

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

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BULLETIN C 33 – 10TH JULY 2022 15TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear brothers and sisters,

At the 10am Mass and 12 noon today we will welcome Tim Mills from Bishops' Stortford who will be coming to tell us about the Catenians a wonderful organisation for Catholic Men. There will be an opportunity to talk with Tim after mass and he will I'm sure be able to answer any questions you may have.

Next Sunday, the last before the School Summer holidays will be the last of the 12 noon masses until the autumn. As you know we tried the added mass at 12 noon because I was worried about overcrowding at the 10am, this will not be the case over the holiday period.

God bless you all,
Fr. John

TIMES OF MASSES THIS WEEK

Sun	10	15 th Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1200 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish Catenians Peace in Ukraine
Tue	12	feria	1900 Mass	
Wed	13	St. Henry	1000 Mass 1020 Adoration	
Thu	14	St Camillus de Lellis	1000 Mass	
Sun	17	16 th of Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1200 Mass & Baptism of Piper Hope 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.

MASS INTENTIONS

We have many spaces for mass intentions, if you would like mass offered for someone, living or dead, or for a particular intention please use the envelopes provided.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Apeirogon is the title of a novel published in 2020 by the Irish writer Colum McCann. It's inspired by the real-life friendship between two fathers from peoples historically bitterly divided: Rami Elhanan, an Israeli, and Bassam Aramin, a Palestinian. They are united in grief by the loss of their young daughters: thirteen-year-old Smadar, killed by a Palestinian suicide bomber; and ten-year-old Abir, shot by a member of the Israeli army. Both bereaved fathers become members of the Parents Circle, a joint Israeli–Palestinian group of families who have lost children or close family members during the ongoing conflict. Rami and Bassam commit to spending their lives sharing their stories and working for reconciliation and a just and peaceful resolution to the conflict. “This became their jobs: to tell the story of what had happened to their girls.”

When Jesus tells a lawyer that to inherit eternal life he must love God and love his neighbour as much as he loves himself, the question immediately follows, “And who is my neighbour?” Jesus does not define who the lawyer’s neighbour might be, but tells him a story instead – the famous parable of the good Samaritan. The priest and the Levite in the story ignore the beaten stranger by the roadside, even though he is a fellow Jew; in contrast, the Samaritan, who is from a different and despised people, shows the injured man love and care. The listeners would have been shocked to hear Jesus say that a Samaritan stopped to aid the victim. Jews regarded Samaritans as enemies and yet here a Samaritan is the good guy. If Jesus had merely wanted to teach about neighbourly love, the third passer-by could have been another Jew, or the victim might have been a Samaritan assisted by a Jew. In selecting a Samaritan as the hero, Jesus is turning the social world upside down and challenging deep-seated suppositions. It is the Samaritan who behaves like a loving neighbour even though he is under no obligation to do so. The priest and the Levite, who are supposed to be examples of virtuousness, reject the opportunity to show love and to be good neighbours.

Jesus intended the story to demonstrate the nature of love in God’s kingdom. The response to “Who is my neighbour?” is that everyone, including my enemy, is my neighbour. The Samaritan’s compassion was costly. It involved making himself vulnerable to attack by robbers because he was walking instead of riding after giving the beaten man his mount. He also made a financial payment to an innkeeper to look after the victim without any expectation of being repaid. He might even have been ostracised by his own people for assisting a Jew. Jesus directly asks the lawyer which of the three travellers was a neighbour to the injured man. “The one who took pity on him,” he replies. To underline the message still further, Jesus instructs the lawyer to “Go, and do the same yourself.”

Jesus asks that we care about our neighbours with the same intensity that we care about ourselves. We are to love as he loved us, and even an enemy is redefined as a neighbour. This love is more than simply smiling at strangers and trying to develop positive attitudes towards people we don’t particularly like. The command to love our neighbour is placed immediately after the command to love God, and it demands a serious effort to elevate the neighbour’s need to the same level as our own. Moreover, we are called not just to serve those who serve us, or return favours because we have received them; we are called to love beyond the usual expectations of making special efforts only for family and friends.

Active involvement with people who are downtrodden and oppressed is a key feature of loving outreach in God’s kingdom. It might mean taking initiatives to reach out to vulnerable and destitute people in our community who can never repay our favours. It might mean taking up campaigns for justice and peace that try to tackle the causes of suffering at home and overseas. Working to highlight root causes of violence and war where whole groups of people are demonised as “enemies” will almost certainly draw criticism, since this goes against the prevailing culture, but it is what God expects of us. Today Jesus is teaching us that it is possible to go beyond the boundaries human society has constructed and to do things in a different and revolutionary way.