



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: FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR: B

Fourth Week of Ordinary Time: 31st January – 6th February 2021 (Weekday Cycle Year I / Psalter Week IV)

<u>Saturday 30th 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>
Mass;	Private Intention	
<u>Sunday 31st January:</u>	<u>Fourth Sunday of the Year: B</u>	
Mass;	Pro Populo; People of the Parish	
<u>Monday 1st February:</u>	<u>Weekday Feria</u>	
Mass;	John Doley RIP (Simmons)	
<u>Tuesday 2nd February:</u>	<u>The Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas) (Feast)</u>	
Mass;	Mary Jones Intentions	
<u>Wednesday 3rd February:</u>	<u>St Blaise, Bishop & Martyr (mem)</u>	
Mass;	Mrs Martha Whitmore RIP (Foundation Mass)	
<u>Thursday 4th February:</u>	<u>St Gilbert of Sempringham, Religious (memoria)</u>	<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;	Joseph Mendonca RIP (Bradford)	
<u>Friday 5th February:</u>	<u>St Agatha, Virgin & Martyr (mem)</u>	
Mass;	Holy Souls	
<u>Saturday 6th February:</u>	<u>St Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs of Japan (mem)</u>	
Mass;	Private Intention	
<u>Sunday 7th February:</u>	<u>Fifth 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: The Sisters send their thanks to you all for your continued support. They especially appreciate your help at this difficult time and wish you all a happy and healthy 2021. At present they are all keeping well and avoiding the virus. My next visit will be **Monday 22nd February 2021**. If you have a donation for the Sisters could you either leave it with Father Christopher or myself. Many thanks for your continued support. –*Diane Wilson*.

CHURCH MAINTENANCE: As mentioned, last year, some essential maintenance work was required in and around the Church. Repairs to the Church roof, including new felt and flashing and also some repointing work have been successfully finished, as was the clearing of the drains around the Church, Hall and car Park. However, the major work is the replacement of the Gas Central Heating Boiler for the Church, as the current boiler is obsolete and unserviceable. After a very lengthy process of getting quotations from a number of local companies, as well permission from Diocesan Building and Sites Committee, I am pleased to say that the work on this will begin this **Monday, 1st February 2021**. The work will take three to four weeks to complete after which we will have a safe, modern and efficient boiler to heat the Church for many years to come. All of this, as I am sure you can appreciate comes at a substantial cost (as it is a commercial boiler), which including VAT will be just over **£ 43, 000. 00**. As we do not have sufficient funds in the Parish to cover the full cost we have had to ask the Diocese for a loan of £ 25, 000. 00 (repayable over 5 years) to cover the shortfall. I am sure that that through your usual generosity and fund – raising the repayment of this loan will not be a problem. I am also extremely grateful to a number of people who have already made generous personal donations amounting to £ 3, 500. 00 towards the cost of this work.

NOTTINGHAM 40 DAYS FOR LIFE 2021: **40 Days for Life** is a peaceful and prayerful way to work for an end to abortion. In the Nottingham Diocese, with the support of Bishop Patrick, we have prayed outside the abortion facility at the QMC during Lent for several years. Routine abortions no longer take place there so last year we prayed at the Stapleford Care Centre, which contains a BPAS abortion clinic, until the Covid lockdown meant that we could no longer pray outside the clinic. We completed the prayer campaign by praying at home. During Lent from **17th February to 28th March 2021**, people in our Diocese are invited to pray and fast for an end to abortion. We planned to return to Stapleford but are currently prevented from doing so by lockdown (although the abortion clinic continues to see women). So, we plan to start our 2021 campaign online. You are invited to peacefully pray for an hour or more during a 40 – day vigil running for 12 hours daily during Lent. Please **sign up now** to pray with us at 40daysforlife.com/nottingham or you can contact us at 40daysforlifenotts@gmail.com. Bishop Patrick will celebrate Mass for us on **Thursday 11th February 2021** at the Cathedral at 7:00pm – if you live near Nottingham (and are not in a high-risk category) please do come. You can also follow the Mass online through the cathedral website.

ASK YOUR MP TO SIGN A PARLIAMENTARY MOTION CALLING ON THE GOVERNMENT TO INTRODUCE NEW GUIDANCE ON FETAL PAIN: A new parliamentary motion (EDM 1340) is calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. The evidence that babies can feel pain in the womb and during many abortions, highlights the humanity of the unborn child and provides another important reason to introduce legislation to protect the unborn child from abortion. Right To Life UK have set up an easy – to – use tool which makes it simple to contact your MP and ask them to sign this motion calling on the Government to introduce new guidance on fetal pain. It only takes 30 seconds using this easy – to – use tool. This tool can be accessed by visiting the link: www.righttolife.org.uk/FetalPainMotion – Daniel Turner (Right To Life UK) [+44 \(0\) 1732 460911](tel:+44201732460911); daniel@righttolife.org.uk; righttolife.org.uk

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 103, 000 deaths in the UK and over 3.7 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 Fourth Sunday of the Year: B.

