



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

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

Fifth Week of Ordinary Time: 7th – 13th February 2021 (Weekday Cycle Year I / Psalter Week I)

Saturday 6th February:	<i>St Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs of Japan (mem)</i>	<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	
Sunday 7th February:	<i>Fifth Sunday of the Year: B</i>	
Mass;	Pro Populo; People of the Parish	
Monday 8th February:	<i>Weekday Feria</i>	
Mass;	Mrs Martha Whitmore RIP (Foundation Mass)	
Tuesday 9th February:	<i>Weekday Feria</i>	
Mass;	John Hayes RIP (Bradford)	
Wednesday 10th February:	<i>St Scholastica, Virgin (memoria)</i>	
Mass;	Michael John Morley RIP	
Thursday 11th February:	<i>Weekday Feria</i>	<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;	Holy Souls	
Friday 12th February:	<i>Weekday Feria</i>	
Mass;	Private Intention	
Saturday 13th February:	<i>Weekday Feria</i>	
Mass;	Special Intention	
Sunday 14th February:	<i>Sixth Sunday of the Year: B</i>	
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: Work began on the New Church Boiler last **Monday, 1st February 2021**, and all seems to be going well. 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 and, a further £ 300. 00 received this week from three more generous benefactors.

SYCAMORE COURSE: HOW TO PRAY: A Lent course of six sessions about Christian prayer and the adventure of the spiritual life. For those who are just beginning and also for those who have been praying a long time! Sycamore is an adaptable Catholic resource for sharing and growing in the faith. You are invited to explore one of the core parts of being a disciple of Jesus in the Church – Prayer. Each **Wednesday during Lent, starting on 24th February 2021 at 7:00 pm** join us on Zoom to watch a video input on a different topic of prayer: “*How to Pray; The Power of Prayer; The Bible; The Mass and; more*” and then discuss it with parishioners from both our Parishes. If you would like to sign up please visit: <https://forms.gle/Qx87VMM1zfk5A6s49> or for more information email Joe Hopkins: alpha.assumption@gmail.com. We hope to run another Sycamore course in Eastertide looking at “*Living Our Faith in the World.*”

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 40daysforlifennotts@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.

SENIOR SAFEGUARDING COORDINATOR: The Catholic Diocese of Nottingham seeks to appoint an experienced Safeguarding Professional to lead and manage its Safeguarding Service. Working with the Bishop, the Diocesan Trustees, Safeguarding Commission and Clergy and Parishes of the Diocese, this person will lead and develop safeguarding strategy and practice to the highest levels, and implement national policies and procedures fully and consistently. This is a key senior role, central to the commitment of the Bishop and the Diocese to minimise safeguarding risks, achieve excellent outcomes with and for children and vulnerable adults and enable a protected, supportive environment in which the Mission of the Church demonstrably takes place safely across the Diocese. The successful applicant will be a highly motivated, energetic and enthusiastic individual with proven team leadership skills and an expertise in and, commitment to, safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. **Salary:** £ 43, 800 – £ 47, 800 dependent upon qualifications and experience. **For more information and an application pack email:** office@dioceseofnottingham.uk. **Closing date 28th February 2021.** Interviews are expected to take place in person on **Monday 8th March 2021**.

VOCATIONS: Are you looking for a challenge? Are you searching for God? Why not join the Vocations Team at their Zoom Café on Monday 1st March 2021 from 7:30 to 9:00 pm, where you will have an opportunity to ask questions and chat with Religious Sisters and Priests about Vocations. A warm welcome awaits you. Please email Diane at vocationsadmin@dioceseofnottingham.uk to register your place or for any further information. They look forward to seeing you (for anyone 18 and over).

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 110, 000 deaths in the UK and over 3.9 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 Fifth Sunday of the Year: B.

(READINGS: Job 7^{1-4, 6-7}; Psalm 146¹⁻⁶; 1 Corinthians 9^{16-19, 22-23} and; Mark 1²⁹⁻³⁹)

Today's Gospel teaches us a very simply truth about Our Lord and that is that Christ is a man for others. Simon Peter and the other disciples come to Him the morning after a day like none they had ever known before. Our Lord's popularity was at a peak. His preaching was a huge success. He had dramatically expelled a demon in the middle of the synagogue. And He had spent the entire evening of the Sabbath working miraculous cures and amazing exorcisms. The next morning, His disciples must have been wild with excitement. They may have even thought that Jesus would claim the Messianic Kingship straight away and gather an army to cast out the despicable Roman occupiers.

