

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.



FAREWELL TO MRS PATRICIA BRYSON: On behalf of the parish I would like to bid a fond farewell to Patricia Bryson, retiring Headteacher of St. John Fisher School, who has relocated to Ireland. In a few short years Mrs Bryson & her staff took our school back to its 'Good' rating from Ofsted. She has been a wonderful Headteacher and leader in our school, and she will be sadly missed. Please continue to pray for the New Headteacher.

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.

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,

Fourth Sunday of Easter 2019

Human beings are frequently compared to sheep in the Scriptures – not, it has to be said, the smartest of animals. In *Animal Farm*, George Orwell depicted the pig as the most intelligent farm animal – for him sheep were easily manipulated and easily led. In his tale the sheep were good at chanting slogans but failed to think things through for themselves. The French poet Jean de la Fontaine said: 'A certain fox, it is said, wanted to become a wolf; who can say no wolf has ever craved the life of a sheep?'



Sheep are vulnerable and needy; they need feeding, guiding and leading. They are prone to stray into danger. They are easy prey for such animals as foxes and wolves (both sly animals). On the more positive side, they are good at recognising the voice of the shepherd. If we are honest, we have to admit that the comparison of human beings and sheep is an apt one. The Anglican Book of Common Prayer includes the following confession in its liturgy: We have erred and strayed from the ways like lost sheep. We followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.' We are like sheep in the ways that we go astray, but the Lord is the Good Shepherd who leads us through the valley of the shadow of death to quiet verdant pastures.

How do we hear the voice of the Shepherd? In our prayer, through the Scriptures, through the teaching of the Church and through the light of our conscience. We all err and fall and walk in darkness, but the Lord's voice is constantly calling us to life eternal. Jesus wants not one of his sheep to be lost. Our lives are a pilgrimage to the safe pasture of haven and the gift of eternal life.

'Looking beyond this life, my first prayer, aim and hope is that I may see God. The thought of being blessed with the sight of earthly friends' pales before that thought. I believe that I shall never die; this awful prospect would crush men, were it not that I trusted and prayed that it would be an eternity in God's presence. How is eternity a boon unless he goes with us? And for others dear to me, my prayer is that they may see God.' (Bl. John Henry Newman)



Dear Friends in Christ,

4th Sunday of Easter

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday, and is the world day of prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood & Religious Life. Sadly we live in an age where fewer young men are presenting themselves as prospective candidates for the Priesthood. But there is still the expectation that every Sunday morning a priest will be available to celebrate the Holy Mass in every parish. The situation is now very serious in our own diocese, and as you know, with our Stewards of the Gospel Programme, we are seriously looking at the amalgamation of parishes, and parish partnerships. The Lord Himself said "...ask the Lord of the harvest, to send labourers into his harvest". We have to really take these words seriously, and have to pray that men will answer the call to the priesthood. The seeds of any vocation to the priesthood are always found in the home. I would ask all families to pray for an increase of vocations; the reality is; No priest, No Mass!



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CELEBRATIONS 2019:

Sincere congratulations to our two groups of children who will make their First Holy Communion this weekend. This is one of the greatest days of their lives, and a day they will never forget! The gift of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist is a priceless treasure; and from today onwards these children can receive Holy Communion every time they come to Mass.

I encourage all of our parents to bring your children to mass every week. Let them see how important being a part of the Catholic Community is. And now that they children have made their Communion, they may like to consider becoming an Altar Server. What greater service to the Lord than assisting at Holy Mass in this great ministry! The final group will make their First Communion next Saturday 18th May at 12noon, and the Going Forth Mass will take place on Sunday 19th May at 11.00am, followed by the Communion Reception for the children in the Parish Hall.

PARISH PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM: Saturday 1st June 2019. The approximate cost for the coach will be £15 per person. You will need to bring a packed lunch; there will be places to purchase teas & coffees. We will be leaving St. Edmund's Car Park at 8.00am and leaving Walsingham at 5.30pm. Mass will be celebrated at 12Noon, luncheon will follow, Rosary Procession / Holy Mile. You will have the opportunity to do some shopping in the little village of Walsingham, and also to visit the Anglican Shrine. Please sign up of the Board in the Porch

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,



Christian Aid Week Collection for Sierra Leone. Christian Aid Week this year is 12th – 18th May. 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 collections will be 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! There will be the opportunity of exploring new initiatives and events for the parish.

FAITH SHARING & BIBLE STUDY: One of the groups to come out of the Forming Intentional Disciples forum is a Bible Study & Faith Sharing series.

Bible Study



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 Bible Study, the second three on Faith Sharing. At our Frist Meeting on Wednesday we will be looking at the Gospel for next Sunday (5th Sunday of Easter). Please bring your Bible with you. Fr John will give and introduction to the whole concept of Bible Study and how we can explore the Sacred Scriptures at greater depth.

ST. JOHN FISHER – Parent Teacher Association: Summer Nearly New Sale! Saturday 18th May 2019. 10.30am – 1.00pm at St. John Fisher School, Burney Drive, Loughton, IG10 2DY. Children's and baby clothes, toys, books, games, equipment & accessories for sale at great prices. 50pence entrance adults, children FREE. Want a stall? E.mail SJFPTA@outlook.com
Please come along and support us!

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