

**BAPTISMS IN THE PARISH:** If you have a child due for Baptism please let me know as soon as possible. To avoid any disappointment with dates contact the Presbytery to book your date. If you are first-time parents, you need to contact Sharon Chalk, who will organise a Baptismal Preparation of two sessions, and then I will come and visit you in your homes. Please don't forget to collect your Baptismal Information Form.



**PARISH WEEKLY OFFERTORY:** At present the Weekly income is not meeting the weekly outgoing! Please do consider your weekly offering to God and the Church, if you're in a position to increase it, this would be gratefully received. Also during the summer holidays there is always a noticeable drop in the offertory; please try to keep your Weekly Offertory Envelopes up to date. As you all know utilities are set to rise over the summer. If it wasn't for the Gift Aid returned tax, we would certainly be running at a deficit! If you Gift Aid we are able to claim back 25pence in the pound, which is a considerable amount at the end of the year. We are currently looking at the budget to see where we can save on our funds!

**BOOKING MASSES:** Has been a custom in the Catholic Church for many centuries! Parishioners can book masses in advance for any occasion. Most commonly we remember our deceased loved ones on anniversaries etc. But masses can be booked for Special Intentions, those who have recently died, Birthdays, Anniversaries, when someone is sick, wedding anniversaries, and many other occasions. If you wish to book a mass there are plenty of openings available in the Mass Book Calendar. Just complete the Mass Intention envelope in the porch of the church and enclose you mass offering. For anniversary masses, could I recommend that you put your Intention in several months in advance to avoid any disappointment with a date already taken.



**IN CASES OF EMERGENCY:** Tuesday is usually Fr. John's Day Off. In cases of emergency please call one of the local parishes, either in Epping – Tel: 01992 572516, or the St. Thomas of Canterbury Friary at Woodford Green – Tel: 020 8504 1688. This would also apply if Fr. John is away for a few days break or on Retreat. All the local funeral directors have a contact number for Fr. John if a funeral needs to be arranged in his absence.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Twenty-Eighth Sunday of the Year 2018

'Come follow me!' The rich young man wanted to love God and inherit eternal life. His genuine efforts delighted Jesus. Nonetheless, Jesus saw that he was relying on his own efforts to gain salvation. By inviting him to see all his goods, Jesus opened up a choice to him. Would he acknowledge his insufficiency and turn to Jesus for the grace to move forward, or would he turn away defeated and despairing?

The Lord wants us to come to him for salvation: to arrive at the point where we discover our weakness and frailty and then turn to him for grace, strength and life. It is essential that we discover this moment in our lives at least once or, as is more likely, again and again. Do we depend on ourselves or on God? The heart of 'being saved' is acknowledging our need and depending on God. We cannot taste the goodness of the Lord if we rely only on ourselves.



Jesus challenged the man to a decision. Similarly, Jesus challenges us to make wise and godly choices. The choice is genuinely ours, as the young man's choice was his. He could not make the decision to follow Jesus because the sacrifice of all his possessions seemed too great to him.

We sometimes fail to make the choices demanded of us. The sacrifices involved seem too much for us. For this reason Jesus promises us that giving up everything for his sake will be rewarded a hundredfold. The reward far outweighs the cost. He asks us to believe his promise and act upon it.

When we are following Jesus everything else in our lives loses importance: 'I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing



Christ Jesus my Lord'. The young man clung to the security of his possessions because he could put his trust in Jesus' love for him. Only by experiencing Jesus' love shall we be able to believe his promises and act upon them without counting the cost. Therefore we need to pray persistently to grow in our knowledge of his love for us. This is the key to following Jesus. Then not lacking one thing, we shall have treasure in heaven.

Dear Friends in Christ,

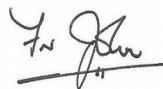
28<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year

**FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES** – I would like to thank most sincerely all of our parishioners who attended the very important meeting last Monday; well over 60 parishioners came and there were several apologies. This was an incredible turnout! Obviously the future of the church is holily dependent on her members, and as Mark Poulter shared with us, this programme is designed to help all people in our parish to come to a deeper and living relationship with the Lord Jesus. In this age of Secularism and Individualism, we need to focus our attention on the person of Jesus Christ.

*A disciple is one who follows in the footsteps of Jesus, but many people do not know Christ. How can we become 'Intentional' if we do not know, or understand who we are following? This very successful programme of 'Forming Intentional Disciples', which has effectively turned around many parishes in the United States and England, will hopefully be the means whereby we, as a parish community, can discover the real beauty of being a Catholic Christian. For anything that is important in life, we have to give time and commitment. Yes, there are fewer priests, our congregations are diminishing, many people are not returning to the practice of their faith. But for us who want to know Jesus Christ, this is our opportunity to make a true, genuine and intentional commitment to the Lord. Jesus said: "I came that you may have life, and live it to the full."*

*My sincere thanks to Maureen Perry & Mark Poulter who are our Stewards of the Gospel; they will help us with this Programme of Forming Intentional Disciples. Mark gave us the presentation last Monday, inviting us to join this programme. Yes it will demand a certain commitment, but with something as serious as our faith, several Mondays will hopefully not be too much of a sacrifice. The Programme is based on Sherry Weddel's book of the same name. Many of you already have the book; it can be obtained from Amazon. You need to read the first two chapters for our session on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> October at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall. Also grateful thanks to those who have volunteered to be facilitators in our group work. Even if you were not present at last week's meeting, you're very welcome to join us, and bring a friend. It would be wonderful if someone from each household be represented in our parish.*

May God Bless You All



**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE ROMAN CATHOLIC FAITH?** The RCIA Programme will continue next Thursday at 8.00pm in the Presbytery. Session 6 –

**JOURNEY INTO FAITH**

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME**

**2018/2019:** The next session will take place on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October at 10.00am in the Parish hall. The next Parents' Meeting will take place on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October at 8.00pm Please keep all the children and the families in your prayers as they prepare for the Sacramental Programme. The Parents' Meetings are part of the Programme and are not optional. I do encourage all the parents of our First Communicants to attend some of the Sunday sessions with the Children.



**SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2019:** My grateful thanks to all the parents who attended with applications for Secondary School places for September 2019. It was good to be able to converse with you about the education of your child. I have now completed the signing process for Secondary Schools. I will personally deliver the Certificates of Catholic Practice to Trinity Catholic High School this week, which lodges your application with the School. Davenant Foundation School follow a different applications procedure. I will need a copy of the SIF form that you completed online; they will send a list of applicants next months, and I need the SIF form you submitted to ensure that there is parity in the information that I have to complete on their request endorsement forms. SIF forms have to be lodged at Davenant by 19<sup>th</sup> October. You have until the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018 to complete the online application with Essex County. Applications for Reception places will not commence until November.

