

**Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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**BULLETIN C 35 – 24TH JULY 2022
17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

My dear brothers and sisters,

Last year Pope Francis instituted the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, to be held each year on the fourth Sunday of July, close to the memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus. This year the Second World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly is today with the theme; *"In old age they will still bear fruit"* (Psalm 92:15).

We are reminded that Grandparents and the Elderly, as well as being a powerful witness by their own living out of their particular vocation, are also in a position to encourage and support younger people discerning theirs. Let us take this opportunity to think of and pray in thanksgiving for those who have inspired us in our lives, including those who have gone to their rest.

Our next Social event is the Strawberry Tea on Sunday 14th August, Our parish festival of The Assumption of Our Lady. Tickets are the same as last year and available after any mass from this Sunday onwards, £5 Adults and £2 for Children.

God bless you all,
Fr. John

Recent Retiring Collection = Day for Life £119-20, Peter's pence £93-00, Stella Maris £139-60

TIMES OF MASSES THIS WEEK

Sun	24	17 th Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	Grandparents & Elderly People of the Parish
Tue	26	Ss. Joachim & Anne	1900 Mass	Grandparents
Wed	27	feria	1200 Wedding Mass	Abigail & Jake (INT)
Thu	28	feria	1000 Mass	
Sun	31	18 th of Ordinary Time	1000 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.

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

“Dear God, you don’t usually hear from me, but there’s something I’d like you to take care of.” If a character in a film or TV drama is shown praying, it often indicates one of two things: either they’re a religious fanatic and possibly dangerous; or they’re in the middle of a devastating crisis in their lives, so overwhelming that they need to make an emergency call to a distant God. The inference is either that God is absent and that only someone deluded would think otherwise, or, at the very best, that God is far away and only to be called on in the most extreme of human circumstances.

The readings for Mass this Sunday reveal a very different picture of what we do when we pray. Prayer is not about somehow getting hold of God, to put God to work for us, but being drawn beyond ourselves, into friendship with God.

In the readings we see two people praying. In our Old Testament reading we see Abraham who, according to the letter of St James, was called “the friend of God” because of his great faith and his good deeds. This friend of God is allowed to interrogate God about God’s plans for Sodom and Gomorrah, and to badger God concerning the fate of any just people who may live in these allegedly sinful cities. After quite a bit of negotiation, the Lord reassures his friend Abraham that even if only ten just people are left, he will hold back his hand rather than destroy the cities. What this prayer of Abraham, the friend of God, reveals is the justice of God, the God who will not punish innocent people along with those who are wicked. This God listens to the concerns of Abraham that justice be done and reassures him.

In the Gospel we see an even deeper intimacy than that of God with Abraham. Jesus prays as more than a friend: he prays as the eternal Son of God who has been made flesh; he prays with the closeness of a relationship that is at the very heart of God the Holy Trinity. He calls God “Abba, Father”, a name that reveals his wonderful intimacy with God the Father. If we follow Jesus throughout Luke’s Gospel, we’ll see him praying to the Father at many significant moments in his life: before choosing the twelve apostles; on the mountain, transfigured in glory; in the garden of Gethsemane. Then finally, on the cross, he prays: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” According to Luke, it’s during Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem that the disciples, seeing him at prayer, ask to be included, to be able to pray as Jesus prays. In response, he teaches them what we know as the Lord’s Prayer, the “Our Father”. And this prayer of Jesus is something that we are all invited to become part of from our baptism onwards, when we are made adopted children of the Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus.

This is no absent God, no far-away God, but the God who is with us and who loves us. We can’t control or manipulate this God, but that isn’t why we (as opposed to characters in on-screen dramas) pray. Praying, for Christians, is about becoming part of the deep communion and love of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit.

Jesus tells us: “Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened to you.” So we are encouraged to keep on asking, to persevere in bringing our wants and needs before the Father. We do this not so that we can twist God’s arm in an emergency – a bit like the pull cord in railway carriages: “In case of emergency, pull the cord” – but so that we may rest the whole of our lives, our tragedies, our sorrows and our joys, our desires and our hopes for ourselves and for others, upon the mercy of God, the Father of Jesus and our Father. And, in sharing in the prayer life of Jesus, we can come to grow closer and closer in friendship with him, and to know the wonder and the intimacy of the loving communion of God the Holy Trinity, who is never absent or far away but remains with us forever.