

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.



EPPING FOREST FOODBANK DONATIONS: Thank you to all parishioners who donated items for the Foodbank in the weeks leading up to Christmas. Your response was so generous. Your donations are needed as much as ever now by people in our area who are struggling to put food on the table. 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 urgent need of the following items: sponge puddings, UHT milk, powdered milk, tinned carrots/peas/potatoes, long life juice, instant mash, tinned meat, tinned spaghetti, rice pudding and female deodorant. Thank you! You can also keep up to date with the Foodbank via their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/EppingForestFoodbank/

PARISH REPOSITORY: There is a selection of religious items and gifts available at the Repository. Religious cards for all occasions (mass cards, birthday & anniversary cards, get well cards, etc), and many other items.

ALTAR SOCIETY: We are in desperate need for some new members to join. If you can give an hour a month in helping to keep our Church clean and tidy; there are many different jobs to do through the Altar Society, please see Fr. John or Sharon Fitzmaurice, Tel No: 07854 919207

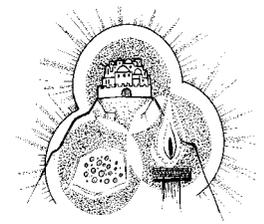
PARISH GREETERS: We are looking for some more volunteers to help the Parish Welcome Greeters at all the weekend masses. If you can give some time before mass to welcome parishioners and distribute hymns books & newsletters, we would be most grateful. This is a very valuable ministry. Please see Fr. John

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,

5th Sunday of the Year 2020

'Oh, they are salt of the earth,' we often say when we are referring to a person who is straightforward, honest and without guile. Another common saying in the same vein is 'what you see is what you get'. In today's reading, Jesus' description of his disciples as 'the salt of the earth' would have struck a chord and meant something very specific to his listeners.



In Jesus' day salt was a valuable commodity. In order to preserve food from decay in the heat salt was applied as a preservative. It also served to enhance flavour of the food. The ancient tradition of salting the sacrificial offerings denoted a purifying function. It was perhaps for this reason that new-born babies were rubbed with salt to denote purification of the addition to God's people and as a reminder of the covenant.

SALT Light
Matthew 5:13-16

Those who heard Jesus speak would have understood the meaning and tradition behind the idea of being 'salt of the earth'. In the same way as salt prevents decay and corruption, so the witness of Spirit-led Christians protects society from decay and corruption. It also adds much needed flavour to society. And, drawing on the idea that too much salt in our food can make us thirsty. St. Augustine once wrote: 'O Heavenly Father, you have put salt into our mouths that we may thirst for you.' The work of the Holy Spirit is to create within us a thirst for the things of God: for union with God, communion with him and for grace to live a life which is holy and pleasing to him. When Jesus said 'I thirst' from the cross, his thirst wasn't just physical, it was spiritual – God thirsts that we come into his presence as we long to come into him.

Jesus also calls us to be 'the light of the world'. In this way we are to be like our Mater, for in John 8:12 Jesus describes himself as 'the light of the world'. We are to be countercultural, signs of contradiction, heralds of the gospel of life in the world which, in so many respects, has lost its way.

Dear Friends in Christ
Year

Fifth Sunday of the

This weekend we welcome some students from the Pontifical North American College. They have just completed their semester exams and have a short break before the new semester begins; please extend them your usual warm welcome. Four more will arrive during the coming week.

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES: This is our Diocesan Patronal Feast; but Lourdes is also very much associated with the care of the the sick. On the Feast Day, Tuesday 11th February we will celebrate the Sacrament of the Sick after the 9.00am Mass. There



are many sick people in our parish, it would be wonderful for families to bring along all our sick and housebound parishioners for the celebration of Mass and the Holy Sacrament of Anointing. Obviously, we offer the Sacrament of Anointing of the sick to those who will truly benefit from it – those suffering from physical, emotional and mental ailments are truly welcomed to receive the Sacrament! Please make every effort to attend!

PREPARING FOR LENT: This year we will have a Lenten Programme of talks, which are based on Scripture. Our Forming Intentional Disciples team advocated this programme. Lent is the time of year when we can embrace certain disciplines, but also at the same time do something special or extra during the Holy Season. The Programme we will use is called 'The Big Picture' – It is an inspirational Bible course, explaining God's plan of Salvation for humanity. When you begin to understand the Sacred Scriptures, it opens a whole new world of discovery; the power of God's Word can take root deeply in our lives and transform us. Course dates: Wednesdays 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th March 2020. Commencing at 7.30pm in the Parish Retreat. Please to attend this course. The study book costs £10 with CD included.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY - BECOMING A SENIOR: Next Saturday 15th February I will reach the ripe old age of 65; officially becoming a Senior Citizen. I was once told that wisdom comes with years. I would like you to join me in the Parish Hall after the Saturday 6.00pm Mass, there will be a finger Buffett & Wine & Refreshments. Some of my family will be present; and several seminarians from the Pontifical North American College. Please put this date in your diary. This is a General Invitation to the whole Parish Community. I really do hope that you can make it!



May God Bless You All

FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES: Next meeting will take place on Monday 10th February at 8.00pm in the Parish Retreat. Our core team meets monthly. All parishioners are welcome to these meetings; we plan future events, share our experiences over the past month, and have a period of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament at the end.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME: Sunday 9th February 2020, at 10.00am in the Parish Hall. The next Parents' Meeting will take place next Wednesday 12th February 2020. The Theme will be Reconciliation. Our guest speaker is Dr. Paul Doherty OBE.

RCIA PROGRAMME: will continue Thursday 13th February 2020 at 8.00pm in the Presbytery. Theme: MARY – Mother of God, Mother of the Church. 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



PARISH PARTNERSHIP YOUTH MASS: The third of our Youth Masses will take place on Sunday 29th March at 6.00pm at St. Edmund's. The arrangements will be largely the same as before. We hope and pray that as many of our young people will be involved in the celebration. There will be a planning meeting for all who are interested on Wednesday 19th February at 7.00pm in the St. Edmund's Parish Retreat. We will need readers, singers, musicians etc. the more the merrier! The feedback from the previous two Youth Masses has been extremely positive. Please start spreading the word about this third Mass to everyone and we hope to see many of you at the meeting! There will be Pizza & refreshments after the Mass in the Parish Hall

YOUR WEEKLY OFFERTORY: Is your personal gift to God and reflects gratitude for everything he gives to us. If you are a Taxpayer and would like to join the Parish Gift Aid Scheme, all we need is your name and address; Gift Aid forms are available in the porch of the church. Please ensure that you use your Weekly envelope, otherwise we are unable to claim the tax back. Thanks



CATHOLIC WEEKLY NEWSPAPERS: Are available in the porch each weekend; there are a variety of papers and magazines. Please consider one!