

**Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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**BULLETIN C 28 – 5TH JUNE 2022
PENTECOST SUNDAY**

My dear brothers and sisters,

The present Year of the Family will conclude in Rome 22nd – 26th June. This year use is being made of the internet, as the Holy Father wants to attract a wider audience. More information of the WMF programme can be found <https://www.reomefamily2022.com/en/>. We have a number of Prayer Cards which are in the porch, please take one. The Diocese will be holding a special Mass in the Cathedral at 3pm on Sunday 16th July. I have a few tickets for this, so couples celebrating a significant wedding anniversary (this year or in previous two years), recently married couples or those preparing for marriage are particularly welcome at this mass.

Talking of Anniversaries, very many thanks to all those who worked so hard to help me celebrate mine on Thursday. If you were unable to attend, I have some commemorative prayer cards which I will give out as you leave mass today.

God bless you all,
Fr. John

TIMES OF MASSES THIS WEEK

Sun	5	Pentecost Sunday	1000 Sung Mass 1200 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish Bridle & Lindley families (RIP) Jimmy Maloney (RIP)
Tue	7	feria	1900 Mass	Nathan & Kersey & Ryan
Wed	8	feria	1000 Mass 1020 Adoration	Zoe & Mike
Thu	9	OLJC Eternal Priest	0930 Mass	Priests
Fri	10	feria	1000 Mass	Joaquim & Santana (RIP)
Sun	12	Trinity Sunday	1000 Mass 1200 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish Our First Communicants Peace in Ukraine

TIMES OF RECONCILIATION THIS WEEK

Fr John will be available this week to hear confession on Tuesday at 6.30pm and Wednesday at 10.30am, or by appointment.

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

**Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.
And kindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you will renew the face of the earth.**

**Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit
you have taught the hearts of your faithful.
In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right
and always rejoice in your consolation.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen**

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Photo-bombing is a recent craze in which a person tries to get into someone else's photograph. It is mostly a bit of harmless fun, and with so many people using mobile phones to take pictures of themselves, photo-bombing is easy enough. It may happen accidentally. At the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, Queen Elizabeth II was passing behind two hockey players taking a selfie when she inadvertently photo-bombed them. At least, it was *assumed* to be an accident, although the Queen did have rather a mischievous smile on her face.

Although photo-bombing may seem like an entirely modern phenomenon, it does have some roots in history. Long before the days of photography, Renaissance artists liked to include themselves, or their clients, in paintings of religious subjects. Some people disapproved. King Philip II of Spain certainly did. Philip was a great patron of the arts but he had something of a paintings shortage when he came to decorate the vast interiors of his new home, the Escorial, which was a kind of palace-cum-monastery. This was a wonderful opportunity for new artistic talent and an artist known as El Greco managed to secure a valuable commission. The trouble was that the king had very decided tastes, and Philip felt uncomfortable when El Greco depicted members of the king's family, including the king himself, in a painting of saints and angels adoring the Holy Name. He liked his religious paintings "pure". After all, earth was earth, and heaven was heaven.

El Greco did not receive any further royal commissions from King Philip, but it did not stop him. In his enormously tall canvas depicting the day of Pentecost, the artist placed himself in the same room as Our Lady and the apostles. Pentecost is the feast we celebrate today, and El Greco depicts the scene as we heard it described in our first reading, with tongues of fire coming to rest upon the heads of each of the friends and family of Jesus. And there is El Greco, gazing out of the picture quite unapologetically, as if to say, "Here I am, alongside Our Lady and the apostles, celebrating this great birthday of the Church in company with them." He understood that the coming of the Holy Spirit was no private affair. This outpouring of God's love was a torrent and by all accounts it sounded like one. The noise was so loud that a crowd of foreign pilgrims in Jerusalem came rushing to find out what was going on. The apostles were only too eager to tell them. What an amazing gathering that must have been – yet in all the commotion, no one was left out, nor left feeling unsure of what was happening, for the apostles found themselves able to communicate in the language of each one of those international visitors. Pentecost was a celebration of diversity and inclusivity such as the world had never known.

El Greco was not being sacrilegious when he included himself in the Pentecost scene, even when he painted one of the tongues of fire resting upon his own head. Today's Gospel makes it clear that *anyone* who loves Jesus is beloved of God: God will come to that person and make a home with them. None of us, then, needs think of Pentecost as past history, or as someone else's celebration, one in which we have no right to take part.

El Greco evidently experienced the power of God's love for himself. For one thing, there is no ceiling in his painting. It felt to him, perhaps, as if, with the coming of the Spirit, earth and heaven had somehow blended into one. And he painted the apostles with unnaturally elongated necks as though he, too, sometimes sensed himself being stretched beyond the confines of the earthly dimension in which he lived.

The life of heaven continues to transform ordinary people like us into spiritual beings. St Paul reminds us that we are part of God's family, privileged to address God as our Father. We need no longer be mastered by selfish inclinations because the Spirit moves us in a different direction, stretching us beyond our self-absorption as we allow Jesus to live out his own life within us. We may never hear the sound of rushing wind, nor feel tongues of fire rest upon our heads, but we can be sure that God has made a home with us – a forever home.