

News from the Catholic Churches of The Holy Child & St Joseph and Our Lady of Ransom

Volume 3 Issue 2

August 2019

Services

St Joseph's:

Sunday

Masses

8.15 am

9.30 am

11 am

6.30 pm

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Our Lady's

Kempston:

Sunday

Mass

9.30 am

Please see the

weekly

Newsletter for

more Services

and

Information on

a variety of

events at The

Holy Child &

St Joseph

Bedford and

Our Lady's

Kempston.

Welcome to the Summer edition of our Quarterly Bulletin

A word from Canon Seamus

At this time of year many of us look forward to a holiday, a rest time from the demands of work and of life in general. We need time to just be. Much activity can and does exhaust and we become drained of energy and enthusiasm. Time out is a good thing for the well-being of the whole person. We need also to take time to build up our spiritual reserves which can be depleted if we do not return again to the source of our spiritual lives, Jesus Christ, who waits for us to come to Him and rest a while in His company. Like Mary in the gospel the other week, we need to put aside our busy activity and sit at the feet of the Lord in prayer, otherwise the demands of life will consume us and rob us of peace and joy. "Come to me all who labour and are over-burdened and I will give you rest". This is Jesus' invitation and promise to us. So let us accept this invitation and find rest for our souls.

Sadly we will be saying farewell to Fr Nathaniel after just a short year with us, when he leaves, I will be Hospital Chaplain pro tem. We may be getting some relief at various times, but the situation is uncertain, pray for us, and have Happy holidays!



Canon Seamus Keenan and Father Nathaniel Dile Onwuekwe

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve;
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.

I asked for health that I might do great things; I was given sickness, that I might do better things.

I asked for riches, that I might be happy; I was given poverty, that I might be wise.

I asked for power to have the praise of others;
I was given weakness, to feel the need for God.

I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life;
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.

I received nothing I asked for, but everything I hoped for. Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayer was answered;
I am, among all people, most richly blessed.

NEWS FROM OUR DIOCESE & PASTORAL AREA

PARISH FORUM

The Parish Forum provides a platform for parishioners and parish groups to share ideas and communicate views for the benefit of the whole Parish. The Forum meets quarterly, if you wish to raise an issue or have a suggestion, please speak to a member, see notice board for the details.

LIFE IS PRECIOUS

Catholics believe that there is something special about human beings, being human is not the same as being anything else in the cosmos; different in nature from being a rock, a tree, an insect, or a chimpanzee. Humans are 'in the image of God'. That means we share something of the nature of God, we know the difference between good and evil, we have the ability to be creative, we have a capacity to love and seek justice. Everything Christian Catholics believe about the sanctity of life follows on from this; and the most wonderful of those facts is a belief that God knows every human individually, from the baby that lives only a few tragic minutes to the great-grandparent who celebrates their hundredth birthday. We also believe that God has an unconditional total love for every human. (This is exhilarating but also challenging because it means He must have loved Hitler as much as He loved Saint Francis of Assisi....) It means that God loves you, wherever in the world you are reading this right now.

Several things follow logically from this: human life is very precious; all humans should treat all humans with respect, and that includes respecting ourselves. Christian Catholics do try to do something worthwhile with their lives; and with good works try to personally avoid harmful excesses such as abusing drugs, alcohol, tobacco that can also harm others close to you.

Human life has absolute dignity, perhaps the most important belief of all is that God himself has inhabited a human body and so He has conferred utter dignity on human flesh; we believe that God as Jesus, was Himself walking and talking on this planet.

Knights of St Columba: On Saturday 15th June in this Centenary year of the order of KSC, Brothers from our local Council 338 and Province 38, gathered with family and friends to witness Brothers Jim & Michael Kinsella receive 50 year service medals and a special letter from Supreme Knight Bertie Grogan. The letter was presented by our PGK Pat Martin at the special Mass amidst a large congregation. Canon Seamus was joined by Provincial Chaplain Father Chris Perry as concelebrant. Brothers Jim & Michael have for



over 50 years been a shining example of the three great principals of the Order, Unity, Charity & Fraternity. Our thanks to Canon Seamus and Fr Chris and all who made this a most memorable day.