**CANONISATION OF:** Pope Paul VI & Archbishop Oscar Romero will take place on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October in St. Peter's Square. Two outstanding giants of the faith in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century! Pope Paul VI led the Church through the Second Vatican Council. Until his assassination by right-wing gunmen, Archbishop Oscar Romero (1917-1980) of San Salvador spoke out courageously in defence of human rights and social justice in strife-torn El Salvador. May our two new Saints of the Church continue to be an inspiration to Catholics all over the world.

### **OCTOBER – THE MOTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY:**

May I encourage all of our families to pray at least a decade of the Rosary every day! This is not a lot to ask; parents, it's your opportunity to introduce and teach your children this beautiful ancient prayer. There are leaflets available in the Repository, and also you can look online, where there is a wealth of information and instruction on how to pray the rosary. This beautiful devotion to Our Bless Lady was given to the Church by St. Dominic (AD 1214) back in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and has certainly been the source of great faith in the Church for nearly nine hundred years.



At the end of each of our weekday masses we will pray a decade of the Rosary, and always on a Saturday morning the whole rosary is prayed after the 10.00am Mass. Pope Francis has advocated that everyone should pray the rosary daily, and in addition to the Rosary pray the 'Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel' & the 'Sub tuum Praesidium' – which is the most ancient prayer to Our Blessed Lady. The famous Fr. Peyton said: "The family that pray together, stay together." Please keep your rosary close to you, in your pocket, or ladies in your handbags.

**NEW STAIR-LIFT:** You may have noticed that the New Stir Lift was fitted last week, and is now in use for those choir members who need assistance in getting to the Choir Loft. I would like to take this public opportunity of thanking our choir Director Sue Farrow for mater minding the whole project, and giving of her time and energy in her 12 hours Sponsored Organ Playing. Your response was absolutely incredible; we did not actually anticipate the lift being installed until Christmas, but we are three months ahead of schedule. A big thank you to everyone who donated so generously; and for the enthusiasm behind the project! Special thanks to the choir members who assisted in the fund-raising. Sue said it was truly wonderful last weekend to have all the members present in the choir loft. Fr. John will bless the new Stair-lift of Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October after the 11.00am Mass

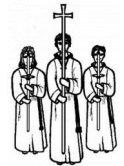
**THE CHOIR:** Is growing from strength to strength. If you are interested in joining please see Sue Farrow. Rehearsals take place twice a week, Wednesday evenings at 7.00pm and Saturday morning at 11.00am. A lot of new music is being learned, motets, new mass settings, we are now preparing for Advent and Christmas.



**PARISH GIFT AID:** "Dear fellow parishioners, I have taken over running the Parish Gift Aid Scheme following Brian Carter's retirement after 40 years' service – wow! I'm writing to introduce myself and to let you know that I'm available for any enquiries relating to the Gift Aid Scheme. In a nutshell, the scheme increases the value of offertory donations made by basic rate tax payers by 25p per £1 donated, i.e. a £2 donation would become £2.50. All I need from you is 30 seconds to complete a form with your name and address and I will provide you with envelopes which you'll then use to submit your donations in the usual way during weekly mass. It's really as simple as that! Gift Aid Forms are available in the porch of the church in a green box on one of the hymn trolleys. Please, please do consider joining the scheme. With the ever increasing financial burden placed upon the parish, every penny really does count and even the smallest donations can make a big difference. I am contactable on 07799 475970 or [mjm70@hotmail.com](mailto:mjm70@hotmail.com) Thank you!" / Maria Mosquera.



**NEW ALTAR SERVERS:** This is an invitation to all the children of our parish, to consider becoming an Altar Server in the Parish. This wonderful service to God and the Church is open to any boy or girl who would like to do something special for God in Parish Community. We will train you when you start. Please see Fr. John or David Knott our Parish MC.



**PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES:** by air for the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception: 4 Nights, 4<sup>th</sup> – evening of 8<sup>th</sup> December 2018. £545 p.p. (twin/double), £645 p.p. (single room) includes return flights, 4 nights' full board accom. at the Hotel Saint-Sauveur (inc. wine with meals), airport transfers from Ilford in UK & in France, all Mass offerings and procession candles (i.e., no extra/hidden costs) and a led retreat with Fr Andrew Headon. For a booking form / more information, please contact Siobhan at Parker Travel Ltd: 07932 634589; [siobhan@parker-travel.com](mailto:siobhan@parker-travel.com)

**ST. JOHN FISHER SCHOOL ADMISSIONS 2019:** I would like to encourage all of our parents of children who will be eligible for Reception School places next September 2019 to seriously consider your choice of schools over the next few months. We have an excellent Roman Catholic School in the Parish, which is going from strength to strength. The choice of your child's Infant & Primary education is extremely important, and I would say that St John Fisher has a lot to offer your child.

## PARISH BAZAAR – SATURDAY 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018

11.00am - 3.00pm



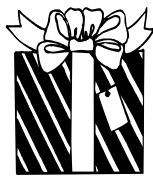
**ANNUAL PARISH BAZAAR:** Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December, 11am – 3pm. As you know, the Annual Bazaar tends to be the only major fund-raising event that we have throughout the year. Its success is always dependent upon your generosity. So once again I appeal to your

generosity for gifts and items for the Bazaar. This Weekend we will place the Bazaar Bin at the back of the Church; you can place your gifts and items in the box, or you can drop off anything at the Presbytery during the week. **A BAZAAR IS NOT A JUMBLE SALE**, please ensure that your gifts and items are worthy of sale! New items are preferable: e.g. Toiletries, fancy goods, bric-a-brac, cuddly toys, new toys, Jams & Preserves, Sweets, (Boxes of Chocolates, Christmas Selection boxes, Tins of Sweets, Christmas Sweets, Candy Canes

**BOTTLE STALL:** Is always one of the most popular stalls at the Bazaar. We are appealing for Bottles of Wine and Spirits. We are aiming for 300, in that way we can make the bottle stall much bigger this year. If you have bottles of Wine and Spirits, you can drop them off at the presbytery at any time. Please be generous!



