

Austin O.F.M.

"St. Anthony's Bread"

St. Anthony is today, as he was in his lifetime, the faithful friend of all in trouble, especially the poor and the needy. "St. Anthony's Bread" means that when a person prays for the intercession of the Saint for a favour, he or she promises to give a gift ("bread") to the poor or some charitable cause.

This custom goes back to the year 1888. At that time there lived in Toulon, France, a devout young woman named Louise Bouffier, who managed a small bakery store.

One morning Louise couldn't open the door with her key. Neither could a locksmith, who told her he would have to break the door open. While he went to get his tools, Louise promised St. Anthony she would give some bread to the poor if the door could be opened without force. When the locksmith returned, she begged him to try just once more. The door opened.

Louise kept her promise and the poor received their bread. This answer to Louise's prayers became known to her friends, and they began to imitate her example. One of them bought a little statue of St. Anthony and placed it in the back room of the shop. It soon became a well-known shrine.

From Toulon this devotion spread to all parts of the world. Sometimes travellers going on a long voyage would promise an offering in bread to St. Anthony if they made their journey safely. Sometimes a mother asked for the health of her sick child. A family might ask for the conversion of someone who was dying. All those petitions accompanied by a promise of bread were granted.

Pope Leo XIII, in his letter of 1898 on the Thirteen Tuesdays, commended the practice of giving "St. Anthony's Bread" to the needy.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

If anyone would like to join the rota for composing the Bidding Prayers at St. Thomas', please contact the parish office.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

The rotas for the Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day for: Ministers of Communion, Readers, Ushers & Sacristans, are displayed on the notice-board at the back of the church. We urgently need additional Ushers for the 7pm Christmas Eve Mass and the 10am and 11.30am Masses on Christmas Day. In addition, we also need a Sacristan for the 10.00am Mass. If you can help with any of these, please add your name to the list on the table at the back of the church.

IN TOUCH

There are still copies available of the parish magazine at the back of the church. Price £2. Collect your copy this weekend as they will run out over Christmas.

CHURCH CLEANING

The Christmas Clean of the church will be on Tuesday, 23rd December at 10.30am. Please put this date in your diary. Don't leave it to the few—just half an hour of your time would make a big difference. Thank you.

PARISH OFFICE

Please note that the Parish Office is closed on Christmas Eve and re-opens on Monday, 5th January 2015.

There will be an SVP collection after all Masses this weekend

CHURCH PORCH

PLEASE PLEASE do not leave jumble in the church porch as we do not have storage space.

Christmas says that being a baby and being a child, as well as being grown-up is what God is all about! A baby is an amazing symbol of helplessness and power! In its total vulnerability it is completely trusting - yet does something for you that only very special people can do - lets you be yourself! Which is the Christmas message - your God wants you to enjoy being yourself, as much as he enjoys you being you!

What do you owe God? From our side we can truly say everything! But what about what God says? Will you be asking the persons who give you presents - how much do I owe you?!!! You smile - but why do we do it to God? This baby is telling you that you have been given to yourself - God says - you owe nothing, it is a present, make sure you enjoy it, and we know that life is full when we know we are loved - need to love - and enjoy being where both of these can happen - that is what Father, Son and Spirit means - and you are made for that. When God chose to be looked after - he asked you and me!

What is this baby telling us about God? The way to be like God is to be a genuine human being - words like love, gentleness, compassion, peace and joy... when these human qualities are real, only when they have skin on, will they blend perfectly with what it means to be God. *Where you find love, enjoy it and celebrate; wherever you find love damaged, mend it; where you find love missing - bring it with you!*

The Gospel begins with shepherds being told not to be afraid, and ends with Jesus telling the disciples at the Ascension - don't be afraid - indeed the whole meaning of the Gospel is in that tiny, helpless baby

clinging to a human breast - God saying to us wherever you meet the need for love - *Don't be afraid, its only me - and I love you!*

From all of us to all of you - peace and goodness!

Austin, ofm

FAREWELL CELEBRATION

Preparations for Farewell Celebrations for Frs. Austin, Brian and Michael will take place in early January. Details to follow.

OFFERINGS

Your offerings at the Christmas Masses will be for the Community.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

Christmas Eve—24th Dec.

