

**Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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**BULLETIN C 17 – 20TH MARCH 2022
THIRD SUNDAY IN LENT**

My dear brothers and sisters,

On Wednesday we held a meeting of our Parish Social Committee to arrange our Calendar of social events for the rest of this year. Our fellowship with each other is an important aspect of our growing in faith as we seek to build back our parish family life. The Calendar is produced below and we hope that there is something for everyone. Do please put these dates in your diaries and watch out for fuller details in due time.

The War in the Ukraine continues and we have built a temporary shrine to our Lady of Kiev, please continue to pray for peace in that land and for all those who have, through no fault of their own, been caught up in the violence.

God bless you all

Fr. John

PS. Please remember to put your clocks forward one hour next Saturday night (26th).

TIMES OF MASSES & SERVICES THIS WEEK

Sun	20	Third Sunday in Lent	1000 Mass	Patrick Wall (RIP)
			1200 Mass	People of the parish
			1800 Mass	Barrie Reynolds (RIP)
Tue	22	feria of lent	1900 Mass	our deanery clergy
Wed	23	feria of lent	1000 Mass	Helen Osborn (INT)
			1030 Adoration	
			1630 Reception of Sadie Bell	
Thu	24	feria of lent	1030 Lent Group	
			1315 Funeral Mass	Sadie Bell (RIP)
Fri	25	Annunciation of the Lord	1000 Mass	Peace in Ukraine
			1030 Stations of the Cross	
Sun	27	Fourth Sunday in Lent	1000 Mass	Paddy & Nanny Maloney
			1200 Mass	Peace in Ukraine
			1800 Mass	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.

SOCIAL CALENDAR 2022

Saturday 14 th May	Sonare Concert - 4.00pm
Thursday 2 nd June	Fr. John's 40 th Anniversary Mass & Party – 7.00pm
Sunday 14 th August	Assumption Day Strawberry Tea
Saturday 27 th August	Day Pilgrimage to Walsingham
Friday 30 th September	Macmillan Cancer Support Coffee Morning
Sunday 18 th December	Carol Service & Refreshments

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Gardening teaches us not only patience but also the unpredictability of growth. Well-established plants, much-loved shrubs and tall trees may grow in established patterns but can be suddenly struck down by blight, disease or a storm. Across Europe in recent years there have been many outbreaks of ash dieback disease caused by a virulent fungus. This once familiar tree with its bunches of seeds is under threat. New and tender plants can be difficult to establish. Beautiful-looking plants bought from garden centres can be very root-bound, find it difficult to live in the harsh world of rain and cold, and often fail to grow and flourish in a flower bed. Young plants attract slugs and snails in large numbers. The time of planting, and the state of the soil and its dryness or moisture, make a huge difference. Hope is often disappointed, sometimes by a lack of preparation of the environment in which the plant will grow. Sometimes it is only in the second year that a plant becomes established. A little simple gardening can open a person up to more understanding of the complex life of plants and their conditions for growth as well as being very therapeutic if we are patient.

Most of Jesus' teaching is to rural peoples in Galilee and Judaea. This is the setting of many parables about growth and God's providential care. It is the world of vines, mustard seeds, fig trees, sowing and reaping grain, wheat, weeds, rain, wind and the sun as well as the birds of the air. So often Jesus teaches about the work necessary for good harvests. The people whom he teaches understand the rhythms of nature but also that they cannot control the outcome; they are dependent upon God's providence. All this helps us understand more fully the ways in which God's kingdom breaks into the world and the Lenten message of preparation to put on the mind and heart, of Christ. In rich soil of the heart Christ will help us bear fruit that will last

Today's readings present the image of the Lord who cares for his people with compassion and love but at the same time calls them back to himself in conversion. The Gospel confronts the mystery of suffering and whether this is part of God's punishment of people for not following God's Law. Jesus gives two examples of people who suffered: the Galileans and eighteen people killed when the tower of Siloam collapsed. Some people must have said they were being punished for their sins. Jesus tells us that these events are not as a result of sin and are not God's punishment. This does not, however, diminish the need to repent and turn away from sin and bring one's life into harmony with God's plan.

This is also the message that St Paul delivers to the community at Corinth. He uses the experience of the Jewish people in the desert during the Exodus to look forward to the experience of the Church. This is called a "typological" interpretation that helps us understand the Christian experience in light of the Old Testament and so enriches both. In the desert, God guided God's people by a cloud, let them pass through the Red Sea, fed them with manna and gave them water to drink from the rock that produced a stream of water accompanying them on their journey to the promised land. But they clung to their idols and failed to love and serve the living God. Paul says that the Christians in Corinth have been guided by the Holy Spirit, baptised by water, fed by the Eucharist, and have Christ as their rock who stays with his Church. Yet they too fail to live out the teaching of the Gospel. The warning is again a call to repentance.

Jesus uses the beautiful image of the fig tree to illustrate the patience of God. The owner of the vineyard is concerned that the fig tree does not produce figs and wants to cut it down. His tenant farmer, who looks after the fig trees and knows more about them, tells him to be patient. He will feed the tree, tend it, and look after it and asks for one more year to allow the tree to produce figs. He is wise. Jesus presents an image of God as compassionate and merciful. This is the God whose mercy and love we are called to reflect in our lives and to whom we seek to grow closer in this Lenten season.