**Suggestions for Grand Draw Prizes:** If anyone could donate any of the Money Prizes this would be helpful? 1<sup>st</sup> Prize £200; 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize £100; 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize £50; Flat Screen Colour Television; I Pad; I Pod; Wii Game; Kindle, X Box games; DVD Player; CD Player; Theatre Vouchers; Crate of Wine; Tickets for Dinner at Restaurants; Theatre Tickets; Hairdressing & Beauty vouchers; Marks & Spencer Christmas Hamper, and various other hampers and many more prizes. If you can help with any of these prizes we would be most grateful.



**FR. JOHN'S STALL:** Every year I try to enter into the full spirit of the Parish Bazaar; I run a stall with really excellent prizes. They are all donated by your good selves! I appeal to the whole parish community for really good quality gifts for my stall. Thanking you all in anticipation of your generosity! Flat Screen Television is a must! A Christmas Hamper; I Pad or I Pod; Kindle; Crate of Wine; Theatre Tickets; CD Music Player; X Box; Restaurant Vouchers, Theatre Vouchers and any other luxury goods that you might think worthy of a special raffle. Thanking you in anticipation!

**TOILETRIES:** Are always popular at a Parish Bazaar, if you have any toiletries can you let us have them as soon as possible. Please ensure that all toiletries are unopened, and unused. Please try to make a very special effort in even providing one item for the Toiletries Stall. Thank you!



**SMALL CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR SANTA'S GROTTTO:** If you see any small toys or gifts for children, that you might feel would be good for Santa's Grotto, please also think of the Bazaar. Every little helps. "If everyone does a little, a lot gets done!"

**HELPERS ARE NEEDED THIS YEAR:** We need help in sorting out the gifts that are donated on a weekly basis; also transporting the gifts and items to the presbytery or the storage room at the back of the parish hall. If you can help in the process we would be most grateful. Sadly these tasks are usually just left for the few, the more help we have the more we can get done! If you can help please speak to Fr. John. Thanking you in anticipation.



**MATCHED GIVING: COULD WE MAKE A SPECIAL APPEAL THIS YEAR FOR ADDITIONAL MATCHED GIVING?** Can anyone help again this year with Matched Giving from your Firm or Bank? Many companies do employ a Matched Giving facility, all you need to do is ask your place of employment; this truly would be of great benefit to us. If you work at the bazaar on a particular stall, whatever is raised is matched by the company. Please look in to it!

**GRAND DRAW MONEY PRIZES:** If there are any parishioners who would be able to donate this year's Grand Draw Money Prizes, I would be most grateful, Or any other Money donations are always gratefully accepted. If you use the Parish Gift Aid Scheme, these prizes and money donations can be Gift Aided, all we need is your name or envelope number. Thank you!



**ARE THERE ANY NEW INITIATIVES FOR OUR BAZAAR THIS YEAR?** If you have any suggestions for new initiatives at the Bazaar this year, please see Kelsey Howard, Joanne Jiggins or Fr. John. New suggestions are always welcome!

**BAZAAR BOXES ARE IN THE PORCH FOR YOUR ITEMS AND GIFTS**

**PLEASE BE GENEROUS IN YOUR GIVING**



**‘CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE’ DEFINITION:** Means a certificate by the family’s parish priest (or the priest in charge of the Church where the family attend Mass) in the form laid down by the Bishops’ Conference of England & Wales. It will be issued if the priest is satisfied that at least one Catholic parent or carer (along with the child, if he or she is seven years or over) have (except when it was impossible to do so) attended Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation for at least 5 years (or, in the case of a child, since the age of seven, if shorter). It will be issued when the practice has been continuous since being received into the Church if that occurred less than five years ago. It is expected that most Certificates will be issued on the basis of attendance. A Certificate may also be issued by the priest when attendance is interrupted by exceptional circumstance which excuse from the obligation to attend on that occasion or occasions. A strict interpretation will be used by all priests.

### **SCHOOL ADMISSIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2019**

*Once again it is that time of year when parents of Year 6 children are looking at schools for their children to begin their secondary Education in 2019. Please remember that if you are preparing to make an application*

*to either Trinity Catholic High School or Davenant Foundation School, there are very strict Admissions Criteria. Trinity requires a Certificate of Catholic Practice (CCP) & Davenant a Supplementary Information Form (SIF) which has to be signed by your priest, stating that you are a practicing Roman Catholic (which means weekly practice of your faith by participating in the Eucharistic Celebration at Mass). This year you have to make your personal application to Essex County on line; these applications have to be lodged by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2018*

*I will be meeting with parents the week commencing Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October - concluding Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October; by this time School visits should be completed. You will need completed CCP & SIF forms, (These can be downloaded respectively from the Brentwood Diocesan Website – Educations Dept, click admissions, and you will find the CCP form. Also Davenant Website for SIF forms. Fr. John will need a completed copy of this form if you’re applying to Davenant) plus a copy of your child’s Baptismal Certificate.*

**ST. ALBAN’S CATHOLIC ACADEMY:** in conjunction with other initial teacher training providers, are hosting a "Train to Teach" event for Epping Forest and Harlow district. We are seeking to encourage Catholic graduates into the wonderful vocation of teaching. Please join us at Harlow Study Centre, Netteswellbury Farm, Harlow CM18 6BW October 13th 2018, 1pm – 6pm You will find out everything you need to know about training to be a teacher You’ll get the chance to:

- meet representatives from schools that deliver teacher training in Epping Forest and Harlow
- speak to teaching experts to receive one-to-one advice on your training options
- receive personalised advice on your UCAS application – and advice on your personal statement (please bring it with you)
- receive advice about funding
- attend presentations on primary and secondary teacher training

This event will operate on a drop-in basis so you can arrive and leave at any time.

For further information, Please contact Anne-Marie Black

Email: [black@ourladyoffatimatrust.essex.sch.uk](mailto:black@ourladyoffatimatrust.essex.sch.uk) Phone: 01279 423499

### **FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES (FID) PROGRAMME**

This week our parish is launching an exciting new programme based on Sherry Weddell's book, '*Forming Intentional Disciples*'. In the light of the ongoing Brentwood Diocese '*Stewards of the Gospel*' process, this is the most significant and challenging period for our parish in a generation. Mass attendances, priest numbers and vocations have been falling and, very soon, we will receive details of Diocesan plans to change and re-structure parishes, including Loughton, for the future. At the same time, Pope Francis has exhorted Catholics to go out and spread the joy of the Gospel!

So that our parish is ready to respond to these challenges and thrives as a welcoming and loving community that spreads the Good News, we shall be focusing on the Forming Intentional Disciples (FID) approach. This has been used fruitfully both in the USA and in other places, including the Diocese of Plymouth and parishes within our own Diocese of Brentwood.

