



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: THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER: B

Third Week of Eastertide: 18th – 24th April 2021 (Weekday Cycle Year I / Psalter Week III)

Saturday 17th April:	<u>Easter 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, Farzin Kazem, Breeda Keaney, Anne – Marie Reid, Canon Owen O’Neil, Alan Roberts, Simpson Family, Evelyn Venning and John Wilcox.</p>
Mass;	Holy Souls	
Sunday 18th April:	<u>Third Sunday of Easter</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Marianne Walton RIP (Powell)	
Monday 19th April:	<u>Easter Feria</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	George Cree RIP (D & D Wilson)	
Tuesday 20th April:	<u>Easter Feria</u>	
10:00 am: Mass (St Francis);	Daphne Mc Leond RIP (Goodhind)	
Wednesday 21st April:	<u>Easter Feria</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Gerry Curran RIP (Breame)	
Thursday 22nd April:	<u>Easter Feria</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;	Holy Souls	
Friday 23rd April:	<u>St George, Martyr, Patron of England (Solemnity)</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Intentions of Dr Liz Brown (Cookson)	
Saturday 24th April:	<u>Easter Feria</u>	
Mass;	Pro Populo; People of the Parish	
Sunday 25th April:	<u>Fourth Sunday of Easter</u>	
10:00 am: Mass;	Jon Herbert RIP (Anniversary)	
<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: Many thanks to everyone who gave donations for the Sisters this month – my car was full and it was good to be taking them so many extra treats for their Easter celebrations. The Sisters send their sincere thanks to you all and remember our Parish every day in their prayers. The next visit will be on *26th April 2021. – Diane Wilson.*

MISSIO – RED BOX 2020: In 2020 our Parish raised **£ 991. 85** through our Red Boxes and donations to MISSIO and the Mill Hill Missionaries. Thank you! Communities around the world are so grateful that people here in Beeston are supporting them through prayer and our generous donations. The missionaries, and the communities they serve, are living in such difficult circumstances, made even harder by COVID – 19. They have asked us to pass on their thanks, and tell us that they pray for us all. Thank you everyone and if you would like to have a Red Box or have one that needs to be emptied please let me know. – *Diane Wilson Parish MISSIO Secretary.*

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 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.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS, SUNDAY 25th APRIL 2021 – GOOD SHEPHERD SUNDAY: This Sunday is our yearly opportunity to reflect on the Vocations to Priesthood and Religious Life. Also, we can contribute to the Clergy Formation Fund which helps train our future priests and contributes to our priests continuing formation. Please pray for the priests who serve you and encourage the young men [and may be the unattached young at heart!] to either consider the call to Priesthood for themselves or encourage among their peers those whom they think would make good priests.

'A FATHER'S HEART' – A PODCAST FOR CATHOLIC DADS: The Diocese of Nottingham has launched a new Podcast to celebrate the Year of St Joseph. A Father's Heart takes its name from *Patris Corde* (Pope Francis' letter that launched this special year). This letter is split into 7 sections, each highlighting a different characteristic of St Joseph's fatherhood. Each month the podcast will pick a section for 2 dads, from around the Diocese, to reflect on and discuss. Find out how to listen (and subscribe) by going to: www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/podcasts.

'BEING A MISSIONARY DISCIPLE': After the great success of Bishop Patrick's Lent Talks on Discipleship, the Formation for Mission Team are offering two talks on Zoom in May on 'Being a Missionary Disciple.' The first talk '*The Ascension & the Great Commission*' will be given by Canon Christopher Thomas (General Secretary of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales) on **Thursday 13th May 2021 at 7:00 pm**. This talk will explore the importance of the Ascension and how we can live Jesus final instructions to us. The second talk '*Pentecost & Mission*' will be given by Pippa Baker (A Catholic Missionary, Speaker & Musician) on **Wednesday 19th May 2021 at 7:00 pm**. This talk will examine the significance of Pentecost for us and how the Holy Spirit equips us for mission in our everyday lives. To register visit: www.dioceseofnottingham.uk.

'HELPING PEOPLE ENCOUNTER JESUS': The Alpha Course is a highly successful way for people and parishes to help others encounter Jesus. Cardinal Raniero Cantalamessa (Preacher to Popes St John Paul II, Benedict XVI & Francis) has said about it: 'One of the advantages of Alpha is that it focuses on Kerygma [the Good News the Jesus desires on friendship]...faith in itself blossoms only by hearing the Kerygma.' The Diocese of Nottingham has partnered with the Alpha in a Catholic Context team to deliver training on how to run Alpha to empower you to help others encounter (or reencounter) Jesus. Visit: https://www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/information/diocesan-commissions/01_commission-adult-formation to register for the training dates on 13th & 20th April 2021.

