



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF
OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION,
FOSTER AVENUE, BEESTON,
NOTTINGHAM, NG9 1AE
and
ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH,
TAMWORTH ROAD,
LONG EATON, NG10 1DH



Nottingham Roman Catholic Diocese Trustees Company No. 7151646 Charity No. 1134449

PARISH PRIEST: Fr. Christopher A Thomas, Presbytery, 25 Foster Avenue, Beeston, NG9 1AE

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TIMES OF MASSES AND OTHER SERVICES: THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR: B

Third Week of Ordinary Time: 24th – 30th January 2021 (Weekday Cycle Year I / Psalter Week III)

<u>Saturday 23rd January:</u>	<u>Weekday Feria</u>	<p><i>Your Prayers are requested for those who are sick:</i></p> <p>Isobel Alana Barnes, Marica Borsos, Jessie Breame, Margaret Brown, Fr John Cairns, Pat Constable, Francesca Lina Craparotta, Jim & Margaret Dougan, Fr Theodore Gomes, Ann Harrison, Fr Peter Harvey, Andrea Hoffman, Breeda Keaney, Anne – Marie Reid, Canon Owen O’Neil, Alan Roberts, Simpson Family, Evelyn Venning and John Wilcox.</p> <p>HOSPITALS</p> <p>A number of priests are still trying to maintain an ‘on – call’ rota for City and QMC. This is strictly calls for Anointing of the Sick when someone is nearing the end of their life. The hospital will not call us out for a request for prayers or when someone has already died – these will be dealt with by a member of the Chaplaincy Team who may or may not be a Catholic minister. Holy Communion is not being taken into hospital by Eucharistic Ministers. Families should not contact a priest directly to visit their loved one in hospital – all requests need to go through the Ward and Chaplaincy Department. QMC 0115 924 9924 ext. 63799 or City 0115 969 1169.</p>
Mass;	Private Intention	
<u>Sunday 24th January:</u>	<u>Third Sunday of the Year: B</u>	
Mass;	Pro Populo; People of the Parish	
<u>Monday 25th January:</u>	<u>The Conversion of St Paul (Feast)</u>	
Mass;	Marianne Walton RIP (SVP)	
<u>Tuesday 26th January:</u>	<u>Saints Timothy & Titus, Bishops (memoria)</u>	
Mass;	Fr John Cairns’ Intentions	
<u>Wednesday 27th January:</u>	<u>Weekday Feria</u>	
Mass;	Paddy Hurley RIP (Butler)	
<u>Thursday 28th January:</u>	<u>St Thomas Aquinas, Priest & Doctor (memoria)</u>	
Mass;	Michael Mullally RIP (Anne)	
<u>Friday 29th January:</u>	<u>Weekday Feria</u>	
Mass;	Lily Lavinia Bird RIP (Anniversary)	
<u>Saturday 30th January:</u>	<u>Weekday Feria</u>	
Mass;	Private Intention	
<u>Sunday 31st January:</u>	<u>Fourth Sunday of the Year: B</u>	
Mass;	Pro Populo; People of the Parish	
<p>UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED THE ABOVE MASSES WILL ALL BE SAID PRIVATELY!</p>		
<p>The Parish Hall of Our Lady of the Assumption and the Parish Hall at St Francis of Assisi are closed to members of the public, until further notice. If you urgently wish to contact Fr Christopher please telephone 0115 922 8145 (at any reasonable time).</p> <p>For enquiries or to book a Mass Intention, please see me after the one of the Scheduled Public Masses or contact me by telephone. Mass Stipends and Parish Collection Envelopes can be posted or given at a later date.</p>		

Items for the newsletter can be given to Fr Christopher or e – mailed to frcathomas@live.com by WEDNESDAY of each week for inclusion in the next issue.

POOR CLARES: I am visiting the Sisters at Bulwell this coming *Monday, 25th January 2021*. If you have any donations you would like me to take over to them could you either give them to Father Christopher or drop them off at my house please. It is so important, especially now, that we continue to help and support them. Many thanks. –*Diane Wilson*.

“BEING A DISCIPLE WEB SERIES:” January is a time when we try and work at being a better person, why not explore how we can be a grow as a disciple of Jesus? On the *4 Thursdays of January 2021* we will explore a different aspect of what it means to be a Catholic disciple with Brendan Thompson the CEO of Catholic Voices in a web series on Zoom. Catholic Voices are an international organisation that shares the Good News in the global media. This will be a great foundation for Parishes, Chaplaincies and individuals to explore how we can support each other in growing as Catholic disciples. Register for the series here: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJMrcuygqjwpGdNBRC5NIQ46Eu1bleEg246A> For information on how to access things on zoom visit: https://www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/information/diocesan-commissions/01_commission-adult-formation/using-zoom

St Francis’ Catholic Voluntary Academy, Melton Mowbray (part of the St Thomas Aquinas Catholic Multi – Academy Trust) has a vacancy for a *Part – Time Non – Teaching Deputy Headteacher*. Please visit www.aquinas-cmat.org/vacancies/ for further information. Closing date: *12th February 2021*.

NATIONAL LOCKDOWN GUIDANCE: *As we continue with the current lockdown measures implemented by the Government, the continued emphasis remains to stay at home and only go out if it is absolutely necessary. The feeling and belief that I and, a number of priests and people continue to have, is that the responsible course of action is to close our Churches for this period. I would suggest that in this and, indeed, in all situations, we use our discretion as to what is safe and advisable in our particular circumstances. As the Government has often said, just because you can do something doesn’t mean you should.*

I believe it is a good idea, at this stage, to continue with our amended arrangements, given the continued increased danger of transmission of the new strains of the virus and the vulnerability of our congregations and those who assist as stewards and cleaners. As the Bishop said at the beginning of the first National Lockdown priests are not to feel pressured to do anything that they feel will put them or anyone else at risk. We are also reminded that the Sunday obligation remains suspended and that live – stream Masses are widely available.