**We aim that at least one member of each family/household in our parish will take part.** Please do all you can to come along and encourage friends and family members to be involved too? The programme costs nothing and takes only an hour or so a week but you will need to buy a copy of Sherry Weddell's book, '*Forming Intentional Disciples*'. You will hear more at our weekend Masses on September 29 and 30 and there will be a chance for you to sign up and get a copy of the book then.

The **Introductory Meeting takes place in our parish hall on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October.** Please put in your diaries. The other sessions take place on Mondays too: October 15 and 29, November 5, 12, 19 and 26. **Volunteers!** We would appreciate help with the programme. This might include helping with

refreshments, setting up the hall or helping to facilitate discussions (no special training or expertise needed). Please speak to Fr John, or one of our Stewards Maureen Perry or Mark Poulter, if interested.

**Forming Intentional Disciples Presentation Evening: Evangelisation and Discipleship Monday October 8 (8pm) St Edmund's Parish Hall**

Pope Francis tells us that when the church tells us to evangelise, she is simply pointing to the source of authentic personal fulfilment. For, 'here we discover a profound law of reality: that life is attained and matures in the measure it is offered up in order to give life to others. This is certainly what mission means'. (Evangelii Gaudium)

**Forming Intentional Disciples:** After all Masses this weekend there will be a chance to sign up for our exciting new programme which begins on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October (8pm). Also, after the 11am Mass on Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September (this weekend), there will be coffee, refreshments and a chance to socialise with fellow parishioners and find out more. Refreshments will be served in the parish hall immediately after Mass. All welcome

**WHAT DOES EVANGELISATION MEAN?** Zealous proclamation of the Gospel in order to bring others to Christ and his Church. In the words of Pope Paul VI, "Evangelizing means to bring the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new, 'Now I am making the whole of creation new' (Revelation 21:5). But there is no new humanity if there are not first of all new persons renewed by baptism, and by lives lived according to the Gospel" (Evangelii Nuntiandi, 18). Evangelization, therefore, includes three distinctive elements: 1. interior conversion to Christ and his Church; 2. affecting not only the individual person but the whole culture; and 3. as a result, changing this culture and its institutions to make them Christian and Catholic. (Etym. Latin evangelium; from Greek euangelion, good news, reward for bringing good news, from euangelos, bringing good news: eu-, good, + angelos, messenger.)

The 'New Evangelisation' initiated by Pope St. John Paul II & Pope Benedict XVI recognise the Church's mission to proclaim Jesus Christ in the Twenty-First Century, and the various challenges involved in that process.

*A joyful parish!*

*Forming Intentional Disciples*

*Pope Francis is encouraging strong joyful spirit-filled parishes who witness to a loving relationship with Jesus Christ. With this in mind, an exciting new programme to encourage parish evangelisation is beginning here at St Edmund's on October 8.*

*We had a very encouraging launch last weekend. Thank you to all of you who signed up! You will need to buy a copy of the book: **Forming Intentional Disciples** by Sherry A. Weddell. ISBN-13: 978-1-61278-590-5*

*It is available online from Amazon. Help to buy a copy will also be available at our meeting on Monday October 8th.*

*This programme has transformed and deepened the faith of many people, inspiring them to witness confidently to the Christian faith. We hope that the people of our parish will support and take part.*

*With today's newsletter, you will find our parish prayer booklet. Please keep it somewhere safe and pray for our Forming Intentional Disciples programme.*

*This programme is for everyone, INCLUDING YOU! We would love even more of you to join us. We hope at least one person from every family/household will take part. It is not too late to be part of this chance to grow and develop our parish in Loughton. For more details, contact Fr John, Maureen Perry or Mark Poulter ([markpoulter70@hotmail.com](mailto:markpoulter70@hotmail.com)). To find out more, please come along to our introductory meeting this week. It takes place in St Edmund's parish hall this Monday (Oct 8) at 8pm. Bring your family, friends and neighbours too. All very welcome!*

*Anything that can help each one of us to come to know the Lord Jesus Christ even more deeply can only be a good thing! The New Evangelisation in the Church, advocated by Pope St. John Paul II, continued through Pope Benedict XVI & Pope Francis, is inspiring the Church to really take up its mantle given by Jesus to the Apostles to 'Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News. If every member of the Church responds positively to the call to evangelise, this will most definitely transform the Church! True commitment in faith; having a lively sense of the presence of God in our lives, and living the Gospel message are the fundamental elements to becoming Intentional Disciples. Bishop Robert Barron, the famous communicator and public speaker, recently said at the Adoremus Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool: "If anyone truly believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who came into this world for the salvation of all, how could you walk away from Him?" A powerful question!*

*May God Bless You All*

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

*27<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the Year*



**ANNUAL PARISH BAZAAR COMMITTEE MEETING:** Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> October at 8.00pm in the Parish Retreat. I would like to invite all those who are interested in helping with our Annual Parish Bazaar to this important meeting. This is a planning meeting for the Bazaar which will take place on Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> December 2018 at St. Edmund's Parish Hall 11.00am – 3.00pm. If any parishioners' have gifts and items for the Bazaar they can be dropped off at the Church Porch or the Presbytery. Obviously, we need everything; Bottles of Wines & Spirits; Toiletries; Cuddly Toys; Children's Toys; Fancy Goods; we need GRAND DRAW prizes and Prizes for Fr John's Stall. You are a wonderfully generous community, and I trust your generosity will be matched again this year. With very grateful thanks & gratitude!

