

**PARISH WEEKLY OFFERTORY:** Could I ask all our parishioners who use the Parish Gift Aid Scheme to kindly use their Gift Aid envelopes, without the envelopes each week we are not able to claim the tax back at the end of the year. If you forget your envelopes there was spare ones in the church porch, just write your number or name on the envelope. A big thank you to all parishioners who contribute for the upkeep of the parish on a weekly basis; the parish is truly grateful for your ongoing support of the parish. Once again I appeal to the whole parish community; the weekly offertories are not meeting the monthly outgoings – Please take this into consideration when you place your envelope or offering in the basket on Sundays. This past months our outgoings have resulted in the Diocesan Monthly Quota - £2,230.00. Staff salaries - £1,400.00. Utilities – Gas, Electric & Water £1,250.00. Repairs in Parish Hall (New boiler tank, toilet repairs, various leaks) £750.00. As you can appreciate, I have cut back considerably on many things in the parish; I don't have a secretary anymore, but we are still running monthly at a loss! I'm always grateful for your generosity!

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2018/2019:** The next session will take place on Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 10.00am in the Parish hall. The next Parents' Meeting will take place on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall. (Please note change of date). I do encourage all the parents of our First Communicants to attend some of the Sunday sessions.

**ST. JOHN FISHER:** PTA presents their Spring Nearly New Sale, Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2019, 10.30am – 1.00pm St. John Fisher School, Loughton, IG102DY. Children's and baby's clothes, toys, books, games, equipment & accessories for sale at great prices. 50p entrance for Adults, children FREE. Having a Spring Clean? Want a Stall? Please E.Mail SJFPTA@outlook.com

**LOYOLA PREPARATORY SCHOOL:** OPEN MORNING Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019, 9.30am (prompt) – 11.30am. Loyola is the leading Catholic Independent School for boys in Essex aged 3-11, which welcomes pupils of all denominations. Come and spend a morning at our school, with a guided tour and the opportunity to meet our Headmistress, staff and pupils. 7+ applications also welcome. 103 Palmerston Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex, IG9 5NH. Tel No: 020 8504 7372 www.loyola.essex.sch.uk

**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,

Second Sunday of the Year, Year C, 2019

In a village in Galilee we encounter John's 'sign theology'. As he puts it so simply and beautifully: 'This, the first of the signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee'. The question as always with these signs is: 'What does this sign mean?' Like all the signs the meaning is profound and many-faceted. St. Thomas More said that the Scriptures are such that a mouse could put his tiny foot in them and an elephant wade in their deep waters! What are you – a mouse or an elephant? Don't answer that!

The changing of water into wine is many people's favourite miracle. A wedding in first-century Palestine was a joyful occasion with plenty of food and wine, and lasted a whole week. Quite some party, that is for sure! Running out of wine was clearly socially embarrassing for the couple but a sign perhaps of how much people were enjoying themselves. The water that was changed into wine was not ordinary water – it was water that had been blessed for the ceremonial washing. This special water was not changed into *vin ordinaire*, as the French say, but top-notch wine. Scholars inform us that as a result of this miracle there were now six jars each holding up to 25 gallons of quality wine! What a miracle!! Indeed, it dumbfounded the guests.



Believer or unbeliever, we all understand the message a superabundance of wine gives – in conveys joy and celebration. In Israel an abundance of wine was a prophetic turn of speech for the ushering in of the new Messianic Age. There is also a passage in the non-canonical 2 Baruch 29, which echoes this sentiment: 'on each vine there shall be a thousand branches, and each branch shall bear a thousand clusters, and each grape, produce a cor [120 gallons of wine]...because these are they who have come to the consummation of time.'