GRACE BEFORE MEALS?

The word "Grace" connotes several things in the English language, derived from the Latin gratia it means 'a favour' or its counterpart "Thanks". The word 'gratis', which means 'free', is derived from gratia. "Grace" stands both for the prayer for God's blessing on the gift of food as well as for the thanks we wish to express for this gift.

For a long time saying Grace was the natural way to start a meal in a Christian home, but this practice is slowly being forgotten. On formal occasions like a wedding reception, Pilgrimage or Parish meals, grace is said in an elaborate manner, usually by our Priest; and grace includes both the blessings on the food and our thanks for the gift. Jesus lifted His hands in prayer before He multiplied the loaves and fishes to feed the five thousand & before He changed bread and wine into His body and blood at the last supper: His prayer was not only for the miracles that were to follow but for the gift of food, both material and spiritual.

THE LANGUAGE WE USE

Much 'churchy' language we use in worship is hard to understand for some who are unfamiliar with it. For example what is a 'Collect'? Why not say a 'prayer'? There are some words we should explain rather than stop using. The Collect is one of the oldest and most universal forms **of prayer** in the church.

The Collect as a prayer form, dates back to at least the 5th century Roman church. As the other use of collect in English suggests, the root Latin word means "gather together." The prayer was a means of gathering the faithful for worship, and was hence an opening act of the Liturgy. It was also a collective prayer that brought all of the people's requests, petitions, and prayers into one focused expression.

The Collect is unique in its structure:

- I. Address: The prayer begins by naming our God we worship, most often in the Person of God the Father.
- II. Acknowledgement: The quality or characteristic of God is mentioned upon which the prayer request is based.
- III. Petition: We ask for a specific thing that we need: guidance, forgiveness, faith, etc.
- IV. Aspiration: The result that we hope will come out of the granting of our petition.
- V. Pleading: The prayer is said through the mercy and merit of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who by His redemption and ascension is the mediator of our faith and worship.

There are many ways we can speak the language of prayer in our gathered worship. We can pray the words of Scripture back to God (especially the Psalms). We can voice impromptu prayers as individuals. We can use historic forms such as The Lord's Prayer, praying together as one voice, but the Collect brings all of the people's requests, petitions, and prayers into one plea to God.

THE LANGUAGE WE USE, REPENTANCE:

Definition of sorry. 1 : feeling sorrow, regret, or penitence. 2 : mournful, sad.

A definition of repent/repentance "a repenting or being penitent; feeling of sorrow, especially for wrongdoing; compunction; contrition; remorse." Repentance is also known as a change of mind, turning away from sin and a return to God.

Repentance includes being sorry, but goes deeper; it is not just about what we say but about what we do. The word literally means 'to turn around', to go in a new direction, to resolve to put things right. Our sincerity is proved not just by what we say we regret, but our resolve to change it. In years gone by, it was common to see black-suited men with grim faces on street corners holding placards with a mortal warning to passers-by, 'Repent – Flee from the Wrath to come'. It was unhelpful to put such menace into the word 'repent'. Jesus certainly warned of the dire consequences of failing to repent, but his attitude to repentance was far more positive than that. When Jesus was scolded for keeping company with sinners, he replied in St Luke's Gospel: 'It is not healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'

Repentance is a radical change of mind wrought by the Holy Spirit through the Word of God that is given with the gift of faith. The results of repentance are a change in attitude about sin that is radically different than the attitude we had about sin before repentance was given, and a change in behaviour. There is no self-justification when repentance is given by God. The repenters' purpose has been altered, as it were, in his own mind. His intentions are not to return to that sin, or to sins in general because he has also been given a new heart. This does not mean that the truly repentant will never return to that sin, but that it is his real intention not to sin again.

