



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: FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT: B

First Week of Lent: 21st – 27th February 2021 (Weekday Cycle Year I / Psalter Week I)

<u>Saturday 20th February:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	<i>Your Prayers are requested for those who are sick:</i> 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. HOSPITALS 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.
Mass;	Cyprie Hillier RIP (Anniversary) (Halliday)	
<u>Sunday 21st February:</u>	<u>First Sunday of Lent: B</u>	
Mass;	Pro Populo; People of the Parish	
<u>Monday 22nd February:</u>	<u>Chair of St Peter, Apostle (Feast)</u>	
Mass;	Special Intention	
<u>Tuesday 23rd February:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
Mass;	Anna Fisher RIP (Curtis)	
<u>Wednesday 24th February:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
Mass;	Holy Souls	
<u>Thursday 25th February:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
Mass;	Mrs Martha Whitmore RIP (Foundation Mass)	
<u>Friday 26th February:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
Mass;	David Powell RIP (5 th Anniversary)	
<u>Saturday 27th February:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
Mass;	Special Intention	
<u>Sunday 28th February:</u>	<u>Second Sunday of Lent: B</u>	
Mass;	Mike & Julia Wilson RIP (Diane & David)	
UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED THE ABOVE MASSES WILL ALL BE SAID PRIVATELY!		
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).		
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.		

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 will be visiting the Sisters this coming *Monday, 22nd February 2021*, to take any gifts you have donated to them. It is very important to ensure that they continue to receive our support during the pandemic and any donations you have got for them can be either delivered to me or left with Father Christopher. Many thanks for all your help and support – *Diane Wilson*.

CHURCH MAINTENANCE: Work is almost complete on the New Church Boiler and all seems to be going well. It is hoped that we will now have a safe, modern and efficient boiler to heat the Church for many years to come. As previously mentioned the substantial cost, including VAT, will be just over **£ 43, 000. 00**. I am also extremely grateful to a number of people who have already made generous personal donations towards the cost of this work.

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 THIS Wednesday, 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.*”



CALLING ALL PARISHIONERS!!

English Martyrs' Chaplaincy Team, with some members of EM staff and parishioners from both St Francis and The Assumption are taking on the Lent Walk for Water Challenge. We will each be aiming to walk 10, 000 steps a day for 40 days to raise money for CAFOD's

work around the world. Follow the link below for sponsorship or share the link with your friends and family if you would like to join in with the challenge: <https://walk.cafod.org.uk/fundraising/english-martyrs-chaplaincy-team-and-catholic>. Check out our Social Media platforms for regular updates throughout Lent @em_chaplaincy Instagram and English Martyrs' Youtube Channel. Thank you so much for your continued support. – *Year 6 Chaplaincy Team*

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.

After careful consideration of the current situation in our city and county and, the fact that there is still no definitive advice from the Government at the moment, the feeling remains that it is still too soon to re – open our Churches for public worship. Although the infection rate has come down, it is still at a much higher rate than it was last year and the vaccination programme needs time to work through the general population. We will therefore, review the closure again on the 1st March 2021.

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 119, 000 deaths in the UK and over 4 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 continued temporary closure then, is to support the message from the NHS and Government 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.

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 First Sunday of Lent: B.

(READINGS: Genesis 9⁸⁻¹⁵; Psalm 24^{4-6, 7b-9}; 1 Peter 3¹⁸⁻²² and; Mark 1¹²⁻¹⁵)

In today’s Gospel we hear the first sermon that Jesus gives in the Gospel of Mark. And in it He immediately brings up His favourite subject: the Kingdom of God. Throughout all four Gospels, Jesus is constantly talking about the Kingdom of God. His mission in life and in death was to establish this Kingdom. He taught us to pray for this Kingdom (“Thy Kingdom come...”). He was condemned to death because He claimed to be a King. He told us that true peace of heart and happiness will come to everyone who “seeks first the Kingdom of God and its righteousness.” There is no denying that this phrase, this reality, is something front – and – centre in the mind of Our Lord. And therefore, it should be something front – and – centre in our minds too. Understanding a little bit better what the Kingdom is can help that happen.

