

**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.

**REQUIESCANT IN PACE:** In your mercy please pray for the repose of the souls of Josie Jaego RIP, long time parishioner who passed away recently. The Requiem Mass will take place on Also: Mary Leith RIP, who passed away this week. Her Requiem Mass will be on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> June at 12.15pm at St. Edmund's, with Cremation afterwards at Forest Park Crematorium. We extend our condolences to both families in this time of great loss.

**PARISH PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM:** Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> 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. We have less than half filled a coach, if after the weekend we cannot anymore parishioners to join us on the Pilgrimage we will have to consider cancelling, as the cost of coaches these days is very expensive.

**LITURGY COMMITTEE MEETING:** Monday 20<sup>th</sup> May at 7.30pm in the Parish Retreat. Would all members kindly be present at the meeting!

**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.

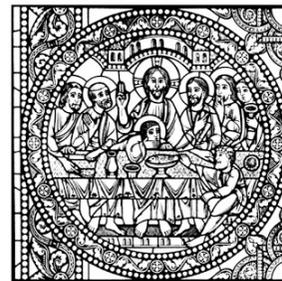
Dear Friends in Christ,

Fifth Sunday of Easter 2019

Shortly after his death Jesus gave his disciples, and us, a new commandment: 'A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another'. To be a disciple is to be called to a life of love. And in particular to agape love, which is rooted in self-sacrifice, in loving without thought of return, freely and unconditionally. Christian love is probably both the most important of all Christian virtues and the hardest to achieve. We may have faith, we may have hope, but don't always have love.



Here's the thing about love: we all want to be loved – more than anything else in the world we crave love. The Greek philosopher Aristotle said: 'No one would choose a friendless existence on condition of having all the other things in the world.' In other words, we were created to receive love and to give love. None of us is an island; none of us is without the capacity to love and be loved. Love, however, is rather like mercy: to show mercy we must first receive mercy; to love, we must first know we are loved.



So we see that to be a Christian is to be called to a life of love. But how far short we fall! None of us loves as we should love. Our hearts incline so easily to malice, envy, jealousy and rage. How can this be when we are called to love? We cannot love with our old hearts – they are callous and hard. No, a new commandment requires a new heart: the heart of the new creation, the heart of Christ.

This new heart of love is a blessing of the Spirit which we receive when we call upon God's help, grace and strength to love in those situations where we find it hard to love, to forgive, and to show mercy where we, left to our own devices, are devoid of mercy. This kind of love, agape love, is the blessing and fruit of the Spirit and to this we are called and for this we receive every spiritual blessing and grace.

Dear Friends in Christ,

5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter 2019

Jesus Christ is the founder of the Roman Catholic Faith. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The author of all creation and life at a moment in time deigned to assume the human condition in the Christ-child of Bethlehem; the child grew to the man, and the Son of God showed a group of individuals an incredible way of life and a different way to look at the world and human nature. Instead of condemning he showed them how to love, and show mercy, and was even willing to give his own life for the sake of sinful humanity. They hung Jesus upon the Cross on Calvary, but on the third day God raised him out of death, and gave him a new eternal life. Jesus showed himself to his followers giving them the strength and courage to be able to proclaim this new life through oratory, preaching, example and service. Today we continue to celebrate Jesus Christ and receive the greatest gift anyone could ever leave us, the sacrament of His Body & Blood, his life-source which becomes our spiritual food and sustenance for the journey of faith. Let us recognise the power of Jesus Christ freely given to us every time we attend the Holy Eucharist.



## JOURNEY IN Faith

### RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

There are many people who attend our weekly Mass who are not members of the Roman Catholic Faith, but often, by association, marriage etc, have affiliated themselves to our community. I would like to extend to you the opportunity of learning more about the Roman Catholic Faith through the Journey of Faith (RCIA) Programme. This is a systematic programme of learning about all aspects of Catholicism, from the Scriptural & Moral teachings of Jesus Christ, to the celebration of the Sacraments & the Sacred Liturgy; to understand the whole meaning of the Eucharist; Distinguishing the Old & New Testaments; to learn about the Blessed Virgin Mary & the Company of Saints; the different methods of prayer and meditation; the meaning of 'The Church' and what it means to be a member of the Church – Ecclesiology; the four last things, death, judgment, heaven & hell. The true meaning of the Paschal Mystery. A guided tour of the Church explaining everything. I would like to invite anyone who may be interested in this programme to speak with me, and hopefully seriously consider this Journey of Faith, possibly with the view of receiving the Easter Sacraments in 2020. Programme begins in September. Tel No: 020 8508 3492

May God Bless You All,

### FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CELEBRATIONS 2019:

Sincere congratulations to our three groups of children who have made their First Holy Communion. On Sunday they will all come together for their Going Forth celebration Mass. Parents, I ask you to now continue to bring your child to mass every Sunday, and help them to get involved in the life of faith and the Church, to become active members of parish community. If your child would like to start Altar Serving please give them encouragement. This is a wonderful way of participating in the Holy Eucharist, and at the same time give service to Almighty God. My sincere & grateful thanks to Kathryn Poulter, Elena Manara, and their young helpers, who have prepared the children over the past nine months! The service they give to our community is invaluable and exemplary. The Going Forth Celebration will continue in our Parish Hall for the First Communicants and their families.



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,

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 22<sup>nd</sup> 29<sup>th</sup> May; 12<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> June at 7.30pm in the Parish Hall. The first three will be on Bible Study, the second three on Faith Sharing. At our second Meeting on Wednesday we will be looking at the Gospel for next Sunday (6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter). Please bring your Bible with you. Fr John will give an introduction to the whole concept of Bible Study and how we can explore the Sacred Scriptures at greater depth.

STEWARDS OF THE GOSPEL – PARISH PARTNERSHIPS: The three parishes, Loughton, Epping & Waltham Abbey have met for a third time this week, looking forward in preparation for our Partnership Plan in the years ahead. We are looking at areas of pastoral ministry where we can work together; whether it be on an administration level or sacramental level. The reality is that there are most definitely fewer priests, and this forward planning is necessary to maintain the life of faith in all of our parishes. The encouragement of more lay involvement is key and essential to this process. –

**LOUGHTON PARISH GIFT AID SCHEME:** Sincere thanks to all those parishioners who have collected their Gift Aid Boxes which came into effect on the 8<sup>th</sup> 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

