



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: FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT – LAETARE SUNDAY: B

Fourth Week of Lent: 14th – 20th March 2021 (Weekday Cycle Year I / Psalter Week IV)

<u>Saturday 13th March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	<p><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, Farzin Kazem, Breeda Keaney, Anne – Marie Reid, Canon Owen O’Neil, Alan Roberts, Simpson Family, Evelyn Venning and John Wilcox.</p>
Mass;	Private Intention	
<u>Sunday 14th March:</u>	<u>Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare): B</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	John Frederick Dixon RIP (Teresa)	
<u>Monday 15th March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Michael Clarke RIP (Halton)	
<u>Tuesday 16th March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
10:00 am: Mass (St Francis);	Lally & Costello Family	
<u>Wednesday 17th March:</u>	<u>St Patrick, Bishop & Patron of Ireland (Feast)</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Charlotte Langham RIP (Marie)	
<u>Thursday 18th March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	<p>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.</p>
Mass;	Special Intention	
<u>Friday 19th March:</u>	<u>St Joseph, Spouse of the BVM (Solemnity)</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Mary Goodhind RIP (Anniversary) (David)	
<u>Saturday 20th March:</u>	<u>Lenten Feria</u>	
Mass;	Holy Souls	
<u>Sunday 21st March:</u>	<u>Fifth Sunday of Lent: B</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Nora Morgans RIP (12 th Anniversary) (Harvey)	
<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). 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.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE: Please remember in your prayers to pray for the repose of the soul of *Eileen Hopkins* who died on *Wednesday 24th February 2021*. Eileen will be received into Church on Tuesday 23rd March and her Requiem Mass will take place on *Wednesday 24th March 2021 at 10:30 am* followed by Burial at Wilford Hill Cemetery. We remember her and her family at this sad time. May she rest in peace.

POOR CLARES: I will be visiting the sisters on Monday 29th March 2021 to take donations from our Parish, this is the Monday of Holy week and so it will be good that the Sisters will receive our gifts before Easter – in time for their celebrations. When I visited them three weeks ago they were all well and some of them had received their first Covid vaccinations, unfortunately since then one of the more elderly and frail Sisters has been into hospital for tests and has now tested positive for Covid – 19. The Sisters are praying Sister Marie Francesca will be well again soon and back with them at the convent. Any donations for the Sisters can be left in the box at the back of Church or given to me or Father Christopher. Thank you – *Diane Wilson*.



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: The children from the Parish are doing brilliantly in their efforts for 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, Niamh, Freddie* and *Henry*. So far they have walked just under 2 million steps! Their fundraising total stands at **£ 676. 00**. Thank you so much to everyone who has sponsored them so far. All of the donations are really spurring them on. If you would still like to sponsor them, you can do so 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*.

MISSIO: Red Boxes – There are copies of the Spring edition of Mission today at the back of the Church – please help yourself to a copy. If you have a box that needs to be emptied would you contact me on the number on the bottom of the box or leave it with Father Christopher. Many Thanks – *Diane Wilson Parish MISSIO Secretary*.

BISHOP PATRICK'S LENTEN TALKS: You are invited to join Bishop Patrick and people from across the diocese this Lent in reflecting on our relationship with God. To be a disciple of Jesus means to know and love Him, but to also know we are known and loved by Him too. Bishop Patrick will give the second of two talks on Zoom exploring God's Love for us and how we can respond to it: *Knowing the Love of God* (understanding our identity as God's sons and daughters) *Thursday 25th March 2021 at 7:00 pm*. The talk will include input from Bishop Patrick, a time for questions and answers, and small group discussion. You can register for the talk on the diocesan website: www.dioceseofnottingham.uk.

