



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



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**TIMES OF MASSES AND OTHER SERVICES: SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT: B**

**Second Week of Lent: 28<sup>th</sup> February – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2021 (Weekday Cycle Year I / Psalter Week II)**

<u>Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February:</u>	<u>Lenten 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 &amp; Margaret Dougan, Fr Theodore Gomes, Ann Harrison, Fr Peter Harvey, Andrea Hoffman, Farzin Kazem, Breda Keaney, Anne – Marie Reid, Canon Owen O’Neil, Alan Roberts, Simpson Family, Evelyn Venning and John Wilcox.</p> <p><b>HOSPITALS</b></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;	Special Intention	
<u>Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February:</u>	<u>Second Sunday of Lent: B</u>	
Mass;	Mike & Julia Wilson RIP (Diane & David)	
<u>Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March:</u>	<u>St David, Bishop, Patron of Wales (Feast)</u>	
Mass;	Intentions of Andrea Dubie (Galea)	
<u>Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
Mass;	Mrs Martha Whitmore RIP (Foundation Mass)	
<u>Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Joan Lynch RIP (Marie Strickland & Family)	
<u>Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
Mass;	Holy Souls	
<u>Friday 5<sup>th</sup> March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	James Atkin RIP (Smith)	
<u>Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
Mass;	Private Intention	
<u>Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> March:</u>	<u>Third Sunday of Lent: B</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Pro Populo; People of the Parish	
<p><b>UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED THE ABOVE MASSES WILL ALL BE SAID PRIVATELY!</b></p>		
<p><b>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).</b></p> <p><b>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.</b></p>		

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

**POOR CLARES:** The Sisters were really pleased and thankful for the donations they received from our parish. Mother Damian sends her sincere thanks to everyone who has sent donations to them and wants you to know that you are remembered every day in their prayers. They are all well and have so far managed to avoid the virus and some of the sisters have started their vaccinations. Our support is so important to them. My next visit will be 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. Thank you – *Diane Wilson*.

**CHURCH MAINTENANCE:** I am pleased to announce that the New Church Boiler is now up and running and we have some heat back in the Church. There are a few minor jobs to finish, as well as commissioning the system, but we 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 are continuing to make personal donations towards the cost of this work. (a further £250. 00 this week!).

**ANNUAL WORLD DAY OF PRAYER:** Please join us for this year's *Annual World Day of Prayer* on **Friday March 5<sup>th</sup> 2021: 10:15 am for 10:30 am** start. Because of Covid Restrictions, this year there will be no church based gathering, but a variety of ways to participate: To get the **direct link** to the event to your email, contact: [claire.milligan@beestonmethodist.church](mailto:claire.milligan@beestonmethodist.church). **You have ZOOM** on your device: use **Meeting ID: 825 2242 1977 and Passcode: 050779**. If you have **no internet connection**, telephone Lynne on 0115 925 5338 or contact your church rep, to receive numbers **to join using your land line telephone**.

**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 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. It is still not too late to join and if you would like to sign up please visit: <https://forms.gle/Qx87VMM1zfk5A6s49> or for more information email Joe Hopkins: [alpha.assumption@gmail.com](mailto: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*

**THE CHILDREN'S LITURGY WALK FOR WATER:** Some of the children from the parish are also taking part in CAFOD's Walk for Water over Lent. Taking part, we have: *Gethin, Carwyn, Fiorella, Gino, Phoebe, Lottie, Flora, Blathnaid, Dylan, Oliver, Max, Grace, Flo, Frank, Arthur, Bella* and *Niamh*. Together, we are trying to make up the 10,000 steps a day challenge, which is no mean feat! But the children have got off to a fantastic start, with many of them reaching the target and beyond. In the first few days, together they walked over half a million steps! We are going to collect their totals every Sunday at our online liturgy, so who knows what the final total will be! If you could support them by sponsoring them, they would be absolutely delighted. You can do this by going to this link: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/assumptionchildren>. Thank you in advance for all your support. – *Catherine Agius and the children and families of the Children's Liturgy Group*.