For John the miracle was a sign of the Messianic Age, the passing from the old to the new. The wedding feast was a sign of the heavenly banquet to which we are all invited by virtue of our baptism. The bridegroom as this wedding is Jesus. The joy of the heavenly banquet would come after the 'hour' of Jesus' suffering: the cross, his death, his glory.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Second Sunday of the Year 2019

*We have just entered into the Ordinary Season of the Church's Liturgical Year. You will see that we have returned to using green vestments at our Sunday Celebration. The Rhythm of the Liturgy is extremely important; it highlights every aspect of Jesus' life, his ministry, his preaching, his passion, death and resurrection, his ascension and the sending of the Holy Spirit. We enter into the mystery every time we attend Holy Mass!*

**FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES:** *I would like to thank all those parishioners who attended the meeting last Monday as we began our second phase in the programme. There was a wonderful turnout, enabling us to have ongoing discussion about Evangelisation and new initiatives for our parish. Our next FID meeting will take place on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall; please put this date in your diary. If any other parishioners would like to join us please just come along to the Parish Hall.*

**LANDINGS – RETURNING TO THE PRACTICE OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH:** *Landings, is a welcoming programme, non-judgemental, which tries to help answer many people's questions re their Catholic Faith. There's no quick-fix for people who have had problems with their faith and the Church, but we invite you to come and explore the possibilities of trying to re-engage with the faith once again! There will be an informal 'Landings Meeting' on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January at 8.00pm in the Parish Retreat, tea and coffee will be provided.*

**BCYS Summer Lourdes Pilgrimage 20<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> July 2019:** *Join the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service in Lourdes this Summer as we travel alongside the diocese, assisting the elderly and infirm on their annual pilgrimage. Alongside this we also run a retreat, daily Masses and excursions for the young people, as well as experiencing the Lourdes Torchlight Procession and Blessed Sacrament Procession. Places will be allocated to ensure as many parishes and schools as possible from the diocese are represented and applications will remain open until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019. Where we receive a large number from one school or parish, places will be allocated on a "first come, first served" basis. Please be aware, this event is always heavily oversubscribed. The pilgrimage is open to anyone currently in school year 10 and above and the cost will be around £570 (TBC). For all information and the chance to apply, please visit [www.bcys.net/events](http://www.bcys.net/events) or for any queries, please*

*Email [gabriellafusi@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:gabriellafusi@dioceseofbrentwood.org)*

*May God Bless You All,*



**YOUR CRIB OFFERINGS** Will go to the work of the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society. This wonderful Diocesan organisation does not receive government funding so is heavily dependent upon all charitable diocesan contributions. You have always been very generous with offerings in the past. The Cribs will remain in our church until the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019 .



**RCIA PROGRAMME:** Will continue on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 8.00pm in the Presbytery. Theme: The Sacrament of Marriage. If you know of anyone who may be interested in the Roman Catholic Faith, please contact Fr. John at the Presbytery Tel No: 020 8508 3492

**THE GOSPEL OF LUKE:** On Wednesdays 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January at 7 pm Fr Adrian Graffy will lead an exploration of the Gospel of Luke, the gospel being read on Sundays in 2019. These 'Gidea Park Faith Evenings' will take place in the hall at Gidea Park Catholic Church (410 Brentwood Road, Gidea Park, RM2 6DH). Please book by email to [GPstudydays@gmail.com](mailto:GPstudydays@gmail.com) Refreshments provided. Admission free.

**EPPING FOREST FOODBANK DONATIONS:** Thank you to all parishioners who donated items for the Foodbank in 2018. Your donations are needed as much as ever at this time of year so please do continue to support the Foodbank in 2019 if you can. Basic staple items are always welcome including the unbranded supermarket basic ranges which can make your generous donations go even further. In January they are in particular need of the following items: UHT milk, powdered milk, long-life fruit juice, instant mash, sponge pudding, tinned spaghetti, small jars of coffee and toilet rolls. Thank you! You can also keep up to date with the Foodbank via their Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/EppingForestFoodbank/](http://www.facebook.com/EppingForestFoodbank/)

**PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – NEW DATE:** Monday 18<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00pm in the parish Retreat. As most PC members were unable to attend the last meeting, I would ask all parish council members to kindly make every effort possible to attend this meeting, as there are some very important issues to discuss. Thank you!

**PARISH REPOSITORY:** There is a wonderful selection of religious goods, statues, Mass cards for all occasions, rosaries, medals, children's books. Many of these can be given as gifts. Please check out the Repository!