

PRAY FOR THE SICK

Anniversaries:

Jeffrey Carlile, Catherine Nelson, Daniel Kilvington, Mary Dennehy, Jacqueline Duncan, Christie Nichol, Laura Pert, Joanna Elflain, Stephen Wheatley, Guilielmuis Comerford, Ronald Johnson, Franceseca Nippress, Reginald Smith, Lygia Walters, Richard Thomas, Clare Woolaghan.

CAFOD

Unite against Coronavirus

Out of love for our sisters and brothers overseas, **sign our petition to the the Prime Minister** asking him to ensure that the most vulnerable people are the priority in the UK's international efforts as well as at home.

<https://e-activist.com/page/59334/petition/1>

Every step we take now getting food and safe, clean water to families, will help prevent deaths and reduce suffering.

Please donate

<https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal>



Pray the Rosary to unite in prayer for the pandemic to end



Trinity Vacancies

- Teacher of Science
- Teacher of Science
- Teacher of Home Economics

Please visit the schools website for more details.

St Mary's Chingford Vacancy

Special Needs Assistant (SNA)

Please visit the schools website for more details.

Loyola Vacancies

EYFS Teacher and SENCO Vacancies
Interested candidates please apply online via www.TES.com If you have any queries please email finance@loyola.essex.sch.uk.

Foodbanks/Charities

Are still in need of donations during this current crisis



ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

Woodford Green

A FAIRTRADE PARISH

Parish Office: 020 8504 1686

Friary: 020 8504 1688

Email: parishoffice@stthomaswoodford.org



Website: www.stthomaswoodford.org

Facebook: @STOCWoodford

Twitter: @STOCWoodford



6th Sunday of Easter Sunday Cycle A Sunday 17th May 2020



The Easter season is drawing towards a close and we are about to celebrate the feasts of the Ascension of the Lord and Pentecost. The focus is on the gift of the Spirit, the Spirit of truth.

First Reading Acts 8:5-8. 14-17

After Philip had brought Christ's saving message to the people of a Samaritan town, Peter and John confirmed them with the gift of the Spirit.

Second Reading 1 Peter 3:15-18

Peter exhorts us to be faithful witnesses to our hope in Christ, albeit that it will probably mean that we will have to suffer with him.

Gospel John 14:15-21

At the Last Supper Jesus reassures the disciples that he will not leave them orphans, but will send them the Spirit, so that they may always remain united with him and the Father.

Responsorial psalm

Cry out with joy to God all the earth

Does it matter?

For eight weeks you have been deprived of the sacraments. Has it made a difference? I suspect there will be a range of different answers to the question. Not so long ago there was a widespread belief in the existence of Limbo. It was never part of authentic catholic teaching, though it was widely taught and believed. The starting premise for some theologians, teachers or catechists was the importance of baptism. Original Sin loomed large in preaching and catechetical. It was an insuperable barrier to any relationship with God, and the purpose of baptism was to remove this blockage so that life with God could begin. Without Baptism there could be no entry into heaven. From this it was a short step to the common practice some of us knew of "getting the baby done" immediately, even before poor mums had gathered sufficient strength to make it to church with the babe. For ultimately the only alternatives are heaven and hell – for eternity. Without the passport of baptism no mite however precious could pass through the pearly gates.

Yet unbaptised babies meeting a premature death were given a sort of sop. Limbo was not a place of pain and punishment. But definitely there was no vision of God. Picture how this harsh teaching heaped more agony on parents grieving the death of a newly-born. It was just another part of a cast-iron unbending structure of an implacable God dictating every detail in terms of sin. Now of course we know better. It is our business to spread an understanding of baptism as the prelude, the first step of a glorious life-long growth of knowledge and love of God, his family and world. Baptism provides the basic equipment by using which a person becomes progressively a child of God, perhaps a servant of God, certainly a friend of God through their gradual growth to full intimacy with Him.

However God is not tied to any restrictions about whom he allows into this dimension of faith and spiritual growth either on earth or in heaven. Nor are his hands tied by how he does it. Is Hitler in heaven, or Stalin, or Judas? We really know so little and it is not our business to know. God being all-powerful has no problem about admitting the unbaptised. We are at a privileged stage of Catholic teaching and understanding where the Mercy of God towers over all considerations. The other sacraments are the further gifts to encourage and enhance the baptismal growth. Yet for 8 weeks – and more to come – we have to live without receiving these meetings with Jesus, his Father and Spirit.

He has deprived us of the sacraments. Are we the poorer? Has God provided through other channels what we would normally have received through these channels of grace? The temporary suspension should drive us to reflect just on what God is giving us – in baptism, communion, reconciliation, marriage confirmation and in sickness. Do these sacraments really matter? See next week's thrilling instalment....



**On Thursday 21st
May**

**It is the Ascension
of the Lord**

**Which is a Holy day
of obligation**

The Parish Office will be closed



**Join us for
Mass on-line
live this
Sunday at
10am
Live Mass**

To view Live Mass go to
www.stthomaswoodford.org/watch-mass-live.

Mass Intentions

Sunday 17th May

People of parish
Patrick Grisdaill RIP

Monday 18th May

Kay Stokes RIP

Tuesday 19th May

Angela Barrett RIP

Wednesday 20th May

Paddy Kileen RIP
Trinity intentions

Thursday 21st May (Ascension)

People of parish
Dr Anton Sebastiampillai

Friday 22nd May

Norma McMahon anniv

Saturday 23rd May

Rory & Patrick RIP

Sunday 24th May

People of parish
Mario Maestranzi RIP

Message from the Bishop National Marriage Week

I would like to take this opportunity to send my greetings to all married couples, especially those celebrating significant anniversaries this year, and all those who are preparing for marriage. We have recently celebrated the World Day of Prayer for Vocations, and the church is greatly enriched by all those who live the vocation to marriage, helping their spouse and their children on the path to heaven and revealing something of Christ's love for his church through their own commitment to each other. You are all in my prayers, but most especially those who are experiencing illness and bereavement. I am also aware of the deep disappointment experienced by the many engaged couples who have had to postpone weddings or do not yet know how their weddings will be affected, and you too are in my prayers at this time of uncertainty.

Many families will be under a great deal of pressure with all the additional stresses associated with the pandemic, and sadly some relationships will be pushed to breaking point: please do not be afraid to seek help, or leave it too late – Marriage Care is one of a number of organisations offering remote access to marriage counselling, and in our own diocese the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society continues to provide vital support to children and families who are experiencing difficulties.

As Pope Francis recently tweeted "The Family is the hope of the future. Let us pray especially for families facing serious difficulties: may Our Lord assist them."