**VOCATIONS:** Are you looking for a challenge? Are you searching for God? Why not join the Vocations Team at their Zoom Café on **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:vocationsadmin@dioceseofnottingham.uk) to register your place or for any further information. They look forward to seeing you (for anyone 18 and over).

**CELEBRATION OF MASS:** Following the latest announcement by the Government about the easing of the National Lockdown I feel that we can now start to Celebrate Mass publicly once again. ***Public Mass will therefore begin again from Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.*** Needless to say that we still need to be aware of the need to follow the guidelines that we have in place and to remember to use the hand sanitisers, wear face coverings and maintain the 2 metre social distancing rule. Please remember that you will still need to book to come to Masses using the Diocesan booking system. Details of how to book for Mass can be found on the Diocesan Website by following the link: <https://massbooking.uk/> where you will first need to Sign Up (if you haven't already done so) in order to book for Mass. This is a pre – booking system and is the only way of regulating those who come to Church. ***PLEASE NOTE: that you can only book on the Mass Booking System up to 7 days ahead, so some of the Masses will not be visible yet.*** The latest time to book for a Mass will be **TWO HOURS** before. If you do not have access to or are unable to use a computer you may book for Mass, by telephone, by calling Marie Calladine for The Assumption (Tel: 07850 978788), or at Long Eaton by calling Christina Boott on 07875 625974; but I would ask that you only use this option if you are unable to book online. Mass will be available at The Assumption, Beeston on ***Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays*** and, at St Francis, Long Eaton on ***Tuesdays***, all at ***10:00 am***. The Sunday obligation continues to be suspended, so if you are unsure about coming along, do not feel under any obligation to do so; and if you or someone in your household, displays symptoms of Covid19, then please do stay at home.

## ***The Second Sunday of Lent: B.***

***(READINGS: Genesis 22<sup>1-2, 9-13, 15-18</sup>; Psalm 115<sup>10,15-19</sup>; Romans 8<sup>31-34</sup> and; Mark 9<sup>2-10</sup>)***

Today's First Reading is one of the most powerful and most shocking in the whole of scripture. It has worried the imagination of the religious world for over three thousand years. It stood, even more than the Exodus story, at the heart of the Israelite religious consciousness. It is called among the Jews the *akedah* or the binding of Isaac by Abraham in preparation for the sacrifice of his son. It is one of the most sublime expressions in all of literature of the meaning of faith.

Abraham is asked by God, for no apparent reason, to sacrifice his son to Him. His son Isaac, the child of his old age and, more than that, the bearer of the promise. For all those years and all those decades, God had promised to Abraham, "I will make you the father of many nations." Though he was an old man, though his wife was well past child – bearing age, God promised and Abraham believed. Then against all odds and against all expectations Isaac is born. Here was the son, through whom God was going to fulfil His promises to Abraham. Therefore, how utterly incredible, how utterly incomprehensible this must have been to Abraham. Abraham walked for three terrible days with his son to Mount Moriah, racked with agony and confusion. Can you imagine walking with your only son where you know the purpose of the trip and he doesn't? Isaac is probably enjoying the outing with his father. But all the time Abraham knows what is at stake. Then on Mount Moriah he hears that terrible question from his son, "Father, here are the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" How that must have torn Abraham's heart open. But the great Patriarch goes through with it. He binds his son to the altar and raises his knife to kill him. And only at the last moment is he stopped. The angel of the Lord says to him, "Do not raise your hand against the boy. Do not harm him, for now I know you fear God."

If that story doesn't bother you at the deepest level, then you have missed the point. That story is meant to get into the deepest corners of your mind. It is meant to get into the nooks and crannies of your heart. It is meant to disturb you, to confuse you and to confound you. Any attempts to rationalise this story, to understand it and to figure it out is just not going to work. Surely Abraham was guilty of attempted manslaughter. If you came upon this scene and saw a father raising a knife against his son wouldn't you try to stop him? And once you had stopped him you would want him arrested and charged with a crime. This story shows the strangeness and the religious seriousness of the Bible. How do we begin to understand it? How do we begin to make any sense of it? Is God being unpredictable; just cruelly toying with His people as a cat toys with a mouse? Does God test us in such a random way? The answer I think is quite clearly, "No."

