always a good start. If we are curious and even delighted to explore the variety in the world, whether it be people or their cultures and faiths, we have made a good beginning. It means that what is different from us is not experienced as dangerous but rather a further expression of God's mysterious goodness expressing itself through human life. We happily do this with the glory of God's natural creation, whether animal, vegetable or mineral. What stops us doing the same for human diversity?

In addition it will help if we explore the source of our fears and anger. We may need others to help us do this, whether we find ourselves cast in the role of persecutor or victim. The remembering of such terrible scars as the Holocaust is also vitally important. As the American author William Faulkner wrote: "The past is never dead. It is not even the past." If we remain aware of the massacres of the past we are less likely to repeat them.