A small prayer for repentance:

God, thank you for making repentance possible by sending Jesus to live and die in my place. Thank you that my sin doesn't separate me from your love; sometimes it is hard to repent, especially when I am stubborn and angry and I just want my own way, please give me a repentant heart and help me to love you more in Jesus' name, Amen.

'THE BEGINNING OF A NEW DAY'

This is the beginning of a new day. God has given me this day to use as I will.

I can waste it or use it for good, but what I do today is important because I am exchanging a day of my life for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place something that I have traded for it. I want it to be gain and not a loss, good and not evil, success and not a failure, in order that I shall not regret the price I have paid for it.



**Morning is not only a sun rise but a beautiful miracle of God that defeats darkness and spreads light.
May God Bless you and give you a beautiful day.**

- Author Unknown -

SOME PATRON SAINTS YOU MAY OR MAY NOT KNOW'

ST ADJUTOR is said to have either escaped Muslim captors during the First Crusade and escaped by swimming (according to various stories, he either swam all the way to France or swam to Crusader territory, or was recaptured and then transported back to France by Mary Magdalene! or else calmed a whirlpool that had emerged beside a boat he was travelling on) From these stories he is now considered to be the patron saint of swimmers and those at danger from drowning.



ST BALTHASAR medieval tradition held that the three kings who visited Jesus in the stable came from all corners of the Medieval world; Balthazar hailed from Africa often held as Egypt. At the time, Romani card sharps and sideshow sleight-of-hand merchants were popular entertainers across Europe. Because of the mistaken belief they came from Egypt, (hence the name Gypsies) the Egyptian king St Balthasar became the patron saint of playing card manufacturers.



ST BERNARDINO OF SIENA was so well known for his crowd-pleasing public preaching in the early 15th century that he's now considered the patron saint of advertising and public relations.



ST COLUMBANUS spent much of the 6th and 7th century roaming around Europe, and that love of the open road and travel led to him being the patron saint of motorcyclists.



ST DROGO was afflicted by a mystery ailment that made him so physically repulsive that he's now considered the patron saint of unattractive people. Entirely unrelatedly, he is also the patron saint of coffeehouses.



ST ERASMUS Bishop of Formia in modern-day Italy, went through quite an ordeal during the Roman Empire's persecution of the Christians in the 3rd and 4th centuries. Initially captured and imprisoned sometime in the late 200s, Erasmus is said to have been freed by an angel and fled to Turkey to continue his preaching. Arrested a second time, however, Erasmus' undying faith so angered the Emperor Maximian that he had him tortured, it's for that Erasmus is now the patron saint of stomach ailments, colic, and appendicitis.



ST GUMMARUS of Belgium an 8th-century figure whose wife, a local noblewoman named Guinmarie, was known for her shrewish and abusive behaviour. Despite his attempts to salvage their relationship, they separated, after which he went on to found an abbey at Lier and became the patron saint of difficult marriages.

ST JANUARIUS a vial of blood belonging to the saint, a 3rd century Bishop of Naples, was saved after his death in 305. The blood is the subject of a longstanding miracle that claims, despite its age, to liquefy on three dates in the year: 19th Sept, 16th Dec and Saturday before the first Sunday in May. He is patron saint of blood banks.



In 2015, the blood of St. Januarius liquefied in the presence of Pope Francis. The last time this happened was 1848, for Pope Pius IX, who was the last pope to rule as the Sovereign of the Papal States, which fell completely to the Italian Army in 1870.