LEAD LAY CHAPLAIN REQUIRED: There are vacancies for two Lead Lay Chaplains within the Diocese of Nottingham, at the St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Multi Academy Trust and also the St Ralph Sherwin Catholic Multi Academy Trust. Further details are available at www.stl-cmat.org.uk/vacancies or www.srscmat.co.uk/vacancies. Closing date: **4th May 2021**.

DAY OF PRAYER FOR SURVIVORS OF ABUSE: The Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM) has highlighted the importance of prayer and suggested to Pope Francis that the worldwide Catholic Church should join together in a day of prayer. The Holy Father has welcomed this initiative. From 2021, in response to a request from the, "*Let's Be Honest*" working group, the Bishops have chosen Tuesday of the 5th Week of Easter as the Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors of Abuse — **4th May 2021**. There were two connected reasons for moving the Day of Prayer from Lent to Easter: this is not a penitential day for the failure of the Church and others to respond to the scourge of abuse but a day of prayer for those who have been abused in a season of hope and new life.

THE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION, "FELLOWSHIP AND AID TO THE CHRISTIANS OF THE EAST" (FACE): is hosting a webinar with *His Beatitude Louis Raphaël Cardinal Sako* Patriarch of Babylon of the Chaldeans, and head of the Chaldean Catholic Church Patron of FACE on the future of Christianity in the Middle East **On Saturday 24th April 2021 at 10:00 am (BST) via Zoom**. His Beatitude Cardinal Sako, who hosted the recent apostolic visit of Pope Francis to Iraq, faces the challenge of leading an Eastern Church in a highly charged and often changing situation, which has witnessed the mass exodus of Eastern Christians from their homelands where Christianity was first spread. It is necessary to register in advance. Places will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. Please register by using the link below: www.cardinalsako.eventbrite.co.uk.

LET US DREAM – EASTERTIDE REFLECTIONS: The Spirituality Committee of the Bishops' Conference has produced a series of reflections based on Pope Francis' book, "*Let us Dream*" for individual and parish use throughout the Easter Season. Copies are available at the back of church and a PDF version on the Parish website.

THE NOTTINGHAM DIOCESAN CATHOLIC YOUTH SERVICE is looking for a highly skilled and ideally qualified Youth Worker (or equivalent) to work as part of the leadership team of NDCYS, be responsible for the leadership, supervision and management of the Volunteer Team and to lead young people in retreat programmes at The Briars. Applications by Friday 30th April 2021. Programme Leader Band 4, £21, 748 - £24, 491, Full – Time 37.5 hours a week equivalent, week on / week off, to begin on 7th June 2021 (if possible). Job description available at: <https://ndcys.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=31e08e04fed7cf68862fb8060&id=8fbd731f23&e=b5a5f5f3c6>. To request an application pack: <mailto:director@ndcys.com>

Third Sunday of Easter: B.

(**READINGS:** *Acts 3^{13-15, 17-19}; Psalm 4^{2, 4, 7, 9}; 1 John 2¹⁻⁵ and; Luke 24³⁵⁻⁴⁸*)

When St John wrote his First Letter, part of which we heard in our Second Reading today, he was an old man. Of the twelve Apostles, he had been the youngest. Most biblical scholars estimate that he was about 16 – years – old when he met Jesus. And he didn't die until he was over 100 – years – old, after the year 100 AD. During the first century of the Church, he wrote the Fourth Gospel, the Book of the Apocalypse, also known as the Book of Revelation and three New Testament Letters. Most historians agree that he spent the last part of his life as the Bishop of Ephesus, a city in what would be today western Turkey. In ancient times, Ephesus was a major commercial city linking the eastern and western Mediterranean; being Bishop of Ephesus back then was like being bishop of present – day London or Paris.

In general, St John's writings are full of poetic imagery and blinding theological elaborations. But the section we have in today's reading is very straightforward. St John reminds us that, because Jesus not only died for our sins, but also – and this is the important thing, the thing we emphasize during this Easter season – rose from the dead, He is our "Advocate with the Father." What exactly did he mean by the word "advocate?" Because if we understand that, we will also understand why what he said is so important for us today.

In modern English, we tend to use the word advocate in a legal sense. An advocate is a lawyer, someone who comes to our defence in a court of law. And it had that meaning in the ancient world too, but it wasn't limited to that meaning. The Greek word was "*parakletos*," from where we get the word paraclete, which is the title given to the Holy Spirit. It came from a verb that meant to call someone to your side to help you or counsel you. So if a king was facing rebellion or attack, he would "call to his side" his wisest and most respected advisors – they became his advocates. If a man was in trouble in any way, he would "call in" someone who was trustworthy, strong, wise and faithful, so that his troubles wouldn't destroy him or so that he would at least receive comfort and encouragement in the midst of his pain and hardship.

