

**Parish of the Assumption of Our Lady
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**BULLETIN C 8 – 16TH JANUARY 2022
SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

Dear Parishioners,

Today we welcome Mgr Keith Newton the Ordinary of the Ordinariate who is visiting the parish today. He will celebrate and preach at our Sunday morning Mass, there will be a chance to meet him and chat over coffee/tea in the hall immediately after the mass.

There are hundreds of live stream masses; however, watching morning mass in isolation last Sunday, it suddenly struck me how valuable it was to stream from my home parish. Yes, other churches may be more imposing: they may have slightly different formats; but none has such a wonderful community.

Why watch my home parish? Well, there in front of me were my family – yes, we are all God's family, as the psalm says Abraham is our father in faith - not by seed but by the Holy Spirit, by Baptism. I don't need other venues: the very best wine is served here every week. There is a natural warmth in our congregation and the temperature is just fine.

Last week Fr John touched on the fact that we all, not just the Ordained, have a vocation. In our second reading today St Paul shares the wondrous gifts of the Holy Spirit with the Corinthians, gifts distributed to each person, skills God sees fit for our journey, for love, the greatest cause of all our faith.

This week, please give a special thought to all those who are alone, in particular the elderly who may have been to the wedding feast a long time ago. The start of Covid saw great camaraderie when people shopped for one another, and I experienced this myself last week when my daughter made and delivered on the door step some premade meals for me including delicious soup - how many, I thought, do not share this privilege. Normally I am in constant contact with people but suddenly Covid shut me down. To be honest I, felt very lonely and isolated despite all the care provided. This turned my thoughts to those who have no one, those with relations who are too far away or who cannot not be bothered. And, more importantly, many who do not have or who are unable to use the internet - an invaluable communication tool today.

Please, I beg you, all this week use the eyes and ears God has given you; share His love wherever it is needed. Like Jesus in the gospel today our time has come, let's find the needy and really come to their aid. Please pray for David Page our Pastoral Assistant and his wife who were diagnosed with Covid last Sunday. Due to previous illness David has no immunity to fight it with and will need all our prayers. God Bless,

Deacon Michael

TIMES OF MASS DURING THIS WEEK

Sun	16	2 nd in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	Paddy Connors (INT)
Tue	18	feria	1900 Mass	O'Keefe Family (INT)
Wed	19	feria	1000 Mass	for Unity of Christians
			1020 Adoration	
Thu	20	St. Sabastian	1000 Mass	for persecuted Christians
Fri	21	St. Agnes	1000 Mass	for consecrated women
Sun	23	3 rd in Ordinary Time	1000 Mass	People of the Parish
			1800 Mass	

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Fr. John is available to hear confession on Tuesday at 6.30pm and Wednesday at 10.30am

GOSPEL REFLECTION

St John, writing in his gospel, twice mentions Mary, the mother of Jesus: at the marriage feast in Cana, the beginning of His public ministry; and at the crucifixion, the end of it. This could be a way of telling us that Mary played the passive role of physical mother of Jesus; and that she 'never wanted for herself anything that was of her Son' (Pope Francis). In today's gospel, we hear of the marriage feast at Cana, and how Mary went out of her way to intercede with her Son who performed his first miracle when they ran out of wine - a catastrophe at any wedding.

In itself it is an unusual wedding for there are two bridegrooms! There is the bridegroom just married, and Jesus who as the real bridegroom now is revealed, the long-awaited bridegroom of Israel. Jesus will transform this private Jewish wedding into the greatest wedding of all time, showing that the time has come when God was taking his people to himself; introducing a 'new way', leaving the old practices behind, bringing revolutionary teaching to everyone. We should note how generous Jesus is in all he does, especially at this wedding - they don't get a simple bottle of plonk but at least 120 gallons of the very choicest vintage.

If this was Jesus' very first sign, how then did Mary know that Jesus could do it? Good mothers know their children. They know the hidden talents and their potential and there are many young men and women who have gone on to accomplish great things in life because their mothers believed in them and encouraged them. Indeed, we are so fortunate that Mary intercedes with her Son for us at Cana and for all mothers.

A more fascinating question arising from the story is this: did Mary know all those thirty years she lived with Jesus that she was living with a wonderworker she never asks him to multiply her bread, turn the water on the dining table into wine, or double her money to make ends meet? How come she never asked Jesus to use his miraculous power to help her out, and yet did not hesitate to ask him to help others? The simple answer is that for Mary and for Jesus the needs of others come first.

God's gifts to individuals are not always meant for their benefit or the benefits of their families but for the service of others. That is what St Paul, writing long before St John, tells us in the second reading when he expounds on the many different gifts of the Holy Spirit, adding that "to each person is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Corinthians 12:6), not for personal profit.

Today, then, is a good day to ask ourselves: "What gifts has God given me? Am I using these gifts mainly for personal profit or for the service of others in the community?" We sometimes wonder why there are no more manifestations of the Holy Spirit like the ones we read in the Bible. Maybe the reason is that society has grown more inwardly focused and selfish. If we began using the little gifts we have for the common good — such as the gifts of praying, singing, teaching, caring, sharing, encouraging, supporting, motivating, writing, etc. — then these gifts will surely begin to grow and soon we will begin to see miracles. Concern for others is indeed the beginning of miracles.

Today is 'Peace Sunday', something easy to say but impossibly difficult to achieve Satan hates God and therefore God's people; his great plan for the church is to cause Christians – true believers who are united by the gospel – to find ways of disagreeing among themselves, to divide, to be bitter and jealous, and ultimately to "bite and devour one another". Remember there is no such thing as darkness, just the absence of light which we bring upon ourselves. Sin is darkness, grace is light; sin is hell, grace is heaven; so what madness it is to create more darkness than light, more at hellish results than heavenly ones. God did not just create us; he created our environment seeking peace so that life is sustained is of course equally important. We must share not hoard or abuse our resources so that all may live equally.

On Tuesday this week we begin the week of prayer for Christian Unity. Christians must be united, as unity is difficult to break. Unity makes it difficult to pick off individuals for destruction. It is when you isolate yourself by disrupting or denying unity that you are most at risk. When you feel your heart begin to turn against anyone, this is the time to turn to Jesus' many commands to love and to Live the Gospel. Our lives are seldom perfect - there are some things in the world that are good but not pleasant and others that are pleasant but not good. But to live in peace is both pleasant and good. Peace is about what we DO with our deeds, our words, and our thoughts. When you are gentle your deeds leave no harmful footprints on other people's hearts. When you are gentle your words are light and airy to the ears of the listener.

Where do we start? It starts with ME! It starts with YOU! It starts with all those we encounter, not just Christians but everyone. Everyone strives for and wants peace and as Christians we are God's ambassadors in this crucially important exercise.