*Over the past several weeks I have been speaking a lot about the 'Stewards of the Gospel' initiative, set up by our diocese three years ago. This is an ongoing programme of addressing the issues of our age in the Church, not only in our own diocese, but throughout the country. The declining numbers of the faithful practicing their faith now probably about 17% of the Catholic population; fewer priests and, those preparing for the priesthood; the secularisation of society in general; apathy & indifference. All the contributing factors that have made the church sit up and try to plan a way forward. This weekend you are going to hear about the 'Forming Intentional Disciples' Programme of Evangelisation. Don't let the word 'Evangelisation' put you off – all it means is the Preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Three of our parishioners involved in the programme will address all the parishioners' at our masses this weekend, inviting you to become a part of this ongoing initiative of 'Intentional Discipleship'.*

*Forming Intentional Disciples - explores the five thresholds of postmodern conversion and how local parish leaders can guide others through the process. The five steps include: how to open a conversation about faith and belief, how to ask thought-provoking questions and establish an atmosphere of trust, when to tell the Great Story of Jesus, how to help someone respond to God's call to intentional discipleship, and much more. In Forming Intentional Disciples, readers will learn of places where conversion is active, and where the presence of many intentional disciples is beginning to change everything:*

*spiritual tone, energy level, attendance, almsgiving, and what parishioners ask of their leaders. Because when life at the local parish level changes, the life of the whole Church changes with it.*

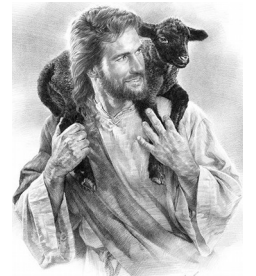
*The sub-title of Sherry Weddell's book of 'Forming Intentional Disciples' is, the 'Path to Knowing and following Jesus'. This is fundamentally at the heart of the Catholic Christian faith. Our lives as Catholics is always about Jesus Christ, and anything that can assist and help us to get close to the Lord Jesus can only be a good thing! This is our way forward in the Church. If we are truly sincere in our desire for Christ, then we will most definitely want to hear about this programme of Evangelisation.*

*I would like to invite at least one member from each family to attend the Meeting on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> October at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall. The meeting will last one hour. This initiative is going to affect the whole of the parish in the future. Please come along to the meeting! God bless you all*



*'Forming Intentional Disciples' Programme, St. Edmund's is embarking upon one of the most challenges ventures in the history of the parish. In a time of great change within the Church and throughout the world – a time of secularism, materialism, individualism, indifference & great apathy, - the Church is challenging all Catholic Christians to nail their colours to the mast. We have to stand up and be counted! The strength of a community is in her faith in Jesus Christ. As the Gospel stated last Sunday "Who do you say I am?" As Roman Catholics we should endeavour to know as much about Jesus Christ as possible. Reading the Scriptures, especially the Gospels; personal prayer; attending weekly Mass & other devotions; really having a desire to know and understand the faith; understanding the Church's teachings on moral issues. Making a daily commitment to Jesus Christ! In an age that's pointing us in all sorts of different directions, having the courage of faith and the strength of commitment is the challenge that's being presented to every Catholic Christian today! If we can echo the word of St. Peter and say: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God", we're not far from the kingdom!*

*I commend to every parent in our congregation the challenge and task of inviting your lapsed children back to the practice of their faith. To all our parishioners, if you know of any lapsed Catholics in your locality, please take them a Parish Newsletter on a weekly basis; this is a simple gesture, and, if you know these people well, please invite them to accompany you to mass once again. The door is open to everyone! The Lord told the Parable of the lost sheep, how the shepherd leaves the 99 and goes searching for the lost one, and rejoices when he's found it! There is more rejoicing in heaven over one lost soul, than anything else!*



**PARISH RENEWAL:** *Is about commitment to Jesus Christ. As we belong to a parish family, we each have a Christian responsibility to one another. In a bid to become engaged and 'Intentional Disciples' I would like to invite at least one member from each family to attend the important programme to commence on October 8<sup>th</sup> at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall.*

*In conjunction with the 'Stewards of the Gospel' initiative taken up by our Diocese of Brentwood three years ago, and now, going forward with the*

**MARRIAGES: Fr. John needs at least six months' notice for marriages, and nine months if you're getting married abroad. Marriage preparation needs to be completed well in advance of the wedding.**



**PARISH CHOIR:** We are always looking for new members to join the choir. You will have heard a lot of the new repertoire over the past several weeks. If you enjoy singing and music, please make contact with Sue Farrow our music director, you will be more than welcome to join the choir. There are rehearsals twice a week, Wednesday evening at 7:00pm and Saturday morning at 11.00am

**CATHOLIC COMMUNITY OUTREACH:** As part of the Evangelisation Programme we are adopting; outreach to those who no longer attend the Church is fundamental to the whole concept of Proclaiming the Gospel message to everyone. People leave the practice of the faith for all sorts of different reasons, but I would like to think that people are still members of the Christian family, unless they have made a formal rejection of the Christian faith. The sixty-four thousand dollar question is how do we reach these people again, and encourage them to return to the practice of the faith. To help them see that the life of faith is truly enriching and really worthwhile is the greatest challenge of all. It would have to be said that there are many contributing factors as to why people leave the practice of faith: - Secularism in this present age; peer group pressure; materialism; apathy & indifference. We live in an age and society that often finds it hard to commit to anything, and religion and the practice of faith is no exception! But to explore the Roman Catholic faith, and to learn and know more and more about its foundations in the person of Jesus Christ, will give the individual a truly deeper foundation to build upon. The Basis of Catholicism is to know Jesus Christ, and this is also at the heart of all Evangelisation.



A couple of ways you can help, and be real 'Stewards of the Gospel', is to invite any lapsed person back to church, and perhaps even accompany them. Or to take an additional Newsletter each week and pop it through their letterboxes – sometimes that personal contact with another Catholic is often the encouragement people need!

**WHAT IS AN IRREGULAR MARRIAGES:** Every baptised Roman Catholic is bound by the RC faith. If a person contracts a marriage outside of the Catholic Faith without a dispensation, it is referred to as irregular, or not actually recognised by the Catholic Church – these include marriages Register Offices; in hotels and on beaches; in Las Vegas; in any other Christian Church without dispensation from the Bishop. The Church has a facility to assist and help any couple regularise their marital status, it is called Convalidation. As long as the couple are both free to contract marriage in the Catholic Church a Convalidation ceremony can be celebrated. This is a totally private and confidential service that the Church offers to couples. If you would like to know more information about this procedure please contact Fr. John directly at the Presbytery Tel No: 0208 508 3492 or e.mail [loughton@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:loughton@dioceseofbrentwood.org) For whatever reason people sometimes marry outside the church, but we are here to help you put it right!



**BOOKING MASSES:** Has been a custom in the Catholic Church for many centuries! Parishioners can book masses in advance for any occasion. Most commonly we remember our deceased loved ones on anniversaries etc. But masses can be booked for Special Intentions, those who have recently died, Birthdays, Anniversaries, when someone is sick, wedding anniversaries, and many other occasions. If you wish to book a mass there are plenty of openings available in the Mass Book Calendar. Just complete the Mass Intention envelope in the porch of the church and enclose you mass offering. For anniversary masses, could I recommend that you put your Intention in several months in advance to avoid any disappointment with a date already taken.