And so, the word "*parakletos*" or "*advocate*," in the biblical sense, has been defined as "one who lends his presence to his friends." St John says in today's Reading that Jesus is our advocate. By His Passion and Death, He proved that He is "on our side," in the sense that He was willing to take the punishment for our sins upon Himself. He was willing to suffer in our place and forgive us for our rebellions – both big and small – against Him and His Kingdom. Then, through the Resurrection and the Eucharist, He proved that He is STILL on our side, that He is alive forever to be our counsellor, defender and comforter. Jesus truly is the "one who lends His presence to His friends," a presence both powerful and enlightening, both merciful and strengthening. That is what the word advocate means. But why is it so important for us to understand this? Probably for two reasons.

First, we need Christ to be our advocate because we are sinners. We admit this publicly at the beginning of every Mass. We all have deep selfish tendencies in our hearts – tendencies towards greed, lust, envy, discouragement, impatience, anger, laziness, etc. And when we fall into temptation, letting these tendencies have their way, we damage our friendship with God and the world around us; we violate God's wise law that leads to happiness. And so, through our sins and sinful tendencies, we are constantly separating ourselves from God, distancing ourselves from Him. But Jesus, although He was tempted in every way that we are, never sinned. And so, when we find ourselves cut off from God, Jesus fills the gap. He comes to reunite us, to restore our friendship with God, to heal our wounds, to bridge the gap and repair the damage, to bring peace of mind to our anxious conscience.

St Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, a Carmelite nun and mystic who lived in Italy in the sixteenth century, was once praying in the convent chapel. At the same time, in the same chapel, another sister was going to confession. St Mary glanced over to the confessional and was given a vision of what was happening there, spiritually. She saw an angel letting drops of Christ's blood fall from a chalice onto the nun as she knelt confessing her sins. The blood had scarcely touched her and suddenly she began to shine like the sun. St Mary Magdalen almost fainted, the sight was so beautiful. Immediately, she got up from the pew and hurried to the confessional herself, praying in a quiet voice, "Sprinkle me, too!" But Mary Magdalene de Pazzi is not a saint because she received ecstasies and graces from God. Many have received visions, ecstasies and miracles without becoming holy. She is a saint because of her response to those gifts, which involved a lifelong struggle to show love and gratitude to the God who gave her those graces. Christ is our advocate with the Father; washed in His blood, our sins and sinful tendencies have no power to separate us from the grace of God. As St John put it in the Second Reading: "He (Jesus) is the sacrifice that takes our sins away, and not only ours, but the whole world's."

The second reason we need Christ to be our advocate is because we are constantly being tempted. At the end of today's Second Reading, St John explains that true followers of Christ don't just believe in the Lord, but they also follow Him. For Christians, faith and obedience always go together: "We can be sure that we know God only by keeping his commandments." The old pagan religions and mystery cults, which were so popular in the Ancient Roman Empire, didn't make this connection. For those non-Christian religions, right and wrong were relative and interchangeable. What mattered were religious rituals that stirred up divine feelings. Popular culture in our world it would seem is going in that same direction.

But our Catholic faith goes much deeper. We do have beautiful rituals and traditions and often God does grant us powerful feelings of His presence and His goodness. But our friendship with Christ is not based solely upon those feelings; it is based on loyalty and love. He was so loyal to us that He died on a Cross instead of giving up on us. And now He invites us to be loyal to Him, to follow His commandments and the teachings of His Church. And he knows that it is not easy, so He Himself gives us His strength – through prayer, through the Sacrament of Confession and through the Eucharist. We are like sailors on the ship of the Church and Christ is our captain. If we truly believe in Him, we will follow His orders. And yet, when the journey is hard, we are tempted to mutiny or to abandon ship. That is when we need to be reminded of His goodness and wisdom; we need to be strengthened to persevere and encouraged to weather the storm – basically we need an advocate. And we have one – all we have to do is look at the Crucifix.

Jesus Christ wants to be our advocate, our protector, our companion, our guide and our counsellor, lending His presence to our lives to every moment of our lives. He died to prove how much He loved us and, He rose to prove how powerful His help can be. And we are weak and needy sinners; we are tempted every day to follow our own selfish tendencies and leave Him out. Will we let Him be our advocate? Will we turn to Him each morning and each evening, thanking Him for His blessings and drawing our strength from the burning love of His merciful heart? He wants us to. And I think all of us want to as well. Let us thank Christ from the bottom of our hearts for all His gifts; let us ask Him to teach us how to let Him be our Advocate, because nothing would please Him more.