JOHN PRIESTLEY WARMOLL
'APOSTLE OF BEDFORD'



1830 - 1885

Late on Christmas Eve, 1863, a newly-ordained Catholic priest, Father John Priestley Warmoll, a convert Anglican clergyman, arrived in Bedford alone, unnoticed and almost penniless. Bishop Amherst of Northampton had sent him "to ascertain the possibility of establishing a Mission in the County Town of Bedford." It seemed a forlorn hope, but he obeyed his bishop without hesitation. There were fewer than 100 Catholics in the entire county, and only one priest and one chapel, in Shefford. The young priest celebrated his three Christmas Masses, the first known Masses in Bedford since the Reformation, in a humble cottage, 7 Little Grove Place, the home of the Tandy family. *[Still extant today]*

The congregation totalled 14 out of a population of 14,000. Yet it was perhaps amazing that after three centuries of persecution, there were even 14 brave souls still remaining true to their Faith. Setting up the Bedford Mission was a daunting task. Since neither Father Warmoll nor his little flock had any funds, he placed the first of hundreds of begging letters in the three main Catholic journals. He then rented rooms at 48 Offa Street, above a wash-house near the prison, converting two bedrooms into a small chapel. He himself lived in great poverty in a tiny attic room.

The street's of Bedford have nearly all had several names in their long history. The first map of Bedford was made in 1610 by John Speed. Speed's map only shows the north corner of St Peters Green with the start of Offal Lane (now The Broadway) at the very top. By 1765 it is included as far as the present junction with Wellington Street. Tavistock Street as we know it would have been a route into Bedford. Offal Lane was so called as this was the place where Bedford's inhabitants dumped their rubbish and offal on the outskirts of town. During the 18th Century the name was briefly changed to Offa Street - a name with quite different associations - it refers to King Offa, a great Mercian King who was rumoured to be buried here in Bedford.

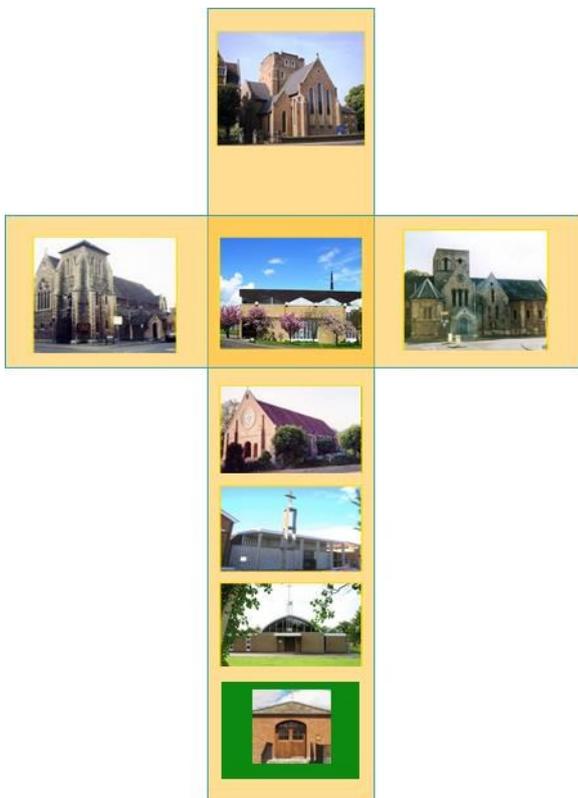
After two years begging for donations, he was able to build a substantial presbytery and chapel/schoolroom in Brereton Road. But soon the Sunday congregations, swelled by converts, packed the new chapel, and during the week, the school-children also filled the presbytery rooms.

So Fr Warmoll, later Canon and then Provost, continued begging for his next project, an imposing church. He resolved that the new sanctuary should be provided by children. All the main subjects of decoration were to be the childhood of Our Blessed Lord, the childhood of His Blessed Mother Mary, youthful saints and patrons of the young, a Sanctuary of the Holy Childhood.

About 2,000 children, rich and poor, generously responded to his signed donations booklet. Their names are all recorded by Canon Warmoll in a book discovered in 1986 under a slab beneath the High Altar. The main portion of the new church of The Holy Child and St Joseph, was opened in 1874 by Bishop Amherst, with Archbishop, later Cardinal Manning preaching.