*you have visited the various schools open evenings before you make your application. If your child has been through Roman Catholic Primary education, the natural progression would be for them to continue that education through our Catholic Secondary School, which is Trinity. I ask all parents to seriously consider all your options. A Certificate of Catholic Practice is required from all applicants who wish to attend Trinity Catholic High School. (I can only sign you Certificate if you're attending weekly mass - this is in compliance with the Code of Canon Law's definition of a practicing Catholic, and the Diocese of Brentwood's guidelines). One of the things that sadden me most in this process is that once children have their place in their desired school, how many families fall by the wayside. In the annual request for the capitation charge for each pupil, I would say that approximately less than a third attend Holy Mass. Children in their early years at High School are not attending even though they have stated they are weekly mass attenders. I see parents at mass without their young teenagers! This is really serious! Our future salvation is inextricably linked to the practice of our faith; these are not pious sentiments, but an impassioned plea to all parents to reflect on these words I have shared with you.*

May God Bless You All,

*At this time of the year parents are considering applications to Primary and Secondary Education; the choice of schools for your children will certainly determine their future lives. It has been drawn to my attention that this year Essex County will not be sending out reminders to parents to make the application procedure for places for Year 7 commencement for September 2019. You have to do this by yourselves and access the Essex County Council website for Secondary School Admissions. (This procedure can all be done online). The application procedure is to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> October. I would ask all parents to kindly wait until after*

**CLASS OF  
2019**

until I was Ordained to the Priesthood. As you can see we have a number of Senior Servers who have served for ten years and over who have received their Silver St. Stephen's Medal. Parents, can I alert your children to this invitation. We will train the children at the altar. Our Parish MC's David Knott and Robert Hatt give instruction to the children. If you are an Altar Server, you are expected to be present at weekly mass!



**NEW ALTAR SERVERS:** I would like to extend an invitation to any of the boys and girls who have made their First Holy Communion, to consider becoming an Altar Server at St. Edmund's. This is a truly wonderful opportunity for our young ones to get involved with the life of faith and give great service to God and the Church. I was an Altar Server right up

***PARISH RENEWAL: As you all know the Stewards of the Gospel initiative initiated by the diocese nearly three years ago continues to develop throughout the diocese. The parish has also adopted the Forming Intentional Disciples Evangelisation Programme. This programme is specifically designed to engage all of our parishieorns to make a total life commitment to Jesus Christ. We will endeavour to reach out to the lapsed, also to those who nothing about Jesus Christ. Obviously, this is going to be a great challenge, but with God's help and grace, let us move forward in faith! The Programme***

*we will use has been formed by Sherry Weddell – I certainly recommend her book ‘Forming Intentional Disciples’, this can be obtained from Amazon.*

***TAKING THIS SERIOUSLY:** I really would commend to all of our parishioners the seriousness of these initiatives! The Church is dramatically changing, more and more people are leaving the practice of their Catholic faith; young people are walking away from the faith in their droves, many of them never to return; a take it or leave it attitude seems to have permeated the Church in this country. Perhaps the Church is destined to be a smaller Church, but with true commitment and ‘Intentional’ hearts for Christ! The Lord told us he ‘would be with us until the end of the time’, Jesus will never abandon his Church; it just means that the Church will be different. To know what your faith is all about, to understand clearly the tenets of Catholicism, and to make them our own is fundamental to what it means to be a practicing Roman Catholic. These are the challenges of the Twenty-first century and they affect us all. We can’t just sit on the side-lines any longer. We have to nail our colours to the mast!*

*May God Bless You All*

#### **SALE OF THE ST THOMAS MORE SITE, DEBDEN:**

**The St. Thomas More Church, Presbytery & Parish Hall: Fr John writes:-**

*“As you know St. Thomas More Church site closed on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2015. After nearly three years of negotiations with Epping Forest District Council, the Diocese of Brentwood and ourselves and various interested parties, I am very happy to report to you that the Debden Site has just been sold to a Property Developer. This was a long and arduous process, involving numerous meetings both at Diocesan and Local Council levels and wasn’t always easy. Sadly we had nearly reached the final stages of a sale at the beginning of the year, and unfortunately it fell through; we had to begin the whole process all over again; obviously, extending the length of time. This was very frustrating, but we wanted to get it right. The sale has now been finalised within the rules of the Charities Act, and it is believed that the developer intends to erect housing on this site in due course.*

*The tenants of the Presbytery have moved to Wiltshire since August 2017. The Parish in conjunction with the Diocese of Brentwood (Trustees), and*

*the Surveyor managed and directed the sales process after this very steep learning curve, and I am very relieved that the Parish is no longer responsible for the security, vandalism repairs and other costs associated with maintaining the vacant buildings.*

*I would personally like to thank Mr John Campbell who really helped me throughout this whole process; Mr Michael Gilmartin of Gilmartin/Ley Quantity Surveyors who did all the work with the various interested parties, and Mrs Amanda Balicki from the Diocesan Properties Department, who did so much from the Diocesan perspective on behalf of the Trustees.*

*All the funds have been placed in the Central Banking System in the Diocese of Brentwood, which offsets the whole diocese keeping interest levels down on various projects up and down the diocese.*

*I thank you all for your patience over the past three years, and I’m very happy that this project has been concluded successfully.” Fr. John*

#### **ST. EDMUND’S PARISH FINANCES**

The reality of late is that our monthly income is not meeting our monthly outgoing. **There has been a considerable drop in the weekly offertory!** I have been consciously aware of this for a long time now, and I try not to burden you with this.

When the St. Thomas More Church was still open we had an additional income from the Presbytery, and also a Playgroup that was quite successful for a number of years. Manifestly, with the closing of the St. Thomas More site and everything moving to St. Edmund's, there has been a loss of revenue, somewhere in the region of £25,000 per year. Coupled with diminishing offertories, this is most certainly taking its toll on our parish Finances. I am very consciously aware of every parishioner's financial situation; there are so many demands on all of us today, mortgage, home maintenance, cars, family expenses, and the list can go on and on!

The survival of any parish is holily dependent on the generosity of the faithful People of God. You are those people! Your weekly contribution sustains the life of the parish. Your offering reflects your thanksgiving to the Lord no matter how great or small it may be. There are always some who may be in the position of giving more. As Cardinal Hume used to say, an hour's salary was not an unreasonable offering. If we think of some of the luxuries we purchase, a bottle of wine, a packet of cigarettes, a meal out, Weekly Gym membership, and season tickets to sports venues. Perhaps a good benchmark would be that suggested by our Parish Accountant, that if everyone gave the price of a cup of coffee that you would purchase on the High Street, this would certainly enhance the Weekly Offering. Of course the 'widow's mite' is always welcomed.