CHRISM MASS: This year the Chrism Mass will be closed to the general public due to the restrictions on numbers permitted to gather for public worship during the time of the Covid – 19 Pandemic, only members of the presbyterate have been invited to attend. The Mass will be live streamed and recorded and can be watched via the Cathedral website: stbarnabascathedral.org.uk

SACRAMENTAL CELEBRATIONS: Obviously due to the Coronavirus Pandemic we have been unable to Celebrate some of the important Sacraments in the life of the Church over the past year. Specifically, Baptisms, First Confessions and First Holy Communion and Marriage. I am hoping that Baptisms can begin again after all the restrictions are finally lifted by the Government on **21st June 2021**. Any families wishing to have their child(ren) Baptised are asked to contact me as soon as possible to arrange a date for after the 21st June. Similarly, with First Confessions and First Holy Communion, it is hoped that we can complete the programme that was begun in 2020 and that the Celebration of the First Holy Communion Mass can be held some time at the beginning of the New School Year in either September or October 2021. Any children who would have ordinarily made their First Holy Communion in 2021 (School Year 3) will now begin preparations in 2022 and we will have two Schools Years' Celebrations at the same time. Any couples who intend to marry in 2021 are also asked to contact me as soon as possible to confirm dates and make arrangements for the Marriage Preparation Course.

CELEBRATION OF MASS: *The public Celebration of Mass is available once again.* 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. ***PLEASE NOTE: If there are only two people coming from the same household please book TWO SEATS and not a whole pew as this will allow more people to attend Mass.*** 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 Fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare): B.

(READINGS: 2 Chronicles 36^{14-16, 19-23}; Psalm 136¹⁻⁶; Ephesians 2⁴⁻¹⁰ and; John 3¹⁴⁻²¹)

Today is “Laetare Sunday,” and “Laetare” means “rejoice.” Half way through our Lenten journey towards Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection, the Church invites us to rejoice. Today’s rose – coloured vestments symbolize this rejoicing. In one sense, it is strange to rejoice in the middle of this Penitential Season, when we are letting the Holy Spirit remind us of all our sins and selfish tendencies. But if we go a little deeper, it makes perfect sense. Christian joy isn’t based on merely human motives. If it were, it would be unstable and temporary – because we human beings are flawed and we fail; we betray and are betrayed. Christian joy is not based on something so undependable as that. Rather it is based on God, who loves us thoroughly and powerfully in the midst of our misery. He didn’t make us earn His love; He gave it to us as a free gift: “God so loved the world that He gave His only Son...” That gift made us into citizens of heaven, even though right now we are living here on earth.

And with that gift He also gave us a promise: our friendship with Christ will bring meaning and partial joy to our lives here on earth, but it will bring us into eternal and everlasting joy in heaven. If we accept God’s gift of friendship with Christ, what St Paul calls “grace,” then we will have “eternal life” – guaranteed! Whoever lives in friendship with Christ lives a fruitful and meaningful life here on earth. Whoever dies with that friendship still intact will enter into the eternal adventure of life with God forever in heaven. If that is not a reason for us to rejoice, then I don’t know what is.

Why did the Church choose rose – coloured vestments to symbolize our Christian joy? Why not brilliant yellow or bright orange? It is because the rose – colour captures both sides of Christian joy: the partial joy we have now and the overflowing, complete joy we will experience in heaven. Rose – coloured vestments are like the pale colour of the horizon when the dark night just begins to brighten as the sun starts to rise. Life here on earth, in the Church, is life in the dawn of salvation, but the full light of day only comes later. Some darkness still lingers; we still have our crosses to bear as we journey with patience and faith towards our heavenly homeland. But we know we are on the right road when we follow Christ and that God will guide and strengthen us, and so we can still rejoice.

This was also the experience of ancient Israelites during their exile in Babylon, which we heard about in the First Reading. That experience is a pattern of human history as a whole. Ancient Israel had been unfaithful to their friendship with God and so they were conquered by their enemies, enslaved and taken into exile. In the same way, the human family was unfaithful to God in the Garden of Eden and conquered by our enemy, the devil, who became the ruler of this fallen world. But while the ancient Jews were in exile, God promised through His prophets that He would come and rescue them. After 70 years of exile, the Persian King Cyrus released the Jews to go back and rebuild their Temple; it was the fulfilment of that promise. In the same way, God promised to send a Saviour to the human race, who would restore our friendship with God, freeing us from slavery to sin, ignorance and hopelessness and, leading us to the heavenly Jerusalem. His name is Jesus.

