

The Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Second Sunday of Easter

The secondary school that I attended in south-east London was named after St Thomas the Apostle and I remember being quite disappointed. I wondered why St Thomas was chosen when there were so many other apostles to choose from: bigger, greater and better known apostles, in my opinion. There was St Peter who became our first pope, St John and St Matthew who wrote one of the Gospels each, and even Philip and James would have been cooler choices. And if we couldn't have any of these apostles, why not St Anthony (my favourite saint) or St Francis? The only thing St Thomas seems to be famous for is doubting that Jesus rose from the dead and surely he should be shamed rather than be rewarded by naming a school after him? It wasn't until I had left school, when I was older and wiser, that I began to understand why.

As I've mentioned already, St Thomas is best known for not believing that Jesus had risen without proof. This has earned him the title of "doubting Thomas" which we use even today to describe someone who is reluctant to believe something. St Thomas will forever be labelled "the doubter" for having the audacity to question Jesus' Resurrection. But shouldn't we all be called Doubting Thomas? Like St Thomas, haven't we all doubted our religion at some point? Haven't we all questioned the benevolence or even the existence of God? If only we have physical proof. But we don't.

St Thomas eventually got the proof he needed by seeing the resurrected Christ with his own eyes. But what about the rest of us who'll never have that concrete proof during our lifetime? This is when having a strong foundation of faith is crucial. The answer to all our doubt is faith. Faith is a gift from God and is something we should pray to Him to grant to us each day.

St Thomas, soon after the Resurrection, ventured out to preach the Gospel in faraway countries including India. It's in India where he made the most profound impact and converted many to Christianity. Like the other apostles, Thomas endured much suffering and persecution for his faith. He is a great role model for us. Yes, often we doubt. But it doesn't make us bad, just human. It is okay to have doubts, to ask questions, to be not sure about something. What is important is that we should be open to the truth, have the desire to find it and that when we get the truth, we have the courage and conviction to live by it, and to fight for it if necessary. Just like St Thomas the Apostle did after he realised the truth about Jesus: "My Lord and my God!"

Fr Antonio Pineda

Parish Note Friday 9th April 2021 and the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Second Sunday of Easter

Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

Fri 4/9/2021 2:02 PM

To: Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

 1 attachments (27 KB)

The Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Second Sunday of Easter.docx;

Good afternoon

Please find attached a wonderful and thought-provoking Sunday Message from Fr Antonio for the second Sunday of Easter.

I was reminded this week that I have been writing the 'Parish Note' for just over a year now. It wasn't intentional to share my inner most random thoughts online from my garden shed, even if it did save my fingers from endless papercuts received from printing and folding 600+ newsletters each week. I had even almost forgotten my special novena asking for a 'paper jam free' Friday afternoon when pleading with the parish office photocopier to comply, just to get everything ready in time. I am certain that in due course our previous normal service will resume once again..

For the past few months, usually in the late afternoon, early evening whilst on my way home, I have come across a gentleman who I encounter roughly at the same point in the road each time, riding a 'Penny Farthing' bicycle. When I first saw him, I was quite surprised, but now he seems to be a normal daily fixture. I don't know who 'PFG' (Penny Farthing Guy) is, where he lives, why he is riding a Penny Farthing or even where he got it from. Being an inquisitive type, I'd like to know and ask him all sorts of questions, but it might just have to remain a mystery (unless someone knows who he is!)

I used to love riding a bicycle in my younger days having the feeling of freedom and adventure. I recall going on all sorts of bike rides with my friends, sometimes daring each other to sit precariously on the handlebars or on the back carrier being scared witless. I also remember getting into trouble for having grease all over my white socks from the chain and for racing around on my father's prized lawn with my sister, as we unintentionally created a shiny figure of eight pattern over the turf.

In my previous career, as a newly appointed and eager recruit, I was given a dilapidated bike to use to travel around an area of North Watford. It was a 'character building steed' which required a certain amount of courage or in fact stupidity, as the brake blocks were rather worn. I discovered this quite by chance as I free wheeled down 'Gallows Hill' at quite a high rate of knots, my eyes streaming with water and cheeks flapping in the wind, unable to stop. The huge sparks that came off the bottom of the metal Blakey's hammered into the soles of my uniformed shoes were quite a sight to behold before I finished up in the hedge!

There is actually a Patron saint for Cyclists, La Madonna del Ghisallo. According to the legend, the Medieval Count Ghisallo was travelling by the hamlet of Magréglia in Italy, when he was attacked by bandits. He saw an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary at a shrine, ran to it and was saved from the robbers. The apparition became known as La Madonna del Ghisallo, and she became a patron of local travellers.