(READINGS: Deuteronomy 18¹⁵⁻²⁰; Psalm 94^{1-2, 6-9}; 1 Corinthians 7³²⁻³⁵ and; Mark 1²¹⁻²⁸)

Occasionally when public figures speak we refuse to take them seriously. Because they convey the impression that they are not sincere. The word, “credibility” springs to mind, when we are suspicious that there is no depth to their fine words. Perhaps the most fundamental criticism we can make about someone is to say that, “They are not a person of their word.” Every age has its true and false prophets. In today’s Gospel we are told that Jesus spoke with authority and conviction. He was never a dictator though, because His words were effective. When the evangelist Mark begins telling his story of the ministry of Jesus, he shows us how Jesus is invested with the power of the Spirit at His Baptism and so He acts with authority. The power which moves Jesus has its source in God. The authority which Jesus displays, both in His actions and His words, is the authority of God Himself. When Jesus begins His teaching, the people are deeply impressed. They can see for themselves the difference between the way Jesus teaches and the way other religious leaders teach. When Jesus teaches something actually happens! It is not a matter of words decorating the air. Our Lord’s teaching creates an impression because the people can see the change for good which it effects. That change which is seen in the broken, the crippled, the blind, the lame and the poor.

In today’s Gospel Our Lord’s teaching is seen in action. In the first public work of His ministry there is a confrontation between the super – powers: the power of God and the power of darkness. While Jesus is teaching in the synagogue He is interrupted by a man possessed; a man who has no authority over his own body or his own spirit. He is possessed; he is not in charge of his own life. When Jesus speaks He commands the power that dominates this man’s life to leave him alone. At Our Lord’s command the man is freed. The people are astonished and marvel at Our Lord’s teaching, “Here is a teaching that is new,” they say, “and with authority behind it.”

When Jesus speaks He shares not only His wisdom but His power. Our Lord’s actions are His principle teachings. That is His unique authority. He uses His power to liberate people from the evil forces which dominate their lives. And when others see what He is doing with His teaching, they begin to wonder who Jesus really is.

The crowds weren't captivated by Him just because He was a gifted preacher who told them what they wanted to hear. There is something about Jesus which communicates real authority to His hearers. He is a man of integrity whose actions match His words and who is not reserved or guarded in His opinion, but speaks truthfully on matters concerning every aspect of life. The power that moves Jesus has its source in the Spirit of the living God and He uses that authority to free people from the evil which rules their lives and to make them feel precious in the sight of God. Even from a brief reading of the Gospels it is crystal clear that those who heard Our Lord preach were filled with a sense of wonder and given hope. He challenged them to the very depth of their being and encouraged them to live good lives. Our Lord never talked down to people who were broken but shared their disappointments, healed their wounds and treated them as friends. He had the ability to bring forth the best out of those who were open and receptive to His message, making them realise that the Kingdom of God was calling them to greater things than they had ever imagined possible.

And so at the beginning of His ministry Jesus seems to meet with wholehearted approval and success. You can almost hear the applause! But later, as we know, things will change and the applause will die down. When people want to ignore His teaching, they will distract themselves, by focusing on His background, His lifestyle, His family and His followers. His listeners will haul in the usual array of defence mechanisms to protect themselves from His insight. They will begin to question His authority, criticise His values and denounce His preferences for their own. Jesus, however, seems to be aware that the road from approval to violence is a very short one and, that He is not excused from facing the rejection that all the prophets had to face before Him.

The important point though, is that Jesus stays committed to using His power for good. He continues to exercise His authority to liberate those who are bound up and, to confront those who lay burdens upon the weak; applause or no applause. No matter what the opinion polls say, Jesus struggles on. If He receives His authority from elsewhere, He looks for His approval and support from elsewhere. Ultimately He is responsible to the Father, from whom all real power and real authority comes.

In a rebellious age, the whole notion of talking about authority seems a bit quaint and antiquated. Thinking about authority can send shivers up or down our spines, as maybe we can recall how we may have been treated badly in the past by people in authority. Rarely today is authority viewed in terms of a leadership role within a community or seen as a parental responsibility within a family. But both are positions of service to others, which need to be exercised with the greatest humility. There are occasions when we are all called to exercise authority, in one form or another, as parents or leaders. And it is not easy when we have experienced the resentment of having made unpopular but proper decisions when it would have been easier to curry favour with those under our care.

Jesus used His authority to call forth the best in each one of us and, to draw people towards God the Father. That is why the words of Jesus are so important and so precious – because they are about how we can be saved; liberated from our sins and freed to live the life God wants us to live. They provide us with the answers as to how we should live our lives. That is why we belong to a hierarchical Church that teaches with authority. Not to burden us, but to keep Our Lord's words alive in the world, to keep us reminded of what He said and still says to us today. Because I'm afraid we are, all of us, prone to laziness, to the lowering of ideals and standards and the watering down of the commandments.

The Word of God will always challenge us to the depth of our being. Today it is asking us how honest and authentic we really are, as we face the problems of living the Gospel message amid a questioning world. If we follow it and live it we are able to speak with authority in our own right and point others towards God. Two thousand years have passed since the time of Our Lord and the Church today is enriched with twenty centuries of distilled wisdom and authority. It continues to cherish the insights of thousands of scientists and mathematicians, philosophers and theologians, saints and mystics. Christ remains its model, as He was on that Sabbath day in the synagogue at Capernaum. "His teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, He taught them with authority."