When we let this Christian joy penetrate our hearts, we find the strength we need to resist temptation and to carry our crosses. This is the experience of all the saints and martyrs. One of the great examples of Christian joy and courage is that of the teenage virgin and martyr, St Agnes, who died around the year 304 AD. She was from a wealthy, aristocratic Roman family and, she was very beautiful. All the young noblemen were vying for her hand in marriage, but she informed them that she had already consecrated her heart and her virginity to a heavenly husband, Jesus. At first, they laughed at her, but when she persisted they became angry. Knowing she was a Christian, which was a capital offence, since Christians wouldn't sacrifice to the Roman gods, they denounced her to the governor. They were hoping that arrest and interrogation would weaken her resolve. They were wrong. At first, she resisted the governor's flattery, reiterating that she could have no spouse but Jesus Christ. Then she resisted the governor's threats. Then she stood firm when they lit fires and wheeled out various instruments of torture for her inspection. The governor tried everything he could think of, but the teenage Christian was too strong for him – she refused to be unfaithful to Christ, no matter the cost. Finally, egged on by an infuriated mob, the frustrated governor had her executed. They say that the executioner was inexperienced and St Agnes had to help guide the sword herself. Eyewitnesses said later that she went to her execution more joyfully than most young women go to their weddings. So, Christian joy isn't built on the shaky foundations of worldly circumstances; it is rooted in Christ, whose love for us is stronger than evil and even stronger than death.

Jesus is leading us to the heavenly Jerusalem, just as King Cyrus in today's First Reading led the Jews back to their earthly Jerusalem – and this is the source of our joy. But not all the Jews returned to their homeland, even when they could, because not all of them had believed the prophets, as today's Psalm implies. Many of them “forgot about Jerusalem” and began placing their hopes in the wealth, power and pleasures of Babylon. After all, it seemed impossible to restore Jerusalem. It was much easier and more reasonable to accept the daily realities of life in a pagan culture, to compromise with it, to stop waiting for God to fulfil His promises, to take things into their own hands. Those who chose this path had some success and pleasure in life, but they lost their true identity; they lost their opportunity to experience the full, redeeming power of God's love.

We are daily tempted to do the same thing; to become impatient with God and seek our happiness outside of friendship with Christ, forgetting about the heavenly Jerusalem. This is why today's Gospel says that in order to experience everlasting life we have to “believe in” Jesus. We who are exiled in a fallen world have to trust God and follow His commands; even though at times it would be easier to live like a Babylonian pagan, like everyone else around us. We do that by living as Christ would have us live: putting our time, talents and treasure at the service of God and our neighbours, no matter the cost.

This is the real source of self – esteem. Psychologists tell us that healthy self – esteem is critical for interior peace, self – confidence and emotional maturity. But they also say that most of us have self – esteem problems. We live in a fallen world, in exile from our true homeland of heaven and we have all experienced rejection, betrayal and abuse of one kind or another. Those people who were supposed to teach us what it is like to be valued and loved have sometimes failed us. Some of us have reacted by trying to build up our own self – esteem through our own achievements: being more beautiful than other people, winning more awards, going to the right college, getting the right job, earning the right promotion, making the right amount of money.....We look to these things to prove that we are valuable and that we matter. But our own achievements are as flimsy and undependable as other people's opinions. There is always someone else who achieves more and so we can never stop feeling inferior. The only true, stable and lasting source of self – esteem is God, Our Lord and Saviour, “who loved us and gave Himself for us.” What a relief! We don't have to make ourselves valuable; we are already valuable, eternally valuable and the Crucifix proves it. This is why in the middle of Lent the Church invites us to rejoice. The rose – coloured vestments symbolize Christian joy, the deepest self – esteem that we can ever experience, because it is based on the solid rock of God's unfailing love, which is bigger than our sin, our misery and our weakness. As St Peter Chrysologus put it long ago: “Why do you have so low an opinion of yourself, when you are so precious to God? Why do you so dishonour yourself when you are so honoured by God?”