Within another two years a large, elegant school was opened, dedicated to the Holy Child. Space does not permit accounts of the Canon's tireless zeal in drawing souls closer to God: his solicitude for the spiritual welfare of his ever-growing flock, nearing 200; his ongoing encouragement of conversions; his affection for the schoolchildren, over 200 in number, including many poor non-Catholics; his active membership of several Bedford societies, meeting townfolk of every class; his kindly words and endearing smile for everyone he met. However, his exhausting labours and constant financial worries took their toll, and in

1885 he died suddenly, aged only 55. The Requiem Mass was attended by his distraught parishioners, almost all the diocesan clergy, and by many non-Catholic clergy and townfolk. Astonishingly, about one-third of the population of Bedford lined the streets and packed the cemetery, it was an extraordinary manifestation of the fruit of his ecumenical endeavours. Within 22 years Canon Warmoll had built up a thriving parish community, and laid the foundations for the network of Catholic parishes and schools that exist in Bedford today. This holy and remarkable founder of the Bedford Mission left us a great example: he preached a Gospel of love - love of God and of neighbour; and he followed this himself with all his heart, his mind, his soul and his strength. May he rest in well deserved peace.



QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

There may be occasions when you want to contact the parish office to request help or information or to make specific arrangements for a Mass or occasion, here are a few notes to assist:

Adding names to the Sunday Mass prayer intention list: Please contact our Clergy either in person or via the parish email address with details of the person you wish to have remembered on the sick or those who have died list.

Mass intention: If you wish to request Mass intentions, please contact our Clergy as above or by letter. Give details of the person or family you wish to have remembered and if it is RIP or a special intention. Because of the demand, we cannot promise that your Mass will be said on the specific date that you ask for, but we will try to accommodate if the diary allows, on or near to your request. It is customary to offer a donation with each request.

The Sick: If anyone you know is sick or for some medical/physical reason and is unable long term to attend Church to receive the Sacraments, please speak to the Clergy as above, and we will arrange for their name to be added to the Parish visits list. If someone is going into hospital, the ward will not generally inform the Chaplaincy so please speak with, or email Father Nathaniel, and we will arrange for them to be visited by a member of the Chaplaincy team.

Funerals: Usually, the Funeral Director will contact our Clergy to arrange the date of the funeral Mass. Please make an appointment to discuss the order of Service, Liturgy and Music.

Marriage: A minimum of three months' notice should be given by those wishing to marry in the Church. Both parties must be legally free to marry, and at least one party should be a baptised Catholic. Prior to the wedding, a number of preparatory meetings are held to meet the needs of the couple who are getting married.

Baptism: The Sacrament of Baptism can be celebrated within the Parish Mass or as a separate service usually held on a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. One Godparent must be a practising Catholic. If you want your child to receive the Sacrament of Baptism, please complete the form which may be obtained from the presbytery, and arrange a meeting with Father Seamus.

First Holy Communion: Children aged from 8 years (Year 3) join a Saturday morning programme which runs from October until May during which the Parish Catechists, Clergy and Parents work closely together to prepare the children to celebrate their First Confession and First Holy Communion. Parents' meetings are held throughout the programme as we work towards this special moment in your child's journey into the Sacrament of communion. Forms can be collected when announced in the newsletter in the autumn.

Confirmation: Young people aged 13 and over (Year 9) join a programme on a Saturday evening which takes place between January and June. The programme helps the young people to develop and explore their faith in preparation for their commitment to the membership of the supportive community of God's Church, through the Sacrament of Confirmation, please complete the form which may be obtained from the presbytery.

Use of the Guild Room, the Guild room is available to Parishioners to use for specifically authorised events, there is no set charge, but a donation to Parish funds are appreciated Please contact Father Seamus to discuss .