In later times, the hill Madonna del Ghisallo was made part of the Giro di Lombardia bicycle race and has often featured in the Giro d'Italia as well. The Church which sits on top of the steep hill became a natural stopping point for cyclists. For this reason, a local priest, Father Ermelindo Vigano, proposed that La Madonna del Ghisallo be declared the patron saint of cyclists by Pope Pius XII. Nowadays the shrine of Madonna del Ghisallo contains a small cycling museum with photos and artifacts from the sport. There also burns an

eternal flame for cyclists who have died. Its first action was to organize a torch relay from the chapel to the Vatican, delivering the torch to Pope John Paul II...

HRH PRINCE PHILIP RIP - On Friday 9th April, the death of Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh was announced. Following the sad news, Cardinal Vincent offered prayers for the repose of his soul:

'At this moment of sadness and loss I pray for the repose of the soul of Prince Philip, Her Majesty the Queen's faithful and loyal husband. I pray for the Queen and all of the Royal Family. 'How much we will miss Prince Philip's presence and character, so full of life and vigour. He has been an example of steadfast loyalty and duty cheerfully given. May he rest in peace.'

THANK YOU to everyone who helped over the Easter Triduum, from our amazing 'Flower Ladies' who created some beautiful displays in our Churches, for our wonderful Stations of the Cross Contributors and to our fab team of Stewards and Cleaners.

RETURN OF THE 11AM MASS AT ST JOSEPH'S - As from next Sunday 18th April 2021, we will be starting to celebrate Mass at 11am at St Joseph's once again, but in order to continue to do this safely **we will need more volunteers to act as Stewards/ Cleaners to help at this Mass please**. If you are able to assist, please may you kindly contact the Parish Office. We really do need your help! Thank you.

POLITE REMINDER RE BOOKING OF MASS - If you know that you are unable to attend Mass, once you have booked a place, **please** call 01279 654063 and leave a message. This is so that we may offer your seat to another Parishioner, particularly at the weekends when we often have a waiting list. Thank you.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL GIFT AIDERS- It is a requirement of HMRC that you must pay more income tax than the total of all Gift Aid amounts claimed in a tax year and the penalties for failure to comply with this rule can be severe. The 2020-21 Tax Year will end on 5th April and we will be claiming the Gift Aid for the tax year soon afterwards. If you are registered with the Parish for Gift Aid and your circumstances have changed so that you are no longer eligible, you **MUST** inform us before 5th April so that we can amend our records to ensure that our claims are correct. If you need to notify us of a change in your status, please contact the Parish Office by phone on 01279 654063 or e-mail at bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk .Many thanks

ZOOM -Thank you to John and our 9am Sunday Mass Musicians who will be continuing to celebrate the livestreaming of the Mass via Zoom each Sunday until further notice, followed by a virtual tea/coffee afterwards. Everyone is welcome to join, please click on the link below.

Topic: Family Mass via Zoom during lock-down (music starting at 8:45am)

Time: April 11, 2021 08:30 AM London

Every week on Sun, until Apr 4, 2021, 13 occurrence(s)

Apr 11, 2021 08:30 AM

Please download and import the following iCalendar (.ics) files to your calendar system.

Weekly: [https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZ0od-GoqT8rHdIH0V5EvYx0CrmCXM8IRh-5/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqzsiGtORsR6BRpx5GYigWfTwilcgqd0tE_TVgVFWxumFfBPEYpSSNTi](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/tZ0od-GoqT8rHdIH0V5EvYx0CrmCXM8IRh-5/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqzsiGtORsR6BRpx5GYigWfTwilcgqd0tE_TVgVFWxumFfBPEYpSSNTi)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89508074176?pwd=TE9YWjQzb01hdmhXbVZibGpuY1hDZz09>

Meeting ID: 895 0807 4176

Passcode: 2021

One tap mobile

+442039017895,,89508074176#,,, *2021# United Kingdom

Dial by your location
+44 203 901 7895 United Kingdom
Meeting ID: 895 0807 417

MARRIAGE CARE COUNSELLING SERVICES -Marriage Care offers support from trained counsellors to couples and families who need help in coping with the pressures of lockdown. Find out more at <https://rcdow.org.uk/diocese/marriage-andfamily-life/news/marriage-care-at-75---we-are-here-for-you/>

SETTLEMENT SCHEME FOR EUROPEAN CITIZENS- EU, EEA and Swiss citizens who were living in the UK by 31st December 2020 have until 30th June 2021 to apply for the Settlement Scheme. Those who do not apply are at risk of losing their rights to live and work here or access important services such as healthcare. There is a need to continue drawing this to people's attention as we approach the deadline. Older and vulnerable people may require assistance with the online application or not even know that their status is at risk. In many cases their main point of contact with society will be through the Church.

Relevant information can be found on the official government website (www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families), from the European Commission (www.eurights.uk/what-you-need-to-know) or from the charity Settled (www.settled.org.uk). Please note, Irish citizens do not need to apply.

BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSES -Thank you very much for your continued patience whilst awaiting to have your Child baptised. If you have not already attended a recent Baptism preparation course, we are pleased to advise you that Sophie Sullivan, our new Catechetical Coordinator and her husband Mike shall be running the next two-part Baptism preparation course on the date below via Zoom. The places will be limited to a maximum of 10 couples on each.

Course 3

Monday 10th May and Monday 24th May 2021 at 8pm - 9.15pm

If you would like to attend this course, please contact the parish office as soon as possible, so that we can send you an invitation in plenty of time. You are requested to attend the course prior to your Child being baptised.

At the current time, **depending on the success of the Government COVID-19 road map steps**, we hope to be able to start to celebrate the sacrament of Baptism again at St Joseph and the English Martyrs, sometime after 29 May **if all is well**, with 30 persons being permitted to attend.

As you will appreciate, we have a large number of Children still to be baptised since the first lockdown in 2020 and will do our best to prioritise those who had their Baptism date cancelled at that time to start with when able to do so.

If you have not yet completed a Baptism application form, please contact the office so that we have your details on file.

PERMANENT DIACONATE COME AND SEE - Men interested in finding out more about the permanent diaconate are invited to come to a two-hour session on a Saturday from 10am to 12pm on one of the following dates: 17th April at St Edward the Confessor, Golders Green, 22nd May at St Anthony of Padua, Radlett or 19th June at Vaughan House, Victoria. Prior booking is required as it isn't known whether the event venue is open, or the session is online via zoom. Wives welcome. For further details and booking, contact Deacon Adrian Cullen on 07961 594725 or adriancullen@rcdow.org.uk.

CATHOLIC ETHOS ADVOCATE - Circa £40k per annum (dependent upon skills, qualifications and experience, pro-rata where applicable). The Trustees of St Elizabeth's, Much Hadham Hertfordshire SG10 6EW are creating a new post to further, celebrate and promote the distinctive Catholic identity and ethos of the Centre. St Elizabeth's is a long-established charity, (which has a school for 5–19-year-olds; a College for 18–25-year-olds and a Registered Children's Home and Care Home with Nursing for Adults), providing education, care and

medical support on a 52-week basis of up to 200 people of all ages with learning disabilities and other complex medical needs, often caused or complicated by severe epilepsy and/or autism. To apply and to find out more information about St Elizabeth's, please visit our website: www.stelizabeths.org.uk . Informal discussions are encouraged prior to interview, for further information please call the Recruitment Team on 01279 844348 or 01279 843451 or email us at recruitment@stelizabeths.org.uk. The closing date for applications will be Friday 7 May 2021

RISE UP TASTER SESSIONS – Rise up is a brand-new youth project created to train, equip, and inspire young people in their leadership skills and faith formation. The main project begins in September 2021, but the Diocese of Westminster Youth Ministry Team and Catholic Voices are offering a number of online taster sessions to help you decide if you would like to get more involved. The next one is on Tuesday 20th April at 5pm online. Details can be found here: <https://dowym.com/events/>
Or visit the Rise Up website: <https://www.catholicvoices.org.uk/rise-up>

RESONATE - Resonate is Westminster Youth Ministry's primary event for young adult Catholics aged 18-35, looking to explore and learn more about their faith. Currently taking place online, the next meeting is on Thursday 13 May at 7pm. All Details can be found here: <https://dowym.com/events/resonate-2/>

BIBLE TIMELINE ONLINE COURSE – starting on Wednesday 7 April at 7pm . This enlightening course will help you understand the bible as never before. Mauro Iannicelli is an experienced speaker and your guide through this 8-week course, explaining how the many characters and events of the bible are related. Why not commit to it as a great follow up to Sycamore? This is a free course, but booking is required. You can do so at: <https://comeandsee.org/>

BREAKING DAY - a play recently advertised in the Church Times presented by Riding lights Theatre company. The play is available from <https://www.ridinglights.org/breaking-day> for watching up to 15th April, at a cost of £10 per household.

<https://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2021/26-march/books-arts/performing-arts/theatre-riding-lights-breaking-day>

PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK - This week Gregory, who often helps to steward during the weekday Masses has been nominated, going the extra mile to help others in need. Gregory is always very cheery, reliable and a well-loved member of our team. Thank you, Gregory, you are a star!

To finish this week, a phrase which was kindly shared with me..

"Remember, God is patient with our questions, our weakness, and our struggles, just as he was patient with Thomas."

I hope that you all continue to have a very happy and healthy week

Best wishes

Debbie

Parish Administrator

(Mon-Fri 9am - 3pm)

Catholic Parish of Bishop's Stortford

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Follow our Live streaming on www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford

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