

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

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www.catholicchurchoftheassumption.co.uk

BULLETIN C 46 – 9TH OCTOBER 2022 28TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

My dear brothers and sisters,

We so often take things for granted, but the pandemic, the war and now the cost of living crisis stops us in our tracks. If there is anything good that we can derive from these horrors it's that all that we are and all that we have is God's gracious gift to us. In our Gospel reading this Sunday we are reminded that faith leads to gift and gift leads to gratitude, at least for 10% of us!

In our gratitude for the gift of food that we enjoy we bring our Harvest gifts to mass this Sunday, they will then be taken to the food bank to be shared with our brothers and sisters in need. Please be generous.

Talking of generosity, I am delighted to record that last week's Macmillan coffee morning raised £364-30!!!

God bless

Fr. John

TIMES OF MASSES

Sun	9	28 th Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	Harvest Thanksgiving People of the Parish
Sun	16	29 th Ordinary Time	1000 Mass 1800 Mass	People of the Parish John Francis Kelleher (RIP)

JOB VACANCY

St John's RC Special School, Woodford Bridge is recruiting for a Head Cook responsible for the provision of well balanced and healthy meals from scratch catering for a variety of dietary needs whilst at all times ensuring high standards in relation to Health and Safety and Food Safety. Previous experience essential, hours 8am-2.30pm Monday to Friday term time only for a job description and application form please contact the school office on 020 8504 1818 or email office@stjohnsrcschool.co.uk Successful applicants will be subject to an enhanced DBS check. www.stjohnsrcschool.co.uk

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Towards the end of World War II, a Polish-American Jesuit, Father Walter Cizek, was accused by the Russians of being a Vatican spy. He was imprisoned for eighteen years, the first five in Moscow's infamous Lubyanka prison and then in the notorious slave labour camps of Siberia. For some years no one, except his captors, knew whether he was alive or dead. When finally he was released, everyone was eager to know how he had managed to survive such ordeals. They asked him for his secret. What had kept him going? What had saved him from being driven mad by so much suffering, so much loneliness?

His answer was always the same: it was faith that had enabled him to survive. He admitted that this answer didn't satisfy everybody. To those who thought it too facile, too simplistic, he responded that he could do nothing other than repeat clearly and honestly what he had slowly learned after a great deal of anguish and a lot of prayerful reflection. The simple truths of the faith had sustained him through years of doubt and darkness and suffering. But then he would add that so often the astonishing thing about divine truth is its

simplicity – the Ten Commandments, for example, or the Beatitudes or the first answer many people learned in the Catechism: that we are made to know and love God in this world, and be happy with God for ever in the next.

Of course, faith is something much more than simply subscribing to a list of truths that we have to believe. It is at its best a relationship, a relationship of love and trust that can transform life, a relationship that inevitably gives rise to other virtues. It gives rise to praise. Take Naaman the army commander, who appeared in today's first reading. He was amazed at his miraculous cleansing from leprosy. Following the prophet Elisha's advice, he had plunged into the River Jordan and on emerging found that he was cured. Now, standing in front of the prophet, he makes his act of faith: "there is no God in all the earth", he says, "except in Israel". And he adds a strange request – that he may take home from Israel "as much earth as two mules may carry". The lovely idea behind that request is that he wants enough soil from the land of his cure to be able to create his own little Israel, so to say, in his native land; and there he will always praise the Lord of Israel, the God who had healed him.

If faith leads to praise, we need go no further than today's Gospel to learn that faith also leads to gratitude. As he travels towards Jerusalem, Jesus is suddenly confronted by ten lepers – in his day, lepers were outcasts and so would often gather in small groups for mutual support. Keeping their distance, they cry out: "Jesus! Master! Take pity on us." He tells them to report to the priests and on the way they suddenly realise that their leprosy has gone. Nine of them are so delighted that they continue on their way rejoicing – perhaps to celebrate at the nearest hostelry. Only one, and he is a Samaritan, a foreigner in the eyes of law-abiding Jews – only he returns to give personal thanks to Jesus. And he leaves his benefactor with these words echoing in his heart: "Go on your way. Your faith has saved you."

In one of his letters, St Paul declares, "what matters is faith that makes its power felt through love". As we have seen, faith expresses itself in many ways – not only in love, but also in praise, in gratitude, and, as we heard in Father Ciszek's case, in unbelievable courage and fortitude. Perhaps we underestimate the power of faith in our lives; maybe we fail to see that faith is a relationship between God and ourselves, and that, like any other relationship, it can grow stronger if that's what we desire.

One of the loveliest and wisest prayers in the Gospels is that of a distraught father who comes to Jesus begging him to cure his son who is gravely ill. Jesus explains that everything is possible to one who believes, and the man cries out his prayer: "I do have faith. Help the little faith I have!" Perhaps that's a prayer that we too might pray: "Lord, we do believe, but help the little faith we have."

The relics of St Bernadette are coming to our diocese. This is a wonderful opportunity to pray with the woman to whom Our Lady chose to appear in Lourdes. Here are the details:

BRENTWOOD CATHEDRAL

Sunday 16 October

11 am: Relics of St Bernadette arrive.

11.30 am: Holy Mass, celebrated by Bp Alan.

6.30 pm: Holy Mass, led by the Youth Service.

9 pm: Cathedral closes.

Monday 17 October

6 am: Cathedral opens.

9.15 am: Holy Mass

12 noon: Relics of St Bernadette leave.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES, WANSTEAD

Tuesday 18 October

10 am: Relics of St Bernadette arrive.

11 am - 3 pm: Time reserved for pre-booked school groups.

7.30 pm: Holy Mass, celebrated by Bishop Alan

12 midnight: Church closes.

Wednesday 19 October

6 am: Church opens.

9 am: Relics of St Bernadette depart.