You are all aware of the ongoing costs of maintaining your own homes; and the bills keep coming in! This year we had a severe winter. As you know I've always tried to keep all our buildings warm, for example, some months the Gas Bill was between eight and nine hundred pounds a month. Utilities are extremely expensive. Capitation to the Diocese of Brentwood is £2,200 per month. Monthly salaries are approximately £1,300. Fr. John's Salary is £675.00 per quarter. These are just some of the regular bills.

I appeal to your incredible generosity, and your sense of belonging to this parish. Your Gift Aiding is so important, and the use of weekly GA envelopes really does assist and help with the annual claim that we make to the Inland Revenue. **PLEASE USE YOUR ENVELOPES!**

**COLLECTION OF SPONSORSHIP MONIES FOR NEW**

**STAIR-LIFT:** As you know the music director Sue Farrow completed a sponsored marathon playing the organ for twelve hours to raise funds for the much-needed stairlift to the choir loft. Many parishioners have already paid their sponsorship monies, and so far approximately £4,000.00 has



been raised. Members of the Choir will continue to be outside the Church this weekend to collect in the outstanding sponsorship and donations over the next two or three weeks. If you are unable to make the donation outside the Church, please contact John Johnson on 020 8508 4167 who will arrange to collect it. Please also note that Lester Haslam, a choir member, is raising funds by the carrying out of a fantastic car cleaning and valeting service for just £35 per car. You can contact him directly on 020 8505 7793. Grateful thanks to everyone who has sponsored or donated towards this project. If there are any parishioners who would like to make a one-off donation please make cheques payable to St. Edmund of Canterbury RC Church.

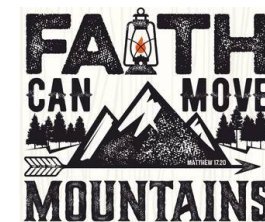
**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2018/2019:**

The programme will commence on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> September at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall with the Parents' Meeting. The children's first session will take place on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September at 10.00am in the Parish hall; this will be followed by the children being presented formally by their parents as candidates for the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist at the 11.00am Mass. Please keep all the children and the families in your prayers as they prepare for the Sacramental Programme.



**RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:** Every September we begin a new RCIA (Journey of Faith) Programme, for those who may be interested in learning more about the Roman Catholic Faith, possibly with the view of receiving the Easter Sacraments. This is a systematic Programme of Instruction in the Roman Catholic Faith, covering aspects of Catholicism: Scripture, Theology, Liturgy, Mary, Catholic practices & Tradition, Church History, Prayer & Devotions. If there is anyone interested, or you know of anyone who might be interested, could you ask them to get in touch with Fr. John, Tel No: 0208 508 3492. Thank you!

**PARISH NEWSLETTER:** There will only be a one-page Newsletter over the summer holidays commencing the weekend 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> July. Please always take your newsletter home with you and keep it on your Notice Boards.



I would like to encourage every single member of our Parish Community to truly embrace the work of Evangelisation. We are all heralds of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and when we share our faith, even in a small way, we bear witness to Christ. We can be like



**St. John the Baptist pointing the way to Jesus. Be strong and courageous in faith; have the courage of conviction that you have something worthwhile to offer others through your own lives of faith. We all have members of our own families, and people that we know who no longer practice their faith on a regular basis; please have the courage to invite them to return to the faith. Take an extra Newsletter on a weekly basis; pop it through their letterboxes, at least through this there is some contact being made. Try to make personal invitation to lapsed family members and friends to accompany you to mass one Sunday. Please pray for all of our lapsed and estranged parishioners, ask the Lord to touch their hearts and bring them home.**

**CHILDREN'S SUNDAY LITURGY: As some of our Catechists have stepped down from the Rota, I have been asked to make a request for some new Children's Sunday Liturgy Catechists. There are many parents whose children regularly attend the Sunday Liturgy at the 11.00am mass. You will be taught how to conduct the session by those who've been Catechists for a long time. You will only be asked to lead the session approximately once every six months. This is truly a wonderful way to serve God and the whole community of faith. If you're interested please contact Claire on 07876710251.**



**CONFIRMANDI:** I would like to encourage our recent Confirmandi to become more involved in the life of the Church. You may feel you have something to offer to God and the Church; please don't be shy to come forward. I hope you have had an opportunity to read the little book he gave you of your questions, answered by Mark Anthony. It really is a powerful resource in understanding your Roman Catholic Faith

**LOUGHTON PARISH GIFT AID SCHEME:** Many thanks to all the parishioners who have collected their new Gift Aid Envelopes. The New Financial Year commences this weekend. Would those who have, as yet, not picked up their new envelopes kindly do so as soon as possible? The use of the GA envelopes is extremely important; we are not allowed to claim any tax back if the envelopes are not used. There are always spare envelopes in the porch of the Church.

If you do not belong to the Parish Gift Aid Scheme, and someone in the family pays Income Tax then please consider joining. It is very simple in that we only require you to complete the GA Form with your name and address and Brian Carter will do the rest. Please think seriously about joining the scheme!

We are able to claim back 25pence in the pound for every pound you donate in your envelopes. E.g. if you give £10 per week, we receive an additional £2.50 per week. This certainly mounts up over the financial year.

Brian Carter – Parish Gift Aid Organiser, Tel No: 020 8508 4086

**PARISH GIFT AID ORGANISER:** I am very pleased to advise parishioners that as Brian Carter has now retired we have a new Gift Aid Organiser, Maria Mosquera. It may be a little while to hand over details to Maria as the files have to be updated and confirmed agreement with the Gift Aid Office. Brian will support Maria for as long and necessary, particularly at the end of the Financial Year. Further details will appear in the Parish Newsletter as soon as the takeover has taken place. In the meantime please give Maria the full support that you have given to Brian over the years. Once again sincere gratitude and thanks to Brian for being the Gift Aid organiser both here and in the parish in Chingford for 40 years.

