

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

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BULLETIN C 31 – 26TH JUNE 2022 13TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear brothers and sisters,

This last week has been quite busy and varied. On Sunday the First Holy Communion children had their going forth mass which ended with them leading us in a procession of the Blessed Sacrament out in the grounds. Then the children had their joint party, to which they invited all the congregation! This generous act was so well appreciated, thank you so much.

Tuesday and Wednesday had a sadder note, the Funeral Masses of Maddy Kelly and Dolores Day. Both of these were extremely well attended which goes to show just how much these two ladies of our parish were highly esteemed.

Today there will be a retiring collection for the "Day for Life". As Catholics we believe in the sanctity of all Human Life, from the moment of conception until the last natural breathe. That message needs to be "out there" for many in our world today believe that life is disposable.

God bless you all,

Fr. John

TIMES OF MASSES THIS WEEK

Sun	26 13 th Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1200 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish Peace in Ukraine
Tue	28 St. Irenaeus	1900 Mass	
Wed	29 Ss. Peter & Paul	1000 Mass 1020 Adoration 1900 Mass	The Holy Father People of the Parish
Thu	30 Martyrs of Rome	1000 Mass	Dolores Day (RIP)
Sun	3 14 th of Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1200 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish 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.

Transylvania: Religion, History & Culture Fr Eduard Fartan from Holy Family in Benfleet is organising a Pilgrimage to Transylvania from 18th - 25th October 2022. The tour will include many beautiful churches and monasteries often set amongst the stunning Romanian countryside and focus on the melting pot of ancient cultures that have been present in the area. The approximate cost will start at £850 for one place in a double room. For more information or to register your interest please send an email to benfleet@dioceseofbrentwood.org

YEAR OF THE FAMILY: The 10th World Meeting of Families is taking place in Rome this coming week, with a programme of talks and liturgies which will be live-streamed via Vatican media channels. Our Diocese is marking the close of the Year of the Family at the annual Mass for Marriage and Family Life in July, which Bishop Alan will offer for the intentions of all families in the Diocese. If you would like a particular intention to be placed before the altar at this Mass, please complete the prayer request form which can be found on the new Marriage and Family Life pages of the Diocesan website, where you will also find more information about the World Meeting of Families: <https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/marriage-family-life>

GOSPEL REFLECTION

We all need a place to be ourselves, where appearances don't matter and we can indulge in at least a few minutes of peace and quiet, briefly forgetting responsibilities and the "to-do" list. There's a difference between a "house" and a "home". The community council of an exclusive celebrity housing estate on the south coast of England forbids the use of lawn mowers between midday Saturday and nine o'clock on Monday morning. Garden fences and hedges must be a minimum 2.4 metres high. Because accounts at the local supermarket are anonymous, delivery drivers cannot identify the householders whose groceries they carry. Security guards patrol the estate where residents hide from celebrity-spotters and fans. Is this the price of fame and fortune? When does a home become a prison?

By contrast, we are seeing daily the turmoil, heartbreak and tragedy as many thousands of people abandoned their homes in search of peace and stability away from the war in Ukraine and the devastation to everything they held dear. We also remember other refugees and migrants who risk everything in search of a new home. We think of their anxiety and fear as, craving homes they can call their own, they face an unknown future in a strange land. What did Jesus mean in speaking of the homelessness that he and his followers knew? Are his followers to downgrade their loved ones in opting for a life of uncertainty? Are we to be afraid of the unknown or confident in following Jesus?

Jesus declared that he had nowhere to call his home. Were there moments when he wanted to escape to a place of his own? Having been ejected from Nazareth, he made Capernaum his base and occasionally visited his friends Martha, Mary and Lazarus in Bethany. He was "at home" but the house wasn't his. Might he have liked occasionally to shut the front door and make the world go away, even for a couple of hours? Apart from his times of solitary prayer, Jesus made himself available to others, known and unknown, at every hour of the day and night. Jesus wanted people to see and know him. He didn't want his disciples to prevent access and didn't gravitate towards people according to their bank balance and high status in society.

Was Jesus, the source of love, unloving when he said that the dead should be left to bury the dead? He appeared to stop someone from saying goodbye to his family before following him. He promised his followers no fixed abode, hard work, tiredness, inconvenience and criticism. If that's love, it's tough. Jesus' words in today's Gospel do not make for easy reading. They are hard-hitting. He was blunt and uncompromising in saying that to follow him requires wholehearted commitment and determination to give until it hurts. Today's Gospel is about putting others before self. That's what it means to lay down one's life on behalf of others.

Most of us have, at one time or another, walked past a huddled sleeping bag in a shop doorway, spread out beneath a bridge or across a park bench, perhaps with a sign asking for money. We might worry that it's money to spend on drink or drugs – but then perhaps the person might use it to find a bed for the night, or to buy a hot drink and a sandwich. We're afraid of being conned by someone's hard luck story that might or might not be true. Yet we should remember that few people are homeless by choice. Some opt for opulent luxury but mistakenly believe that fame and fortune are their own reward. Instead of a home, they create a gilded cage. Others are physically homeless because circumstances force them into a desperate search for the basics of survival for themselves and their families.

Yet others may, in a sense, describe themselves as having no fixed abode simply because they have chosen to accept Jesus' call to follow him. Just as his home was nowhere because it was everywhere, so can the same be said for his followers. They do not occupy a mindless routine that restricts their minds and activities, because their hearts are alive and sensitive to the beauty and intricacy of the people around them. The proverb tells us that "home is where the heart is" – and so they find Jesus everywhere and in everyone. Jesus told us to make our home in him just as he makes his home in my heart, your heart, our hearts. That requires self-sacrifice.