What we have to do is situate this story in the context of the great theological fact of creation. One of the most elemental and basic affirmations about God, that we have in the Bible, is the fact that God is the Creator: THE CREATOR of all that exists. Everything that exists is from God and this means something that is given as pure gift. God does not need the world in any way. God does not benefit from the world. Rather, He gives the totality of the world as sheer grace. Whatever we have therefore, whatever we are, is, as it were, on loan from God. It exists from God and totally for the purposes of God. How long do things exist? Precisely for as long as God is pleased to allow them to exist. How long do we have what we have? Precisely as long as it pleases God to let us have them. We have talents and powers because God has deigned to give them to us. We breathe and we exist precisely because God is pleased to give us breath and life.

In many ways we would affirm that and agree that it has to be true. But part of what it means to be holy is not just to know the truth of that, but to live the truth of that. To let that truth sink into your mind and heart and allow it to determine the way you live. Ultimately, we don't have or own or control anything. Everything exists in God and for God. To be holy, to be a person of faith, is to know this and live out in a radical way this consciousness. The crux of the story in our First Reading is to be a person of faith and Abraham is our father in faith. He is the model of faith and to be a person of faith is to know this truth and to radically live out this new consciousness.

The difficulty with this is that so much of this is counter – intuitive; it is at odds with our natural inclinations or common – sense expectations. We like to be masters of our own destiny. We work hard for things and so they belong to us. They are pleasing to us and so we cling to them. We want them. We want to possess them and have them. The problem with this is that it backs us into a difficult and dangerous spiritual corner. No matter how hard we think that this is true, no matter how much we want it to be true, it just isn't. And if we don't adjust to it, life will force us to adjust to it.

All the goods that we have, all the talents that are ours, will eventually fade away. Sometimes gradually; sometimes suddenly, sometimes relatively fairly; sometimes unfairly. But no matter what, everything we have and everything we are will in time be stripped away from us. And the longer you live the truer this becomes. We reach our prime and we are able to do so many things. We have possession of many things – wealth, talent, control and power. But then you know as you move through life it is taken from you. You become weaker and your talents are stripped from you. All that you have is gradually or suddenly taken. And all of it is finally taken away in the dreadful fact of death. Ultimately, we don't control anything. All is on loan from God. To be a person of faith is to know this truth in one's mind and heart and then, actively, to co – operate with it.

Going back to Abraham. It means that one is willing to sacrifice, even what one loves the most. One is willing to offer it back to God. That is precisely what the sacrifice of Isaac is about. Abraham acknowledging in the most vivid way possible, that Isaac was and is a gift and so he is able to sacrifice him and offer him to God. What is the reward for all this? Even if I accept the fact that all things are from God and ultimately for God, what does it benefit me to surrender to it? Maybe I should resist? Yes, I know that it is true. I know that nothing lasts forever, that death finally swallows up all things. But maybe I should just shake my fist at the world and resist for as long as possible.

The great message of the Bible is “No” to that. Because your being increases in the measure that you give it back to God. Life actively surrendered to God is enhanced and multiplied. That is the law of the gift and it is affirmed in the first reading: “‘I swear by myself’ – it is the Lord who speaks – ‘because you have done this, because you have not refused me your son, your only son, I will shower blessings on you, I will make your descendants as many as the stars of heaven and the grains of sand on the seashore.’”

We shouldn't read this in an indiscriminate way, as if Abraham were just given this reward for his surrender. We should read it more as a kind principle for the spiritual life. When we let go of our lives and we give them to God, offering them for God's purpose, our lives become richer, more joyful and more abundant. God is not toying with us; He is not playing games with us. Through this story He is inviting us into a healthy spiritual position. Everything you have and everything you are ultimately does not belong to you. It belongs to God; it is on loan to you. But be willing at every opportunity to offer it for God's purposes; turning it over to Him. Then the great paradox – you will find your life much more joyful. You will find your life richer in the process. That is the great spiritual lesson of this story of Abraham and Isaac.