

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 CHOIR: You will have heard the beautiful music and choir over Holy Week & Easter. We are always looking for new members to join the choir. 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.

JOURNEY IN Faith

JOURNEY OF FAITH PROGRAMME: The Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults is a Roman Catholic instruction programme in the Faith. This programme commences at the beginning of September and runs through until the following Easter. If anyone is interesting in learning more about the Roman Catholic faith possibly with the view of being received into full communion with the Catholic Church and receiving the Easter Sacraments, please see Fr John as soon as possible. It is a systematic programme of instruction, involving weekly meetings, covering every aspect of Catholicism, Scripture, Moral Teachings, Catholic Devotions, and Prayer etc. It's always really good to have several enquirers on each programme. There are many people who attend mass weekly who are not yet Catholics, I would ask you to consider seriously the possibility of enrolling in this programme this September 2019.

PARISH FOREST WALK: Sunday 28th April. Immediately after the 11am Mass. At 12.15pm we will leave the Car Park. Come along to socialise with fellow parishioners. Please do bring family, friends and neighbours, even if they have not been to our Church before. All are very welcome



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 Easter 2019

Thomas, whom we know as 'Doubting Thomas', was blessed to have put his fingers in the wounds on the Lord's hands and to have touched his pierced side. However, he was gently rebuked by the Lord: 'Stope doubting and believe'. Thomas, despite his doubts and unbelief, was led to faith and perhaps should be remembered as 'Believing Thomas', since his subsequent profession of faith was so sincere and genuine: 'My Lord and my God!'



This is the confession of faith that the Lord seeks from every true believer: 'My Lord and my God' or 'Jesus Christ is Lord'. This admission of faith in the Risen Lord is always the fruit of grace in our lives. It is also one which we are called to make every single day. Every day invites a re-dedication of our lives to Christ.

The coming of Jesus Christ can be likened to the major theme in a musical performance. Often in musicals, operas and classical works, different instruments give hints of the main theme: first the flutes, then the clarinets, the bassoons, the string instruments and the bass – all take up different variations. In its final climax the whole orchestra sounds the theme towards which everything has been moving. In a similar way, in the coming of Jesus God's eternal plan of salvation is fully and finally revealed, and when we freely accept and embrace this plan we receive God's gift of joy.



Jesus is both the Word and the Event in which the fullness of divine revelation is made known. We can lose sight of what an amazing grace of revelation it is to humbly bow before God's greatest gift - the sending of the Son. We receive in this moment the grace which understands that faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we cannot see. We have not seen and touched as Thomas did, but we are blessed for despite not seeing we believe. As Peter said: 'Without having seen him you love him; though you do not see him you believe in him and rejoice... As the outcome of your faith, you obtain the salvation of your souls'.

Dear Friends in Christ,

2nd Sunday of Easter

Today is Divine Mercy Sunday. The whole life of Jesus Christ was that of mercy. He never sat in judgement of anyone, and in the scriptures we constantly see and witness the infinite mercy of God shown through his Son. Even from the cross he prayed for those who crucified Him. When you really enter into the spirituality of mercy, you begin to understand completely the infinite mercy of God. Jesus Christ is the revelation of God's loving mercy, and as Christians we are trying to emulate Christ in our lives of faith. This is the daily challenge of faith, and yet when we look to the lives of the Saints, they understood what the Lord was about, and lived this life of mercy totally and completely. Once again, try to practice this beautiful virtue of mercy in your life of faith!



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: Programme will resume again on Sunday 28th April, with the theme being the Last Supper. There will be three celebrations this year; Saturday 11th May at 12noon. Sunday 12th May at 1.00pm. Saturday 18th May at 12noon. (Rehearsals for each of the celebrations will take place on Wednesday 8th May at 4pm group 1; 5pm group 2; 6pm group 3) The Going forth Mass on Sunday 19th May at 11.00am. Please keep the children and their families in your prayers.



THE PARISH REPOSITORY: will be open after all masses this weekend, with a special table of First Holy Communion items; Statues, crucifixes, cards, medals, rosaries, prayer-books etc. It will also be open on the day of the rehearsals in the Church, Wednesday 8th May 4pm onwards

PARISH FOREST WALK: on Sunday 28th April, immediately after the 11.00am Mass, approximately 12.15pm we'll leave from St. Edmund's Car Park Come along to socialise with fellow parishioners. Please do bring family, friends and neighbours, even if they have not been to our church before. All very welcome!