When we pray, “Thy Kingdom come,” we mean at least three things. The first and most obvious meaning we have in mind is Christ’s second coming. As the Catechism puts it (§2818): “In the Lord’s Prayer, ‘thy kingdom come’ refers primarily to the final coming of the reign of God through Christ’s return.” Every Sunday when we pray the Creed, we profess our firm conviction that Jesus Christ, the same Jesus who was born of the Virgin, who suffered, died, was buried, rose again and ascended into heaven – that same person, who is true God and true man, will come again at the end of history. And when He comes, the period of history in which good and evil are mixed together will finally come to an end. Jesus will judge the living and the dead, take away the sin of the world and banish all evil from the new heavens and the new earth. At that point, all injustice will be corrected and all those who have lived in friendship with God will be fully healed and given the indescribable happiness that comes from seeing God face – to – face. This is what we look forward to as Catholics. And it is not just wishful thinking. Jesus has promised that it will come to pass and He has backed up His promise in many ways: through His Resurrection, through the constant guidance and expansion of His Church, the beginning, on earth, of the everlasting community of His followers, through the lives of so many saints, through the forgiveness and mercy that all of us have experienced in our own lives. The Kingdom of God, then, is in the first place the goal of our earthly pilgrimage, the object of our deepest desires.

But when we pray “Thy Kingdom come,” we have a second meaning in mind too. We are also praying for Christ to come and rule more and more fully in our hearts right now. As members of the Church, we are already citizens of Christ’s eternal Kingdom. And so, if we are good citizens, if we strive to follow Christ’s example and obey His laws, we will begin to experience true spiritual prosperity. Every good King brings prosperity and security to His faithful people and Jesus is certainly no exception. St Paul put this very clearly in his Letter to the Romans: “... the Kingdom of God does not mean eating or drinking this or that, it means righteousness and peace and joy brought by the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 14¹⁷). Righteousness is a right relationship with God. And that gives us the kind of interior peace that nothing else can give us. And when we are in a right relationship with God, we experience Jesus not as a distant ruler, but as an intimate friend, a friend who dwells deep within us, through the Holy Spirit. And since this friend dwells within us, the joy that comes from this friendship never goes away – we are never separated from Him. This explains how so many Christians through the centuries have been able to find joy and peace even in the face of terrible suffering. This is the strength, peace and joy of soul that comes when we make Jesus Christ the true Lord and King of our hearts, right here and right now.

The third thing we mean when we pray, “Thy kingdom come,” has to do with ourselves. We want Jesus to come and bring history to its glorious conclusion. We also want Him to come and bring peace and joy to our hearts. But by expressing our desire for the benefits of Christ’s rule of justice and mercy, we are also expressing our willingness to live by the law of Christian justice and mercy. This is why Jesus followed up His announcement that “The Kingdom of God is at hand” with the command: “repent and believe the Good News.” Repent: turn away from our selfish habits and inclinations, which are so destructive to ourselves, those around us and, the Church. Believe in the Good News, the Gospel: trust God enough to follow His commandments, the teachings of His Church and His voice resounding in our conscience. “Lord, teach me your paths,” today’s Psalm says. And that should be the prayer on all of our lips throughout this season of Lent. It is no coincidence that in the *Our Father* Jesus put the phrase, “thy will be done” right after the phrase, “thy kingdom come.” Jesus does not want to impose His Kingdom, like some tyrannical dictator. Instead, by inviting us to be citizens of His Kingdom, He gives us an active role in building up that Kingdom. Reaching out to those around us, serving those in need, forgiving those who hurt us, comforting those who are troubled, instructing those who are ignorant. These are the actions proper to a citizen of the Kingdom of God and when we pray for that Kingdom to come, we are telling Jesus that we are ready to take them on. This is how we freely choose to make Christ our King. As Pope Benedict XVI put it: *“It is necessary that each person freely accept the truth of the love of God. He is Love and Truth and love as well as truth never impose themselves: They knock on the door of the hearts and minds and, where they enter, bring peace and joy. This is the way God reigns; this is His plan of salvation.”*

Lent is a season the Church gives us to renew our citizenship in Christ’s Kingdom. It is a six week process of renewing our Catholic passport. Let us decide, to do our part to make that renewal go deep. If we need to jump – start our personal prayer life, let us jump – start it. If we need to cut out some selfish habits in order to give, in a self – forgetful, Christ – like way, let us do it. Christ is the Lord of life and the Lord of history. He has been present in this world ever since His Incarnation, transforming and redeeming it from within by building up His everlasting Kingdom. Let us, each one of us, make sure that He is also the Lord of our lives and our history as well.