

Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady Old Harlow, Essex CM17 0HA

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BULLETIN C 15 – 6TH MARCH 2022 FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

My dear brothers and sisters,

So our Lenten season has begun. If you haven't already taken a copy of the booklet "The meaning of Lent", please help yourself they are on the pew at the exit door in church, they are free. Also free is the March issue of Catholic Post, again please take one.

This Friday 11th March is the Lent Family Fast Day. A day when we are asked to eat simply and generously, to CAFOD. Thus expressing our love and solidarity for the poor and the needy of our world. There will be some Cafod envelopes for you as you leave after mass today.

Many thanks to those who have been contributing to the Food Bank Tub, please do continue, as and when you are able. The Food Bank have enough beans and pasta, but would especially welcome: tins of meat, mashed potatoes, sponge pudding, hot chocolate and teabags (max 240 bags).

God bless you all

Fr. John

TIMES OF MASSES & SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sun	6	First Sunday in Lent	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the parish Maddy Kelly (INT)
Tue	8	feria of lent	1900 Mass	Mary Brien (INT)
Wed	9	Feria of lent	1000 Mass 1030 Adoration	Peace in Ukraine
Thu	10	feria of lent	1000 Mass 1030 Lent Group	Sadie Bell (INT)
Fri	11	feria of lent	1000 Mass 1030 Stations of the Cross	Cafod
Sun	13	Second Sunday in Lent	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the parish Eileen & Alex Welsh (RIP)

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.

Fully escorted Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, Ireland, 23rd May 2022. £699.00 per person sharing. Price includes flight with 10kg hand luggage, all transfers, 4 nights' in Knock House Hotel with full board. All entertainment and excursions included. Lunches on days out. Wheelchair accessible rooms. Single room supplement £100. Contact Patricia on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com. Knock Pilgrimages is a member of the Travel Trust Association and is fully protected by ATOL T7613. Fr. John is leading this pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage to Lourdes: Bp Alan will lead the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes from 24 – 29 July; a time to pray at the Grotto of Our Lady and enjoy the opportunities of this experience. You can book now on-line: www.tangney-tours.com/brentwood For further information, please phone Cathy O'Connor, the Administrative Director: 01206 735623

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Yeb Saño was a talented young Catholic Filipino diplomat – a Commissioner of the Philippines' Climate Change Commission – when a disaster in his home region of the Philippines prompted a career change. He had been attending a UN climate summit in Poland in 2013 when the news came that Typhoon Haiyan had devastated the city of Tacloban and surrounding areas. He wept and fasted for two weeks, as he heard news from family and friends in the area, before deciding that his life needed a change of direction.

The following year, he gave up his career as a diplomat. "I will be working with different faith groups across the world, as part of the larger global climate movement," he said. He had seen communities suffering because of severe weather. Yet political and industrial leaders internationally were failing to act seriously on climate change to secure a safe and just future for all. Later that year he was part of a People's Pilgrimage, which culminated in a sixty-day walk from Rome to Paris to arrive in time for the landmark UN climate change summit that saw the first serious international agreement to tackle climate change. He had a clear mission to work with people of faith on the climate crisis, which he felt hurt poor communities the most. He saw it as a moral issue.

In today's Gospel, we see a Spirit-filled Jesus standing at the crossroads of his life. He enters the Judean wilderness. At that time this would have hosted lions, leopards, bears, jackals, foxes and antelope – this was before humans had driven most of these creatures into extinction in the Near East. It was here in the wilderness, away from human society, that Jesus accepted his messianic ministry. But what drew Jesus to the wilderness? The natural world played a key role in his teachings and life. He regularly returned to the hills to pray and commune with the Father, especially before making important decisions.

The devil knows that when Jesus leaves the wilderness he will embark on his public ministry, so now is the time to try to seduce him away from his mission. But Jesus shows his resolve. He uses this time to clarify his identity and the direction and work of his life. The devil challenges Jesus to produce bread from a stone, potentially solving poverty and hunger as a show of his strength. Instead, Jesus will offer himself as living bread, to help transform his followers into people who would share the material resources they had with those in need. Jesus taught that wealth should not be hoarded but shared, and that frugality and living simply should go alongside caring for the natural world. Jesus rejects the temptation of political power, of becoming a leader who would overthrow the occupying Roman rulers. He resists the use of violence. And while he is urged to use a miracle to prove unambiguously that he is the Messiah, he rejects power again.

Lent is a time of repentance and new beginnings. Jesus' experience teaches us that there is nothing wrong with being tempted. It's how we react to the temptation that matters. Temptation is less about a choice and more about our identity and direction in life. Think about the decisions before you at the moment. What are they? What is it you are really seeking? What brings you peace?

This Lent, let us look at the signs of our times, particularly the damage being done by destructive human behaviour to those who are poor and to the community of living things on earth. Christian churches have been waking up to the moral imperative to address justice, peace and care for creation. Could we get more involved in local initiatives, working for the common good of humanity and of the whole earth community? A transition to a more sustainable life will mean opting for a new way of living based on simplicity and sufficiency rather than endless consumption and the greed-driven accumulation of material possessions. We need to make a move to escape the materialism that seeps into our minds through incessant advertising. Somehow, we have to break this cycle because it makes us sin against our needy brothers and sisters and God's creation. Let us reject temptations of greed, selfishness and indifference towards our neighbours. God expects from us a maturity to accept responsibility for the future of our lives and the communities of which we are part.

The Trustees of Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Multi Academy Trust wish to appoint for the following vacancy: KS 1 / 2 Teacher Closing date Thursday 24th March 2022 For further details please visit www.ourladyoffatimatrust.essex.sch.uk or alternatively call Mrs Irene Nelson, H.R. Manager on 01279 425383.