And so, when they awoke to find Him gone from the house and a growing crowd of townspeople clamouring to see Him, they were confused. They frantically organised a search party and scoured the surrounding area. But when they find Him, alone in prayer on the mountain top and they tell Him that everyone is looking for Him, Our Lord's answer is surprising. He tells them it is time to move on, that His mission is not to maximise His popularity, but to preach the Gospel to all of Israel – this is what His Father sent Him to do and no opportunity for mere personal glory will distract Him from it.

This was the first instalment of a lesson that Jesus would teach over and over again in the Gospel, by words and actions: He is not a political figure looking to climb the ladder of success; He is a servant and a messenger; a man for others. In a world that tends to idolise success and achievement, where great souls are withered by the rat race of petty promotions and obscure rewards, the selfless, transcendent purpose of a man entirely focused on fulfilling someone else's plan, the plan of God, is like a bright star shining in the darkness.

This self – giving; as opposed to a self – seeking, attitude of Christ is vividly present in His encounter with St Peter’s mother – in – law. In the first place, like all of His miracles this one is not performed to impress people, but to help people. The devil had tempted Jesus to use His miraculous powers to impress the crowds when He invited Him to cast Himself off the pinnacle of the temple, but Jesus refused. And He always uses His healing powers to benefit those in need. It is a lesson for us too – the gifts and talents we have received through God’s providence are not meant to foster self – satisfaction, but self – giving. And in the second place, notice the manner in which Jesus performs this miracle; it is supremely personal, gentle and kind. Simon’s mother – in – law is sick in bed with a fever. Jesus could have snapped his fingers and cured her from the other side of the house, like something out of a Harry Potter movie. But that was not His style. Instead, He follows Simon Peter over to the bed where his mother – in – law lay, listening as they tell Him the story of her sickness. Then He bends down beside her, grasps her trembling hand in His own firm, gentle grip and looks into her face. It is with that personal touch that He relieves her sickness and then, as St Mark points out, he even helped her up! In Jesus Christ, God comes to meet us in the reality of our humanity, bringing the warmth of His divine light into even the most mundane nooks and crannies.

I sometimes think that one reason so many people find it so hard to believe in Jesus or to follow Him is because they don’t see Jesus as this man for others. Instead, they imagine Jesus to be harsh and judgmental. That is not the Jesus of the Gospels though. That is not the Jesus of the Cross and that is not the Jesus of the Eucharist. So why do they think of Him that way? One of the most common reasons is what the Catechism calls the “counter – witness” of Catholics. Every one of us is an advertisement for Christ. As Catholics, we have identified ourselves with Christ and His Church. And so, people who are outside the Church look at us to get an idea of what Christ is really like.

So, if we gossip and criticise and talk harshly about one another are we not just as like everyone else. If we live pleasure – seeking, self – indulgent lives, eating and drinking too much and sleeping around are we not just like everyone else. If we look out for number one instead of looking out for our neighbours and those in need, if we lie, cheat, take away another person’s good name and manipulate things for our own advantage, are we not just like everyone else. Well then, is it any mystery why people who know that we are Christ’s followers don’t decide to follow Christ themselves?

But if they see us walking away from gossip and defending other people’s reputations, if they see us living balanced, well – ordered and joyfully disciplined lives, if they see us as compassionate, forgiving and yet firm in our moral commitments, if they see us trying to go against the current trend of the corrupt, ego – centric culture that is tearing society apart, well, then, in that case, they may well be drawn towards Christ and not pushed away from Him.

One of the great truths of our faith, is the fact that Jesus became man for others and, that has a direct impact on our personal relationship with Him. It means that Christ is for each one of us. It means that He is always thinking of us, always guiding us, always walking with us, always at our side. And as beautiful as this truth is, it can also be hard for us to accept.

Our modern society is built on individualism, the idea that each person is self – sufficient. That everyone is able to achieve happiness and fulfilment solely through their own efforts. Because of this, depending on others, is often seen as a sign of weakness. And this individualistic attitude is deeply rooted and embedded in our television programmes and films, our music and advertisements, even in the news and media – we are surrounded by it.

And as a result, it can seep into our relationship with Christ too. We sometimes think that we should be able to make ourselves perfect and holy and then we will be able present ourselves to Christ to earn a reward. But if that were the case, Jesus would never have come to earth in the first place. He would not have given us the Church and the Sacraments. He would not have died on a Cross to show us the limitlessness of His love. Christ is a man for others, because He knows that all of us need a Saviour. It is not a sign of weakness or failure to let ourselves be loved and guided by God – it is the surest sign of true wisdom.

As Pope Benedict put it in his inaugural homily, “We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary. There is nothing more beautiful than to be surprised by the Gospel, by the encounter with Christ. There is nothing more beautiful than to know Him and to speak to others of our friendship with Him.”