PARISH PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM: Saturday 1st June 2019. Once again we are going to make a Pilgrimage to Walsingham. One of the world's oldest shrines to Our Blessed Lady! Please sign up on the list in the porch if you wish to join us! The cost will be approximately £15. You will need to pack a picnic luncheon. Mass will be celebrated at 12Noon, and then luncheon, followed by Walking the Holy Mile praying the Holy Rosary. Please sign up!

Christian Aid Week Collection for Sierra Leone. Christian Aid Week this year is 12 to 18 May. The theme is reducing maternal and infant deaths in Sierra Leone, which is the most dangerous place in the world to have a baby: every day 10 women die while giving birth. Christian Aid is building clinics and training nurses in Sierra Leone so mothers can deliver their babies safely. This year, with the other churches in Loughton, we will be raising money specifically to fund that work. The Loughton Christian Aid team have organised several collections during the week and we need helpers to rattle a collecting tin for an hour in Loughton High Road or at Loughton Station or Woodford Station. St Edmund's is an important part of that effort, can you help? The four collections will be: Woodford Station, Thursday 9 May (4.00-8.00pm); Loughton Station, Thursday 16 May (4.00-8.00pm); Loughton High Road, Sunday 12 May (9.30am-1.00pm) and again on Saturday 18 May (10.00am-4.00pm). Please offer to help us by contacting Iain McLay, 02082819125, or email Keith Aldred at keith@akaldred.plus.com and volunteer for one hour collecting.

FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES: Our next meeting will take place on Monday 13th May at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall. Once again I encourage as many parishioners as possible to attend this meeting. We are trying to the best of our ability to emphasise the importance of Evangelisation here in our parish; you too can be a part of this process, please help us!

FAITH SHARING & BIBLE STUDY: One of the groups to come out of the Forming Intentional Disciples forum is a Faith Sharing & Bible Study series. This may be of interest to some of our parishioners. If you would like to know more about your faith, and of course, the sacred scriptures, please come along on Wednesday 15th 22nd 29th May, 12th 19th 26th June at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall. The first three will be on faith sharing, the second three on Bible Study.

THANK YOU FROM FR. JOHN: I would like to thank the whole parish community for your Easter Greeting & cards. Also, for your Easter Offerings this year! I'm truly grateful! A big thank you to the parishioners who donated cakes and sweets when the seminarians were here; thankfully they've demolished the lot! You are so kind and generous! They all had a wonderful time, and were so grateful to your all for your hospitality and kindness shown to them.

Requiescant in Pace: Anniversaries – Michael Touhy RIP, Michael McGuire RIP, Thomas Austin RIP, Brian & Paul Street RIP.

LOUGHTON PARISH GIFT AID SCHEME: Sincere thanks to all those parishioners who have collected their Gift Aid Boxes which came into effect on the 8th April. However, there are still a large number of boxes which have not been collected and I would ask those parishioners to collect them as soon as possible.

In addition, there are several small boxes for those parishioners who pay their Gift Aid by Standing Order. It is important to use these boxes as the Second Collections, e.g. Christmas & Easter Offerings, etc., lose quite a lot of money because the Special Envelopes are not used.

It is pleasing to note that the majority of parishioners now belong to the Gift Aid Scheme which produces last year, and extra amount of just under £22,000.00 (and costs absolutely nothing, other than your name and address), which helps considerably towards the upkeep of the Church, the Parish Hall, The Presbytery and all the grounds. Obviously, we still have to maintain the St. Thomas More Site until its disposal. The ongoing increasing expenses of utilities and general maintenance are a great drain of parish finances. Also the Diocesan Quota has been raised again this year to over £26,000.00.

Although there are spare envelopes at the back of the Church many parishioners forget to use their own envelopes. If you do use the spare envelopes please remember to put your Gift Aid number or your Name on it.

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 I will do the rest.

On behalf of Father John, thank you to all parishioners who belong to the Gift Aid Scheme.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fr John', with a horizontal line underneath it.