

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
Old Harlow, Essex CM17 0HA
Tel: 01279 434203

www.catholicchurchoftheassumption.co.uk

BULLETIN B 48 – 24TH OCTOBER 2021
30TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear brothers and sisters,

This afternoon we are hosting the Sonare Choir, if you have not already bought a ticket, you can pay at the door £12. There will be Tea and Coffee available during the interval at £1 a cup.

Next Sunday we shall receive and welcome five new members into the Catholic Church, they are; Ray Parks, Audrey Saunders, Pauline Gillet, Abigail Ashborn and Ian Testro. They have been worshipping with us for some time and have been receiving instruction in the Catholic Faith for the past three months. Please pray for them this week.

During the month of November we remember in prayer the Holy Souls. As in previous years there are special envelopes in the porch and by the exit for you to place the list of those you would like us to pray for (collectively) during all masses throughout the month, your offering may also be placed therein. Please bring the envelopes back next Sunday, ready to be placed before the altar on Tuesday.

As I said last week the Childrens Liturgy will recommence on 7th November.

God bless you all
Fr. John

TIMES OF THIS WEEK'S SERVICES

Sun	24	30 th in OT	1000 Mass	Margaret Ayrton (RIP)
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish
Tue	26	Ss. Chad & Cedd	1900 Mass	
Wed	27	feria	1000 Mass	
			1020 Rosary and Adoration	
Thu	28	Ss. Simon & Jude	1000 Mass	George Hokinson (RIP)
			1020 Rosary and Adoration	
Fri	29	feria	1000 Mass	Mary & John Bidnamrodi (RIP)
Sun	31	All Saints	1000 Mass	Our Reception Candidates
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Fr. John will be available to hear confessions on Tuesday at 6.30pm and Thursday at 10.30am

Parish Administrator Required in the Parish of Our Lady of Walsingham, Royal Docks working at St Anne's RC church, Berwick Road, E16 3DR. Candidates should have a background in Personal Assistance and Finance though training will be given in the first week. Hours: 20 hours p/w Monday-Thursday. Salary: £11,284 p/a (£10.85 p/h). Apply by sending a CV and covering letter to frdanielkelly@dioceseofbrentwood.org. Closing date for applications will be Friday 29th October 2021 with shortlisting and interviews being held between 1st and 3rd November. Starting date: 8th November 2021.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

If we were asked to prove our identity, we might reach for our passport, identity card, driving licence, maybe even our birth certificate. These things provide the bare facts of our identity: name, date of birth, country of origin, current address and so on. Of course, my identity comprises more than these observable facts. One way of understanding identity is to think of it under two headings. Firstly, there is my personal identity, that is, how I understand myself – my self-image or mental model of myself, including my self-esteem, be that healthy or not. My self-identity may change over time, though some elements arguably never change. Secondly, we can speak of my social identity. This will include all the varied groups of people who are important in my life, and can comprise lots of separate “identities”: my race, religion, ethnicity, gender, even my occupation.

These identities – the things that make me “me” – draw on my ancestry (where I come from), my hopes for the future (where I am headed), and all the network of relationships which make up my life in the here and now. My identity is a complex interplay between so many aspects of my life. This means that when my identity is attacked or even stolen in some way, such as when someone takes my credit card or passport, the emotional distress caused can be devastating – it cuts to a person’s very heart.

Jesus’ response to the question about which is the first commandment of all directs us to the heart of the identity of the people of God. For people of the Jewish faith, the most succinct way of expressing their identity was – and is to this day – by reciting the *Shema Yisrael*, quoted in both today’s first reading and Gospel: “Listen, Israel: The Lord our God is the one Lord.” It’s something to be recited daily and so important that often these are the last words a dying Jewish person utters. Jesus links this core belief with his second commandment: love of neighbour as oneself.

Up to this point in Mark’s Gospel, the scribes and Pharisees have been presented as implacable enemies of Jesus, but something in Jesus’ response touches one scribe. He agrees with Jesus and goes further: love of God and neighbour is far more important than sacrifice or ritual offering. True worship is not an end in itself, but points us to what is truly authentic in the life of faith: love. It is love which connects or binds us with God, love which connects us with our neighbour and love which connects us with our truest self. The very word “religion” means “that which binds together”. Love is the deepest meaning of religion. Jesus’ profound summary becomes the identity card of his followers: we are a people who seek to love the Lord our God and love our neighbour as ourselves. This is the definitive expression of the identity of the Christian because it is the expression of God’s own identity. As St John tells us in his first letter: “God is love.”

This incident sets us up for the next chapter of Mark’s Gospel, Mark’s “mini apocalypse”, which describes the coming persecution of Christians and the trauma of the end of the world. Although Mark’s persecuted community lived in a very different world from us, we share some fundamental similarities. Then, as now, the big question Christians faced was: how can we live today as authentic followers of Christ in the face of so many challenges, indifference, hostility and sometimes even persecution? How do we live faithfully in the present moment so that we will be ready to meet our Maker at the end of all things?

Mark’s Gospel tells us that the answer is simply to make love the centre of who we are: to live by love and not to give in to fear and despair, which are the opposite of love. St John tells us that perfect love casts out fear. Love of God and love of neighbour as oneself is how we remain true to our deepest self in the here and now, with all its pressures and challenges; and it is how we can confidently prepare for the day when we will face the final judgement of the Son of God. It is love which most clearly identifies who we are, where we have come from, how we are to live now and what our future is to be. This is an identity which can never be stolen from us.