



Parish of Our Lady Help of Christians and St Lawrence

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2nd August 2020 – Eighteenth Sunday of the Year

Psalter Week 2

First Reading:	Isaiah 55:1-3
Psalm:	You open wide your hand, O Lord, you grant our desires.
Second Reading:	St Paul to the Romans 8:35. 37-39
Gospel Alleluia:	Alleluia, Alleluia! Blessings on the King who comes, in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens! Alleluia!
Gospel:	Matthew 14:13-21

Saturday 1st August	6.30pm	Vigil Mass (<i>People of the Parish</i>)
Sunday 2nd August	10.30am	Mass (<i>Ellenanne & Josie Keegan RIP</i>)
Monday 3rd August <i>St Walthen, Abbott – op. memoria</i>	10.00am	Mass (<i>Fr Richard Barrett Int</i>)
Tuesday 4th August <i>St John Vianney, Priest, memoria</i>	10.00am	Mass (<i>Bernhard & Marion Grabowiecki Int</i>) (<i>30th Wedding Anniversary</i>)
Wednesday 5th August <i>Dedication of S. Maria Maggiore – op. Memoria</i>		No Mass
Thursday 6th August <i>Transfiguration of the Lord - Feast</i>	10.00am	Mass (<i>Private Intention</i>)
Friday 7th August <i>Pope St Sixtus II & companions, martyrs</i>	10.00am	Mass (<i>Sisters of St Joseph's Convent – Int</i>)
Saturday 8th August <i>St Dominic, Priest – memoria</i>	10.00am	Mass (<i>Intention</i>)

Saturday 8th August	6.30pm	Vigil Mass (<i>C & K Keeney RIP</i>)
Sunday 2nd August	10.30am	Mass (<i>The People of the Parish</i>)

From Fr David's desk... Reflection on Eighteenth Sunday of the Year

The second reading at this Sunday's Mass is taken from St Paul's Letter to the Romans. It is an amazing piece of rhetoric – Paul waxing lyrically, his words voicing what he is singing in his heart. The heart of what he has to say is simply this: *Nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from the love that God has for us and which He has made real in Jesus Christ.* It's worth pausing and reading and re-reading that phrase – or better, what Paul himself says.

We have been living through a period of separation. The basic human gesture of touch connects us to others. In the pandemic, it has become a source of fear, something to be avoided as much as possible. Contact with others, with family or friends or others, has been severely restricted – again, we have become wary of something that would convey love and connection. We will soon be wearing face masks even more than before – even in church: seeing someone's face, the way they smile or the way they talk is now to be shielded from us.

I think we can all agree that, no matter how necessary these forms of separation are, there is something horrible about them. They are not natural to us. We yearn to meet our loved ones, to touch them and hug them, to look into their faces and enjoy their company.

I think God yearns for the same thing with us. He wants to look at us and for us to look at Him. In reality, He is always looking at us – with the tender love of a Father, with the joy of the Creator over a work of art, with the heart of a passionate Bridegroom. He embodied all of this in the life of Jesus – the Son of God who became the Son of Mary. In Jesus, God shows how eternal and unbreakable is His redeeming love for us – it never flags, it never can be exhausted, and it searches for a response from each of us. There is no power on earth or in heaven or in hell that can stop God from loving us – nothing can stop Him from being who and what He is which is Love. No sin and no evil has that power.

Perhaps one of the saddest things is that, as believers, we sometimes think that God doesn't love us. Perhaps we feel ashamed of our sins. Or maybe we have been deeply affected by some form of suffering which makes us question if God really loves us – or if He is even there. But Paul in the reading does not say that we won't face trials and sufferings – indeed, he actually seems to be saying that God won't always save us from suffering but if we rely on God's power, on His grace, then we will be saved through our suffering. The path of suffering Christ has already walked for us – in order to save the world. When we walk on our own paths of suffering, He will walk with us, sometimes carry us, but in such a way that we will ultimately triumph in being brought safe and whole to heaven. And our suffering will also contribute in some way to saving the rest of the world.

Without Christ, our suffering has no meaning. But with Him, it takes on a life-giving quality: it finds a meaning and fruitfulness which we could scarcely imagine before. This is because we suffer in union with Him who loves us – and we make an offering of our cross with the love that filled His heart for us when He was on His Cross. So, no matter where we are, what we are going through; no matter how scared we feel or how isolated we may be - we are not separated from God, from His love for us, made visible in Christ. This love made visible in Christ will be given to some of us at Mass over the coming weeks. Holy Communion is the visible expression of the Father's love for us. It really and truly is the Body that Christ offered for us on the Cross and still offers to us from His Risen Glory. Treasure the moment, value the grace, appreciate His presence: "Taste and see how good is the Lord!"

To those who cannot come to Mass at the moment – do not be afraid! No lockdown can keep Christ from you. Through the spiritual communion we make in every Mass, He enters confidently and lovingly into our hearts. When we think that we can't get to God, God surprises us by making the journey to us. The greatest journey He has already accomplished – when the Son of God became Man and eventually passed through death on the Cross to the Resurrection. If there is any pathway to our hearts, we will find that He is already taking it to come to us.

