

**Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady  
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**BULLETIN C 12 – 13<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2022  
SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Mr dear brothers and sisters,

The news is full of speculation about the impending rise in the cost of living. Fuel prices, energy costs have already caused a hike in inflation and every indication is that things will get worse. We hear that some are/will be forced to choose between heating and eating. We are also informed by the local food bank in Harlow that food donations have tapered off and stocks are extremely low. I would like to encourage you all, therefore, step up your food donations at this time. The big black tub in the church porch is waiting for our donations. From earliest times Christians have supported the poor and needy in their communities. I have one further suggestion in this matter and that is if you or someone you know has fallen on hard times please do help yourselves to any of the big but black tubs contents. No names, no explanation needed, we are here to support the wider each other as well as the wider community. Put another way; Charity begins at home, as long as it doesn't end there!

The First Holy Communion classes begin shortly and there will be a meeting of all parents and children involved next Sunday at 9.00am before the Sung Mass. That will be the cut off day for applicants. If you have a child in year 3 or above and want them to be prepared for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Communion there are forms in the church porch, which should be delivered to me on completion before next Sunday.

God bless you all

Fr. John

**TIMES OF MASSES THIS WEEK**

Sun	13	6 <sup>th</sup> in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	Eileen Penza (INT) People of the parish
Tue	15	feria	1900 Mass	Joseph & Mary Murphy (RIP)
Wed	16	feria	1000 Mass 1030 Adoration	Hollick Family (RIP)
Thu	17	feria	1000 Mass	Kenneth Albert Saunders (RIP)
Fri	18	feria	1000 Mass	Fr. John Michael Robinson (RIP)
Sun	20	7 <sup>th</sup> in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	June Warner (RIP) People of the parish

**TIMES FOR THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION THIS WEEK**

Fr. John will hear confessions on Tuesday at 6.30pm, Wednesday at 10.30am or by appointment.

**SYNODAL PATHWAY.**

We had a very successful meeting after the Thursday morning mass over coffee the other week. I know that some who wanted to be there were not able to because of other commitments. So I will hold another session this Thursday evening at 7.00pm in the I Hall. I am sorry if this is short notice but we have been given a deadline by the diocese.

## GOSPEL REFLECTION

In the 1989 film *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, the hero – archaeologist Indiana “Indy” Jones – and his companions experience terrible dangers in their quest for the Holy Grail. To save his father from death, Indy has to risk his own life. The final challenge involves stepping onto an invisible bridge over a vast chasm. Indy can see nothing solid to rely on, but that step of faith into the unknown and the invisible saves them both. Today’s Gospel invites us to risk a step of faith leading to eternal life. Faith may appear unreliable in the face of life’s dangers, and we may struggle to see the way ahead, but the example of many saints shows the transformative power of trusting in God.

The teaching in all three of today’s readings contains a strong challenge. There is nothing fluffy and soft here, no “religion as air cushion”. Jeremiah’s prophecy is uncompromising. It is natural for human beings to seek security and want to trust in what seems powerful and strong. Trusting in God can seem like madness, when there is nothing to show for our confidence and nothing concrete to rely on.

In his own way, Paul is as uncompromising as Jeremiah. Faith in the resurrection is not a “take it or leave it” belief. Without Christ’s resurrection, his teaching makes no sense. And in the Gospel, Luke’s Beatitudes are more uncompromising than those of Matthew. Luke’s Beatitudes are tough, as faith itself is tough. This faith makes demands but offers infinite rewards in return.

The life of faith stands in radical contrast to the values of this world. Reliance on the world’s values – whether of strength, security, wealth or reputation – is shown to be pointless and ultimately empty. Instead, we are offered what may seem unrealistic: reliance on a God we cannot see, faith in a crucified saviour, belief in an eternity of which there are no guarantees. Faith, hope and love are not easy virtues, but they are the foundational graces offered to any follower of Christ.

Adventure films love to place their heroes in impossible situations where they are doomed to fail and die, only for them to overcome all odds and win the day. As a Messiah Jesus was nothing like what his followers initially expected. There was no kingly power, no overthrowing of his enemies, no worldly triumph over evil. Several times in the Gospels we see Jesus struggling with not only his own preconceived notions of his role but those of his disciples, the crowds and his enemies. It seems to make little difference which of these groups anyone belonged to – nothing prepared them for the way in which he ultimately fulfilled the purpose for which he came into the world.

When the Gospels eventually emerged from within the faith communities, they sought to give voice through Jesus’ teaching to the difference between a God’s-eye view of human affairs and the human perspective. Luke’s Beatitudes are far more concrete and starker than those of Matthew. Matthew’s version allows for spiritual interpretation, while Luke looks at the lived reality of the first followers of Jesus. They are mostly poor, outcast and without security. Faith in Jesus does not save them from persecution or death. It does not make them rich, powerful or successful. However much we know this, we are often still tempted to think of Christianity as something safe and respectable. We try to tame the message of the Gospel and cut it down to fit our size.

When we do this, we turn the Gospel from a tiger into a domestic pussycat. We render it safe, comforting and comfortable, but we also risk rendering it powerless to make a difference to our own life and that of the world. The values behind Luke’s Beatitudes are radical, dangerous and ultimately transformative. They invite us to overstep the safe boundaries that we have set for our faith and to risk losing our securities. Many saints, like Thomas More, Oscar Romero and Edith Stein, learned to find a God greater than anything they could ever imagine when they took this risk. Their greatest apparent failures emerged as victory. This is the paradox of God’s offer of salvation. It turns darkness into light and sorrow into joy, but it is a costly discipleship. The grace is there for anyone who asks for it, but God will not force it on us. It is a free choice and a free gift.