***ADOREMUS** The Latin word for 'Let us adore', is the theme of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage in Liverpool this September (7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup>). There is a beautifully produced Book on the Eucharist at £5.00 available in the Porch Repository. This is a wonderful publication exploring all aspects of the Holy Eucharist. Please think of investing in one of them. Thank you!*

*May God Bless You All,*

## GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS –

**GDPR:** You have probably been receiving a great deal of information in relation to the GDPR which came into force on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> May. To preserve the confidentiality & privacy of all documentation held at the parish, e.g. Baptism, Marriage, Confirmation, Death Registers etc. Please be assured that all of these registers are held in fire-proof safes, both in the Church and the Presbytery. All Census Forms are held in a fire-proof filing cupboard. With the new regulations we now need to build privacy into all personal data. Any data that is out of date or obsolete will be destroyed through shredding. To seek information about someone in the parish or registers held at the parish will become a lot more difficult. The only information that can now be given is directly to the individual who desires a Baptismal, Confirmation or Marriage Certificate. For example, solicitors will have to ask their clients to apply personally for a copy of a Marriage Certificate. With regard to the Parish Gift Aid Scheme – the only person who has access to this data is the Gift Aid Organiser; the Parish Priest does not have access. All of those involved in this work have been advised on the confidential nature of this information. No personal information will be given over the telephone – written requests only! This is the first stage of information on GDPR. If you have any queries please don't hesitate to ask Fr. John for more details.



partnership with the Catholic National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, and with the support of Youth 2000. It is hoped that local evangelisation teams will also help with other catholic organisations.

Each triduum will begin on a Thursday evening, all day Friday, Friday evening with a possible 'night fever' style adoration event, and conclude on Saturday with mass around midday.

Resources will be made available by the National Shrine for all cathedrals and it is hoped these will filter to the catholic parishes throughout the country. This will help bring to fulfilment the prophecy spoken by Pope Leo XIII in 1887, "When England returns to Walsingham, Our Lady will return to England".

We pray for a rapid return of Our Lady to her Dowry.

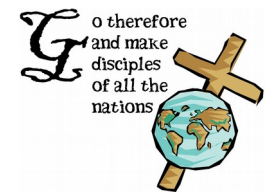
The Slipper Chapel Statue of Our Lady of Walsingham will visit every English Catholic Cathedral between 2018 – 2020. Brentwood Cathedral of St. Mary & St. Helen, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex. CM15 8AT. 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> July 2018. [www.dowrytour.org.uk](http://www.dowrytour.org.uk)

**MISSIO RED BOXES:** Thank you to all those who responded to the Missio appeal. If you missed the chance to take a box there are a couple of spare boxes in the porch of the church. **EXISTING BOX MEMBERS:** Please bring your box to mass on the second week in June 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> June, when they will be emptied. If you have a box and no longer wish to use it please return it that weekend. Thank you!

## PREPARING FOR THE REDEDICATION OF ENGLAND AS THE

**DOWRY OF MARY:** The Bishops of England & Wales have agreed to rededicate England as the Dowry of Mary. This will take place on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020. In preparation for this great event there will be a two-year spiritual preparation during which the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham will be taken to every cathedral in England for a three-day triduum of prayer. This is being done under the banner of the Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, in

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:** Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018. 8:00pm in the Parish Retreat. This is an extremely important meeting. I would ask that all members of the Parish Pastoral Council please be present. But I would also like to extend the invitation to anyone in the parish who is interested in learning more about Evangelisation. Realistically, the survival of the Roman Catholic Church in this country is rooted very much in the various methods of Evangelisation that we employ in our parishes. This is a really serious time in the Church, and I would encourage as many parishioners as possible to attend. I have managed to get Mr Mark Lambert to come and speak about



the Evangelisation Initiative of 'Forming Intentional Disciples'. Hopefully this will dove-tail into our Stewards of the Gospel Initiative. Reaching out to our lapsed Catholics and also to be welcoming to new members in the Church. At present we're running a Faith Sharing Programme; and in September we will begin our Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults once again. Evangelisation is at the heart of all parish life, preaching the Gospel message of Jesus Christ is fundamental to our commitment in faith. In truth, many people are leaving the practice of their faith; the reasons are many and varied, but anything that can help us understand why we are at Mass each Sunday and why we're Roman Catholics, can only be a good thing! Hopefully these two new initiatives will help us!

**RETURNING TO THE PRACTICE OF THE FAITH:** From the first moment Jesus gave his command to the Apostles to, '*Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News*', the faithful people of God have responded! It is an invitation freely given by Jesus Christ. The Catholic Church, on her part has tried to the best of her ability to encourage and support all the faithful in their Journey of Faith. Sometimes along that journey people can lose their way, often taking other paths. But, they are still part of the family, and we really do miss them when they're not with us. We pray for them, and I truly believe that Jesus is constantly searching out our brothers and sisters. We can also help in this mission; if you know of anyone, it may be a family member, or a neighbour or friend, who no longer actively participates with the worshipping community, have the courage to invite them to accompany you to one of our weekend masses. Obviously, there are so many other distractions out in the world today that it's so easy to be distracted with regards commitment in faith; but the fact is that Jesus Christ came into our world to show us the way to God, and he doesn't want to lose anyone along the way that leads to him. Sometimes, when people have been away from the practice of the faith, they often feel nervous and embarrassed about coming home. There will always be a Big Welcome! This is real Evangelisation, because it really can enable and help all of us recognise the importance of what it means to be a member of God's Family of Faith. Have Courage!

"You probably don't see that much of me but I'm the one who makes a loud noise from above and behind you! My part in the liturgy requires me to be up in the organ loft; along with 21 dedicated choir members who rehearse twice a week to be the best they can possibly be to enhance our Sunday liturgy. Their generosity of spirit in allowing me to nag and cajole them into achieving new things stuns me every single week.

But something's not right. We are actually a choir of 22, but one of our members cannot access the organ loft. That member attends a rehearsal in our hall every week but when it comes to doing our job in the loft, they are effectively excluded. With others also who find the stairs quite difficult these days. This feels wrong to all of us and, with Fr John's support, we've decided to do something about it. We're going to buy a Stairlift!

We've already raised a small proportion of the funds we need but we have a long way to go. So, on 28th & 30th June I will be doing a 12-hour sponsored musical marathon to raise the rest. (Commencing at 10.30am on both days). If you'd like to come along and listen during the marathon, you'd be most welcome!) The choir has promised faithfully to prop me up with flasks of (very!) strong coffee but we need your help too. **SPONSORSHIP IS STILL AVAILABLE.** Are you willing to take one and ask your family, friends, colleagues (and anyone else you can think of!) to help us achieve our goal? It would mean so much to us to have ALL our members together in the loft, and we'd be sincerely grateful for your help. Special Donations will always be very welcome. Please support us! Please use Gift Aid envelopes also!"

Thank you. Sue