Nothing "can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord!"

May Our Lady Help of Christians, St Joseph, St Lawrence & St Rita pray for us all

With love and prayers, Fr David B. Barrett, Parish Priest



PUBLIC MASSES AND LITURGIES – As you know, we are now able to open our church for the celebration of Holy Mass. The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays or any other day remains suspended and so you do not have to attend Mass, therefore we will continue to ‘Live Stream’ all Masses except probably on Wednesdays. For the first couple of weeks we are setting up a booking-in system to ensure that we maintain good social distancing and also that we do not have to turn anyone away at the door of the church. If you haven’t already done so, please contact Denise with your preferences

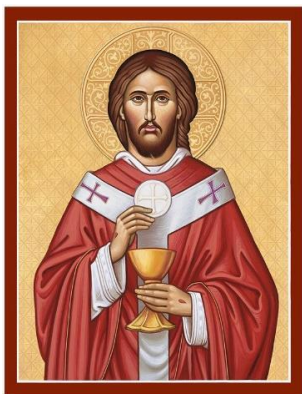
We have a great team of Parish Stewards who will welcome and guide people to their places in the church – please do follow their guidance. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Fr David, Deacon Peter or Denise



FACE COVERING

IMPORTANT: From 8th August the Government has announced that the wearing of a Face Covering will be obligatory in all places of worship. So please ensure that you have a face covering when you come to church.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION – Even if you are not attending Mass, you can make a Spiritual Communion every day. It is an expressed heartfelt desire to receive Our Lord even when we are unable. In making the prayer, we receive the Lord spiritually. Here is one prayer to make a Spiritual Communion:

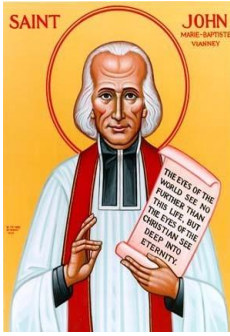


My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as being already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

St Alphonsus Liguori

MASS OFFERINGS (STIPENDS) – If you have any Mass intentions to be offered, please contact Fr David, Deacon Peter or Denise. Please do include the full name of the person for whom you want the Mass to be offered, whether they are alive or deceased. **There are a number of available dates during August and September.**

SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION – If anyone would like to go to Confession, please do contact Fr David by email or call round to the presbytery. Confessions will not be held in the confessional but in a safe place and with appropriate distancing, in compliance with the guidelines.

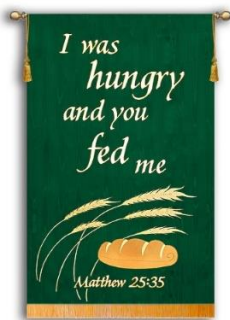


St John Mary Vianney – (1786-1859)

On Tuesday we will be celebrating the feast of St John Mary Vianney, often referred to as the Curé d’Ars. He was a renowned confessor and would spend many hours hearing confessions. He understood the importance of prayer and once wrote, “Prayer is nothing else than a union with God”. “We have not deserved to pray; but God, in His goodness, has permitted us to speak to Him. Our prayer is an incense which He receives with extreme pleasure.” He is the Patron Saint of Parish Priests and so perhaps on this special feast we will especially remember Fr David in our own prayers.



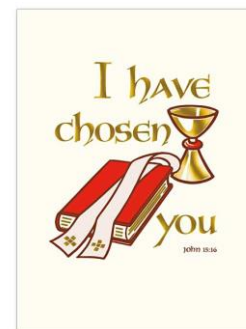
CAFOD APPEAL - CAFOD has joined with the U.K. Disasters Emergency Committee to help millions of people whose lives are at risk as Coronavirus spreads across refugee camps and countries suffering conflict. You can donate at <http://cafod.org.uk/coronavirus> to help through our global Church.



We continue to be very grateful to all of you who have been supporting the Food Bank – Catholics, Anglicans and others. The donation box remains outside the presbytery door and is checked frequently. The Food Bank continues to need donations of: Long Life Milk – Long Life Juice – Tinned Rice Pudding – Tinned Custard – Tinned Meat – Tinned Vegetables – Tinned Tomatoes – Pasta Sauce - Spreads

Ad Multos Annos

Last Thursday, 30th July, Fr David celebrated 27 years of his priestly ordination. We are very fortunate to have been blessed with such a caring and loving Parish Priest. We thank God for Fr David’s priestly ministry and pray for him, his family and friends and for our parish under his ever-watchful gaze. God bless you Fr David



The Feast of the Assumption of the BVM

This year the Feast of the Assumption of the BVM has been transferred to Sunday 16th August. Weather permitting, Fr David is hoping to celebrate the 10.30am Mass in the garden at Our Lady’s. So, fingers crossed that this can go ahead as planned – we will confirm details next weekend

