

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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BULLETIN B 45 – 3RD OCTOBER 2021
27TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear brothers and sisters,

Laudato Si. Which means “Praised be” it is the first words of Pope Francis encyclical letter on our Catholic response to the environmental challenges which our world is facing. At mass this Sunday will be read a Pastoral Letter from Alan our bishop, in which he sets out his hopes for each parish to respond to those challenges. I believe most firmly that it is not just the work of governments to put into place ways of protecting our environment, but it is our task to care for the whole of creation that God has placed in our stewardship. You will be given a leaflet and a pledge card as you come to mass today, which will help you understand a little more. There will also be more information on our website. I would like us as a parish to embrace the “live simply” award scheme which is a Cafod initiative. Maybe this is something that you care about and would like to join a small group of parishioners to explore this further.

Sonare Choir. Are coming to the Assumption of our Lady on Sunday 24th October 3.30pm. The choir, perform choral pieces by Bruckner, Mozart, Tallis, Stainer amongst others. This is a rare opportunity to enjoy live beautiful music as well as to raise money for our parish, the Choir are sharing revenue from tickets sales 50/50 with us. The programme will last 90 mins and includes an interval. You can get tickets online or from me for £10 or £12 at the door on the day. I hope that many of our people will come bringing friends and family even if they don't normally come to mass.

God bless you all,

Fr. John

TIMES OF THIS WEEK'S SERVICES

Sun	3	27 th in OT	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Lawrence Daniel Soul (RIP)
Tue	5	St. Faustina	1900 Mass	Jim Birchall (RIP)
Wed	6	St. Bruno	1000 Mass	Yvonne Marshall (INT)
			1020 Rosary and Adoration	
Thu	7	Our Lady of the Rosary	1000 Mass	Vera O'Mahony (RIP)
			1020 Rosary and Adoration	
Sun	10	28 th in OT	1000 Mass	Jack Roche (RIP)
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish

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

Today's Gospel is about relationships, particularly involving women and children. More than that, it is about the status of women and children. Today there are many instances in the global south – especially in Africa and Asia – where widows, for example, can find themselves thrown out of households and destitute overnight. “When my husband died, my in-laws told me to get out, so I came to town and slept on the pavement,” reported a widow in India. The shock of widowhood can entail a loss of economic means, including access to productive assets, such as land, as well as the loss of protection and status. Around the world there are many instances where children have little legal protection. Tens of thousands of young children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are driven by extreme poverty to seek work in mines, where they can be paid as little as £1.50 a day for backbreaking, dangerous work digging for cobalt rocks with primitive tools in dark, underground tunnels. The cobalt is used in our batteries, cars and smartphones.

In the UK the National Board of Catholic Women released a report last year on the devastating effects of a surge of domestic abuse on women during the Covid pandemic. Many children lived in families which experience violence. Catholics in England and Wales were encouraged to support projects helping vulnerable families. The Church emphasises that the essential nature of marriage is a commitment by the spouses to love and respect each other and nurture children, but many families can face tensions in their relationships.

Jesus gives us a lot to think about in today's Gospel. He speaks especially on behalf of married women and of children. Both were vulnerable in his society and had little value or official protection. Women were too often seen as property, without social power to protect themselves from the whims of a husband's disloyalty or disinterest. Jesus defends women and speaks out for the protection of marriage. He seems to accept the reality of separation in some marriages but the passage is less about the regulations for ordering relationships and more a glimpse or vision of God's loving plan. Jesus' words urge us to see the importance of marriage, rather than seeing commitment and love as fleeting.

Then Jesus rebukes the disciples who try to block children who are being brought by their parents for his blessing. “Let the little children come to me,” says Jesus, “do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.” While the disciples see the small children as unimportant, with little economic or social power, Jesus wants to meet them for they are precious and worthy of his blessing. To emphasise their value, he makes the claim, “I tell you solemnly, anyone who does not welcome the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” Jesus blesses the children because he loves vulnerable people and has compassion for those whose innocence and powerlessness make them susceptible to abuse and exploitation.

So what does the deep concern that Jesus has for the welfare of women and children say to us today? It is clear that Jesus gives women equality in the marriage relationship. Jesus implies that adultery involves more than violating the property rights of another man or woman. It concerns accountability to a partner, just as marriage does. He highlights that every person is made in the image and likeness of God – both men and women. Because of that, every person is worthy of respect. Every person has great dignity. Every person is worthy of love. No one deserves to be disregarded or betrayed by partners or indeed by people known to their family.

How can we respond to Jesus' teaching here? We could identify those in our community who need help – perhaps women recently widowed and feeling lonely or perhaps in families experiencing abuse – and support the church agencies and other service organisations that assist them. We could find ways to volunteer to help those in need, or visit someone we know who needs care and attention. Jesus teaches us not to be indifferent to suffering. Perhaps, too, we could support human rights more widely; for example, in places of conflict, where women and children are often victims. The “little children” represent those who are among the most weak and helpless in society. Are we receptive to the kingdom that Jesus presents?