

NEWSLETTER 2nd August 2020

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Join our Facebook group: St Teresa's Parish Community Princes Risborough

Parish Priest: Fr. Lijo Jose MSFS

Deacon: Sean Duffy (343705)

Safeguarding Representative - Phil Hughes (345006)

My dear parishioners

What a joy it was to be able to celebrate the first public masses in our beautiful church since the lockdown. I felt so happy and privileged to celebrate with at least some of you present in the church.

I know that the restrictions that we have to follow are very burdensome but of course they are necessary as we all need to feel safe. We will have to continue in this way until we have further guidelines from the Government and the Diocese.

I want you to know that I continue to hold all of you in prayer- those who are able to come to mass and those who remain at home for the time being. I pray for all your intentions and I ask God to bless you all and to keep you safe.

Please see details below for booking for the Masses on Wednesday 5th and Sat/Sun 8th/9th August 2020.

As I was watching the news this week, I could not help but be appalled at how fast Covid 19 is spreading throughout the world. As I am writing this newsletter there are more than 17. 1 million confirmed cases and 669,000 reported deaths worldwide. It is really horrendous news. So much suffering and pain. So many deaths. And there is still so much uncertainty and anxiety about what will happen in the future. Will we ever return to normal? There seems to be a lot of talk about a 'new normal. 'But what does that mean?

I hope that Sunday's gospel can help us as we grapple with unprecedented situation, we are living in. The gospel is from Matthew 14:13-21. It is the account of the miracle of the loaves and fishes, which is very well known to most of us. But there is an introduction to this miracle (13-14) and verse 14 is worth paying attention to, **'So as he stepped ashore he saw a large crowd; and he took pity on them and healed their sick.'**

When he saw the crowd, Jesus was deeply moved with compassion. The verb that expresses Jesus' compassion is really meaningful- it is as if his heart is broken with all the pain and suffering that he witnesses.

And I think that when Jesus witnesses all the pain and suffering in the world today, he is deeply moved with compassion. When he looks at us personally, and sees our worries and anxieties and suffering, he is also deeply moved with compassion. He is interested in every detail of our lives. Nothing is irrelevant to him. This is so comforting and consoling for each one of us and for our world. He loves us – it is as simple as that.

The compassion of Jesus towards the crowd moves him to action as the rest of the gospel makes clear to us. The crowd have come to see him, to hear him speak, perhaps to ask for healing. It is getting late and they are hungry- they have no food and they can't buy any in this particular place.

The disciples see the problem- they cannot see any other solution than to send the people away so that they can buy food. All there is five loaves and two fish. Obviously not enough!

The disciples emphasize the problem, - Not enough food. But the heart of Jesus is breaking when faced with the human need and suffering that he sees. He orders the people to sit down and blesses the loaves and the fish- and as the disciples distribute it, there is food in abundance. He shows the disciples that with the power of faith and prayer the loaves and fish can be shared by all. ***"It is a miracle that Jesus performs, but it is the miracle of faith, of prayer with compassion and love."* (Pope Francis)**

It is the compassionate heart of Jesus which brings about the food in abundance. Jesus also works miracles in our lives, because he loves us so much and is so close to us. We often need to open our eyes and the ears of our heart to see how our prayers are answered- in many small ways, but small ways that make a difference. An unexpected phone call, a letter, an email, a kind smile or word, a thoughtful gesture- our prayers are always answered (maybe not in the way we asked for) because of that compassionate heart that loves us so much.

The miracle of the loaves and fish also evokes the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. Jesus lifts his eyes to heaven, says the blessing, breaks the bread and gives it.

When we receive Holy Communion (or make an act of Spiritual Communion), we receive spiritual nourishment and we become more and more like Jesus. And so we become signs of his merciful and tender love towards others. We are given the strength, courage and wisdom to reach out to those who are in need. No act of kindness or love is ever too small.

Let's not forget that Jesus asked his disciples and the crowd to trust him. And there was food in abundance. Let's not be afraid to put our lives into the hands of the One who loves with an everlasting love.

A few important notices.

Fraudulent emails

Please be extra vigilant about emails supposedly sent by me. Unfortunately, there are many phishing emails at the moment trying to trick you into opening a link or an attachment. I would **never** ask you to send money to me by an email. I would **never** ask you to email your bank account details to me. Please be vigilant.

Virtual Pilgrimage to Lourdes 21st-28th August

The Catholic Association is creating an online 'Virtual Pilgrimage' from 21st- 28th August. This is the week when many people from Great Britain would usually be on pilgrimage in Lourdes. This year of course it cannot happen so a virtual pilgrimage is the next best thing.

It will include adapted versions of many of the usual Masses and devotions, along with reflections from a number of pilgrims, young and old, sharing their experiences of Lourdes over the years. Please go to <https://www.catholicassociation.co.uk/virtual-pilgrimage-2020> for more information.

I end with this lovely thought from Pope Francis. 'No one can strip us of the dignity bestowed on us by the boundless and unfailing love of Jesus. With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, He makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and start anew.'

I wish you all a very blessed week.

Fr Lijo

Bookings for the Masses on Wednesday 5th and Sat/Sun 8th/9th August 2020

General points:

Please do wear masks to Mass.

Please do book for any of the above Masses you would like to attend. In the event of over-subscription, 'new' bookers will take priority.

Please do not attempt to book for any Mass 'in advance' of the times and dates specified. For simplicity and fairness, we are only taking bookings one week at a time.

When you receive confirmation: please see this as a commitment. If you find you cannot attend, **please** let Deacon Seán know in good time so that – in case there is a waiting list – another person can be offered your place.

Thank you very much.

HOW TO BOOK

Information required: Full name (and names of those in household or bubble who wish to attend); phone number; number of seats required; choice of Mass.

For Mass at 10am on Wednesday 5th August:

Booking: opens 9am Saturday 1st

: closes 9am Tuesday 4th

Confirmation: by 6pm Tuesday 4th

Email: stteresa.WEDNESDAY.masses@gmail.com

Text: 07761 301435 (or answerphone)

For Masses at 6.30pm Saturday 8th – or 8am or 10am Sunday 9th - August:

Booking: opens 9am Monday 3rd

: closes 6pm Thursday 6th

Confirmation: by 6pm Friday 7th

Email: stteresa.WEEKEND.masses@gmail.com

Text: 07761 301374 (or answerphone)