

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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BULLETIN B 51 – 14TH NOVEMBER 2021
33RD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear brothers and sisters,

This past week I should have been on a priest's conference in Walsingham, but instead I decided that I really needed to give my chest infection the heave ho. So I self-isolated in my home and rested. I knew it was not Covid, not just through testing, but I could still smell Coco, my dog! As winter approaches and we all are vulnerable to colds and flu I feel it is all the more reason for us to wear our masks especially in church and other crowded places. We owe it to each other to protect each other. Washing hands and sanitizing are also important and I am very grateful to those who clean and sanitize our church after the main mass on Sundays. I do hope that you all will continue to stay well this winter, should need help, practical or otherwise, at any time please do not hesitate to ask.

We are very fortunate to have in our parish a small but dedicated choir. Singing is an important part of our worship, something we all missed during the pandemic. Would you like to join them? If so this Thursday at 7pm in church there will be a special choir practice when newcomers will be especially welcome.

Our Quiz night is this Saturday, details at the notices at mass.

This Sunday is also Remembrance Sunday and there will be the traditional act of remembrance at the end of the 10am Mass.

God bless you all,
Fr. John

TIMES OF THIS WEEK'S SERVICES

Sun	14	33 in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	Victims of war & violence
			1200 Baptism	of Oscar Mulholland
			1800 Mass	People of the Parish
Tue	16	St. Margaret	1100 Mass	Deanery Mass for departed Priests
Wed	17	St. Elizabeth of Hungary	1000 Mass	Holy Souls
			1030 Adoration	
Thu	18	Dedicat of Ss Peter & Paul	1000 Mass	Our Home communicants
			1030 Adoration	
Fri	19	feria	1000 Mass	Holy Souls
Sun	21	Christ the King	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Holy Souls

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Fr. John will be available on Wednesday and Thursday to hear Confessions
At 10.30am or by appointment

GOSPEL REFLECTION

A few years ago, in the Philippines, there was a drive to inoculate the population against a dangerous and infectious disease. A certain mother had been reluctant to have her children vaccinated and, tragically, two of them subsequently died of the illness. When the nurse asked why she had not had them protected by a simple injection, she replied that she had heard that it was dangerous and likely to produce severe side effects. When questioned as to where she had gained this information, she answered, “On social media”. This sad, but unfortunately not unusual, case led to a forceful campaign against this type of misinformation.

The rise of social media has brought many benefits, easing communication to such an extent that we can speak or exchange messages instantly to relatives or friends on the other side of the world. But, as often happens, there is a dark side to it: genuine mistakes may be accepted and spread as accurate – worse, there is the deliberate encouraging of negative attitudes, the spreading of false reports, the cynical manipulation of the truth to secure a certain outcome or result. It can be difficult to tell what is true and what is not: sometimes, a simple misunderstanding on a person’s part can have unforeseen consequences.

Our Gospel passage today is of the type of writing most easily misunderstood in the Bible: it is known as “apocalyptic”, and the last book of the Christian scriptures is often called “Apocalypse”, which means “Revelation”. It is set at the end of time, and describes the natural and human upheavals which will accompany the second coming of Christ and the establishing of God’s eternal kingdom. However, this particular literary genre has a definite purpose: it is to encourage the community to stand firm in the face of persecution. The book of Daniel urges the Jewish faithful to resist the determined, cruel attempts by their overlord to replace their traditional religion and culture with that of the Greek empire; the book of Revelation and apocalyptic passages in the Gospels tell the Christian disciples that the Roman empire will not prevail for ever, that God will rescue and vindicate those who remain faithful – eventually.

The main difficulty with this type of writing is that people can take it literally. Some will say, “It’s the word of God, therefore it must be literally true.” There are two ways in which such a misunderstanding of the literary form of apocalyptic can have unintended consequences or be misused. The first is that some people see in natural events, such as earthquakes, floods and the like, signs that the end of the world is imminent. This can cause panic, especially when a significant date is looming, such as the turn of the century.

A second, and more serious, misinterpretation of apocalyptic writing is thinking that we can actually hasten, or at least facilitate, the coming of the kingdom. Some fundamentalist Christians, who take the biblical text literally, see in natural disasters, and in some political movements and developments, clear signs of the arrival of the kingdom: this can lead to their opposing initiatives to tackle global problems such as the climate emergency, or even to supporting government policies which could lead to nuclear war, as such a conflagration would correspond to many of the details described in the Gospel reading today. These may be extreme examples, but they are none the less real.

We are approaching the end of the Church’s year, and our scripture readings have encouraged us to reflect on the end of time. This is not so that we will become morbid, but that we will take seriously what time we have. Jesus tells us that “as for that day or hour, nobody knows it, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son; no one but the Father”. Perhaps we might reflect on the teaching that along with the final appearing of the Lord comes judgement: the book of Genesis makes it clear that the earth is given to human beings to be used, but also to be treated with respect. In some ways, the teachings of Jesus can be summed up as “respect one another”. Every time we celebrate the Eucharist, we pray, “thy kingdom come”: these readings are put before us to remind us of our responsibilities towards one another and our world, so that whenever the Lord comes, he will find us truly awake and ready.