We will therefore continue, at least until the 17th February 2021, with our two Churches closed for public worship. I hope that we can resume public Masses on Ash Wednesday but, I will only be inclined to do so when and, if, our area is placed in a lower tier or that the signs indicate that the infection rate is significantly falling.

I know that this is not what some people want hear and it is not a decision that has been taken lightly. Personally, saying Mass on my own is not something I am always happy to do. But the facts confirm the really terrible news, that there have been over 94,500 deaths in the UK and over 3.5 million cases of infection. The news reports continue to remind us of the real struggle and pressures which our health care workers face, both physically and mentally, on a daily basis and have done for a considerable period of time now and, it seems that they will continue to do so for some time to come. This temporary closure then, is to support the message to ‘Stay at Home, Protect the NHS and Save Lives’ and, to recognise that despite all the measures we take in our Churches, to come to Mass is still a risk, especially travelling to and from Church, particularly for the more vulnerable and elderly members of our communities.

The vaccine roll – out still has some way to go yet, leaving many people still at risk. Compliance with ‘Hands – Face – Space’ is still inconsistent in our communities with many people not wearing masks and not keeping 2m from each other.

All Masses listed in the Parish Newsletter will be said privately. Funerals can continue in Church under strict restrictions. We look forward to welcoming you back as soon as it safe to do so.

The Third Sunday of the Year: B.

(*READINGS: Jonah 3^{1-5, 10}; Psalm 25^{4-5, 6-7, 8-9}; 1 Corinthians 7²⁹⁻³¹ and; Mark 1¹⁴⁻²⁰*)

One of the most interesting stories in the pages of the Bible is the tale of Jonah; the runaway prophet. Jonah is commanded by the God to go up to the great city of Nineveh and tell the people that God is going to destroy them in forty days. Jonah believes that because God is merciful the city will not be destroyed – hence, he will look rather silly after his “*all – to – be – wiped – out*” speeches. If this is to be Jonah’s first mission, then it is also to be his first refusal. Instead of going to Nineveh, he decides to run away on a ship to Tarshish. At least in Tarshish no one will laugh at him.

Jonah makes the mistake of thinking he can travel out of God’s reach. But he is in for a wet surprise. He buys his ticket, boards the ship and settles down to sleep for the voyage. There is a great storm and the ship threatens to break up. While all the sailors are busy praying and throwing cargo overboard, Jonah is fast asleep. The captain orders him to get up and pray and, when Jonah sees how close disaster is for everyone, he admits that he is the cause and orders the sailors to throw him overboard. Since tossing passengers overboard is not a usual pastime for sailors, they are reluctant to oblige. But when the seas grow rougher, they change their mind. With Jonah overboard there is calm again.

And then, Jonah, who is not famous for keeping his mouth shut, meets a whale, who is not famous for keeping his mouth shut either. The image is clear: Jonah is taken into the depths to be born again. If the hero is to pass onwards he must first pass inwards. Something in Jonah has to give, something in Jonah has to die. Illumination will come only after the experience of annihilation. So God sends Jonah on a renewal course for three days.

Jonah has the opportunity to repent. He is out of his element, he is in the depths, he must face himself and understand what is asked of him. He prays, he reflects, he remembers and then he promises to fulfil the Word of God. When that happens, he is delivered out of the depths and the whale deposits him on the land. When Jonah is back in his element, the Word of God is addressed to him a second time: “Up go to Nineveh, the great city, and preach to them as I told you to.”

Jonah obeys. He goes into the city and tells the people that all of them will be destroyed in forty days. There is no ambiguity about his message. It is proclaimed as certain. Everyone pays attention. The king and his ministers command the people to renounce their evil behaviour: “God may yet relent and pardon, forgo His avenging anger and spare our lives.” They hope that if they repent, then God will repent of His anger also.

God relents when the people repent. Everyone is overjoyed. All except one. While the people rejoice, Jonah leaves the city, to sulk. As he suspects from the beginning, God has a controlling habit of forgiveness. He argues again with God: “That was why I fled....I knew that you were a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in graciousness and mercy, relenting from evil.” He asks God to take his life. He has been put to shame. The prophet has been proved a failure.

Jonah decides to sit in the hot sun until he dies. But God causes a tree to grow, to shade his prophet. Jonah feels better. But God causes the tree to die and then Jonah feels sorry for the tree. God has the last word. He asks Jonah why he feels sorry for the tree. Should God not feel sorry for Nineveh, where many thousands of people live?

With that question from God, the story of Jonah comes to an end. Jonah is obsessed with being right and he is willing to see all the people perish to be proved right. But Jonah has to learn that the point about prophecy is not accuracy, but repentance. Jonah has been made to look foolish; but his foolishness is less important than the people’s repentance. He has to learn, that it is never too late to repent and that it is good when the prophet is proved wrong.

The story of Jonah holds out hope for us all. In the story everyone repents: Jonah himself, the people of Nineveh, even God. The Good News is that no one is tied to a planned fate; no one is doomed to embrace disaster. By choosing to repent we can change our lives. Repentance is the Good News because it means that nothing is settled, nothing is sealed. Punishment that has been planned can always be cancelled. Things can change. If God can begin again, so can we begin again and again and again.

That is the message which is at the heart of the Gospels. That is the Good News. And repentance need not be a crusty, grouchy affair. As Jonah experienced himself, you can still have a whale of a time!