

**Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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**BULLETIN C 10 – 30TH JANUARY 2022
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

My dear brothers and sisters,

Our Bishop recently wrote: *“In each of our parish churches at Christmas, a crib scene depicting the Nativity helps us to focus on the Incarnation of Christ and His love for the whole of humanity. Traditionally, a collection in aid of Brentwood Catholic Children’s Society has been associated with these crib scenes and I would very much like to encourage this tradition and to retain these crib scenes until the Presentation on 2nd February each year. I would be grateful if we could make a special effort to support the work of BCCS this Christmastime”* The Crib remains in our church until after Wednesday’s feast of the Presentation of the Lord (often called Candlemas).

First Holy Communion classes will begin shortly, any parent of a child in year 3 or above who wishes to be considered to make their first Communion is asked to fill in a form ASAP and hand it to me or Deacon Michael. We shall be having a meeting in early February to discuss these classes with the children and their parents.

We are wanting to recruit some new servers. To join the serving team applicants must have received their first Holy Communion. Those interested please have a word with me.

God bless
Fr. John

TIMES OF MASS DURING THIS WEEK

Sun	30	4 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	Judith Hopkinson (RIP) People of the Parish
Tue	1	feria	1900 Mass	
Wed	2	Presentation of the Lord	1000 Mass 1020 Adoration	Janet Davis (RIP)
Thu	3	St. Anne Line	1000 Mass	Joan Brialle (RIP)
Fri	4	Votive of the Sacred Heart	1000 Mass	Margaret McBrearty (RIP)
Sun	6	5 th in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish Edith Fox (RIP)

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Fr. John is available to hear confession on Tuesday at 6.30pm and Wednesday at 10.30am

In November 2020, more than fifty people of different faiths in Birmingham, England, shared in an online webinar their experiences of Covid-19 restrictions and interfaith collaboration. A Sikh spoke of his community's concern for vulnerable people and felt the pandemic spotlighted inequalities and the need for collective social action. Hindus believe giving of surplus is rewarding and benefits the community, and food boxes were regularly delivered to people isolating at home. "Covid has shown how interdependent we are," a representative said. A Muslim teacher said she was one of many who cooked extra food and brought it to the mosque, where people in need could collect it. Her mosque helped out a nearby church that phoned when their food bank ran low. "Humanity really came through," she said.

A Catholic priest in the Archdiocese of Birmingham Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue said faith communities were at the forefront of response to the pandemic crisis. "They don't share faith but they share a common humanity," he said. A representative of the Columban Missionary Society shared its charism of crossing boundaries to engage with people of other faiths. The gathering concluded that dialogue around daily life and common action is a foundation for promoting peace and the common good. The meeting ended with the Hindu greeting "Namaste", which means "the Divinity in me recognises the Divinity in you".

In today's Gospel, Jesus has just been enthusiastically acclaimed in the synagogue at Nazareth for announcing the promised Jubilee, which he calls "the Lord's year of favour". Yet the whole mood suddenly changes. The listeners become so set against him that he is in danger. But what happens to make the crowd turn on him so quickly?

They are upset because Jesus had been working all kinds of miracles and healings in Capernaum and other places, only now returning to his hometown of Nazareth. Jesus antagonises them further by telling them that his mission and the "Lord's year of favour" will not be restricted to them but extends to people who are not Jewish. He reminds them of two people outside the Jewish faith who were blessed by God in the scriptures. The listeners have a sense of privilege that comes from having as a miracle worker one of the kids who grew up locally. Yet they want to keep the best things in life – that is, God and God's favours – within their own closed circle and the Jewish community. The sense of privilege, of having some special status with Jesus, evaporates as it dawns on them that they are going to get no special treatment. What should have been joy at the prospect of many being helped by Jesus turns to rage that he would so freely bestow "the Lord's favour". Jesus' fellow villagers display their lack of openness to his message by pushing him out of the synagogue. They are about to hurl him down a hill when he manages to slip away and continue his work elsewhere. In Luke's Gospel Jesus never returns to Nazareth.

God's love isn't just for Christians. It is for everybody, and how wonderful that love is. In the first reading, the Lord says: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." The second reading is heard often at weddings, but the love it highlights goes beyond love of a partner. It is a love that is a way of life, extending to the whole of society. Jesus calls on us to be open and loving outside our own community. He urges us not to be suspicious of other people just because they come from different cultural, religious or social backgrounds. We are asked not to settle into security, but to embrace newness and take risks for the sake of the kingdom. A true embrace of this mission will call us out of our comfort zones and challenge us to be witnesses of love in a divided world.

Could we find out about local ecumenical and interfaith initiatives that promote mutual respect, understanding and cooperation between believers? These could be: working together on social concerns; working together on environmental issues and to promote peace; rejecting religious extremism; and acting in solidarity with victims of religious discrimination. Cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity is deeply embedded in the life of our cities. Religious believers can contribute to the harmony and wellbeing of society. Engagement promotes initiatives around dialogue on daily life, and common action is a foundation for promoting peace and the common good.