

**Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady**  
**Old Harlow, Essex CM17 0HA**  
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[www.catholicchurchoftheassumption.co.uk](http://www.catholicchurchoftheassumption.co.uk)

**BULLETIN B 52 – 21<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2021**  
**CHRIST THE KING**

My dear brothers and sisters,

This Sunday sees the end of the Church's year, and we rightly conclude with the Feast of Christ the King. For at the end of all things Jesus Christ is our King. Yet as the liturgy for today reminds us that His kingdom is not of this world. His is a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace. So at the end of one of the strangest years for the Church throughout the world, it is right that we should not just acknowledge King Jesus, but rededicate our lives to him.

**Jesus, king and centre of all hearts.**  
**Make our hearts like thine own.**

We have revised the guidelines for those attending mass on Sundays and I am publishing them below and on our Parish Website. These are guidelines, but it would be good if we could help protect both ourselves and each other by keeping to them.

God bless you all

Fr. John

**GUIDANCE FOR ATTENDING SUNDAY MASS**

- Please enter the Church by the main doors and exit via the side doors.
- Although not mandatory our congregation prefer to wear masks and we ask you to respectfully comply.
- We would like to make a note of your name or a person representing your party and telephone number on arrival for tracking purposes.
- You may now sit where you wish
- A Steward will direct you when to receive communion or come for a blessing. They will also indicate the side door when leaving.
- Please exit the church immediately after mass as sanitising commences shortly thereafter.
- Thank you for your cooperation.

**TIMES OF THIS WEEK'S SERVICES**

Sun	21	Christ the King	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Holy Souls
Wed	24	St. Andrew Dung-Lac	1000 Holy Hour	
Sun	28	First of Advent	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Holy Souls

**VACANCY** The Trustees of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust wish to appoint for the following vacancy at St Luke's Catholic Academy. Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust currently consists of two one form entry Primary Academies within Harlow, both academies are served by an Executive Headteacher.

Position	Closing Date	Interview Date
EYFS Practitioner	Tuesday 30 <sup>th</sup> November 2021	TBC

For further details please visit [www.ourladyoffatimatrust.essex.sch.uk](http://www.ourladyoffatimatrust.essex.sch.uk) or alternatively call Mrs Irene Nelson, H.R. Manager on 01279 425383.

## GOSPEL REFLECTION

Holman Hunt's famous painting *The Light of the World* has been described as "a sermon on canvas". After its completion in 1853 it toured the world, with huge crowds queueing to see it. The painting's inspiration comes from the book of the Apocalypse. Jesus stands, dressed as a king, knocking on a door covered with dead and overgrown foliage. He is waiting, lantern in hand, to be let in but there is no handle on the outside of the door, which can only be opened from the inside. The door symbolises the human soul. Jesus knocks and waits patiently, willing to come in and make himself at home, but only our choice to open our minds and hearts will allow him in.

Today's Gospel is all about the reversal of power and of the rule of might. We celebrate God's eternal triumph over evil, but when that triumph took place in the life of Jesus it looked like a thorough defeat. His own disciples on the road to Emmaus talked of the disappointment of their dreams of glory, "Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free." Even after he had appeared for forty days in his risen body, the disciples still could not shake off their attachment to the trappings of worldly power, asking, "Lord, has the time come? Are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel?" It took the early Church a very long time to accept that Jesus was operating to an entirely different scale of values. The crucifixion came as a huge shock to those who had followed him, dreaming of triumph over Rome. The history of the Church has been, and still is, beset by our continuing addiction to the exercise of power.

However much Jesus' followers think that they have taken on board his teachings, the track record of the Church shows that power continues to be an attractive drug to which many are addicted. Over the past few decades there have been repeated and devastating revelations about sexual abuse within the Church. The abuses themselves, and the equally appalling failure to deal with them, have principally arisen through the desire for and abuse of power, and the failure of the human imagination to envisage any system of organisation other than one that empowers the minority and disempowers the majority. It's a depressing picture for all who love Jesus and hope to build a community of faith, hope and love in his name.

Yet today's feast should give us heart. There is a remedy for the ills of the Church and indeed for those of the wider world. Anyone baptised is invited to share in Jesus' threefold ministry as prophet, priest and king. Called to prophecy, we are invited to be courageous in proclaiming by our words and our lives the righteousness of God and God's saving love for all that lives. This may include speaking challenging truths to those in power.

Called to share in the priesthood of all believers, we are invited to make of every aspect of our daily living, however small and apparently trivial, an offering of love and service. Called to live by kingdom values, we are invited to build a community of encounter, of human solidarity and of mutual support in which we see Jesus in the least of our sisters and brothers. This is our final answer to all structures and systems that thrive on oppression and on robbing others of their God-given dignity.

It is difficult for us to wean ourselves off the addiction to authority as power. The crowds who heard Jesus commented that he spoke "as one with authority" and not as the Pharisees who built up their own prestige by belittling others. At Christmas we celebrate a king born in a stable, who becomes a refugee and a foreign migrant, who becomes a working man and who sides with people who are marginalised. At Easter we celebrate a king who makes himself the servant of his disciples and who chooses to die naked and alone. The message could not be clearer, but we have to be willing to open the door of our minds and hearts to take in the meaning of Jesus, our servant king.