St. Thomas'

5pm preceded by carols at 4.30pm

7pm preceded by carols at 6.30pm

11.15pm Carols leading into Midnight Mass

Chigwell Convent

8.45pm Carols leading into Mass at 9pm

CHRISTMAS DAY

St. Thomas' 8.30am, 10am & 11.30am

St. James (URC) Buckhurst Hill 9am

Chigwell Convent 10am

FUNDRAISING

Tom Kennedy is running the marathon for local charity Haven House in memory of Dr. Tom Cruz. Tom will say a few words after Masses on Sunday, 28th December followed by a collection or you can support him at justgiving.com/TomHH

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Sick:- Sheila Abrams-Batley, Benjamin & Teresa Bonaventhor, Rosette Bradbury, Portia Brighten, Angela & Kerry Bromfield, Julia Croft, Irene & Carter de Freitas, Don Dourado, Ros Drew, Joan Farrelly, Ray Finney, Fr Jim Fitzpatrick, Kevin Godkin, Joan Green, Pat Greene, Stephen Gunn, Doris Harriss, Christine Hewstone, Rowland Hill, Phyllis Kelly, Sadie Kelly, Fr. Austin Kinsella, Della Kerr, Linda & Grandson Jenson, Mary Luxton, Roger Machin, Lisa Maguire, Mary McKay, John Meneghan, Jutta Menzies, Kay Meyler, Harry Moody, Patrick Moran, Patricia Morgan, Miriam Mullally, Fr Con O'Connell OFM, Mary O'Donnell, Gary Peile, Anneli Prowse, Lily Reding, Joan Reynolds, Jacky Rott, Debbie Smythe, Joan Steadman, Bert Suffield, Grace Taylor, Sr. Tian (Cold Ash), Teresa Warnock, Claire & Lauren, Kian Wright.

and for all the sick and housebound of the parish.

Lately Dead.: Frances Finch, Fr. Jim Fitzpatrick, Judy Gilmartin, Peter Hinton, Fr. Brian Nash, Fr. Jim Fitzpatrick,

Anniv: Craig & Chevonne Lobo, Bernard Casper, William and Iris Mansbridge,

CHRISTMAS FAYRE RAFFLE

Prizes are awaiting collection from the parish office.

SOUP RUN FOR THE HOMELESS

We would like to say a big thank you to the parents of children in the Nursery at St. Anthony's School for the food donations for the Soup Run.

FREEDOM PASS FOUND

Mary Farrell—please collect from parish office. Also specsavers glasses in blue case.

ST. JOHN'S SPECIAL NEEDS SCHOOL

Wishes to thank everyone who bought raffle tickets last weekend. Winners are Jim Murphy and S. Lukose. Please collect from parish office.

ECUMENICAL ADVENT SERVICE

Many thanks to those who supported the service, particularly to the readers, the choirs of Loyola and All Saints and the CWL. The retiring collection raised £600 which has been divided equally between the Redbridge Cold Weather Centre and Mary's Meals. Many thanks for your generosity.

STEWARDS ROTA

We urgently require Stewards to join the rota for the 10am Mass at St. Thomas' More information about this ministry contact David 07905 741033.

SUNDAY MASSES

St. Thomas'

1st Mass Sat. 6pm; 8.30am;
10am (Children's Liturgy)
11.30am

Chigwell Convent

10am

St. James URC

(Buckhurst Hill)

9am (Children's Liturgy)

WEEKDAY MASSES

St. Thomas'

10am

Chigwell Convent

9.30am

Saturday 10am

(1st Weds of the month)

No morning Mass

Trinity High School

8.20am on Lower Site.

SATURDAY

CONFESSIONS

St. Thomas'

10.30am—11.30am

5.00pm—5.45pm

Chigwell Convent

After 10am Mass

BAPTISMS

1st and 3rd Sundays

Of the month



St Thomas of Canterbury

557/559 High Road, Woodford Green, Essex IG8 0RB

Served by the Franciscans



A FAIRTRADE PARISH



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4TH SUNDAY IN ADVENT CYCLE B

21ST DECEMBER 2014



God is building a house where all people may experience unity and peace. This is our home and Jesus is coming to show us the way so that we may avoid the hurt and disappointment of broken promises.

First Reading

(2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14.16)

King David wants to build a house, a temple, for the Lord; but the Lord promises rather to build a house, a dynasty, for David.

Second Reading

(Romans 16:25-27)

The mystery of God, revealed in Jesus, has to be made known to pagans everywhere to bring them to faith.

Gospel

(Luke 1:26-38)

The angel Gabriel reveals to Mary that she is to be the mother of God's Son. He will be given the throne of his ancestor David and his reign will have no end.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord