

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

In my younger years, nothing terrified me more than public speaking. The fear of talking in front of an audience was one of the things that made me have second thoughts about becoming a priest. After all, if I couldn't preach or preside at the altar, how could I possibly be a good priest? And so, for many years, I did what I did best: hide behind a computer building websites, designing publications and writing and editing articles.

This Sunday's First Reading from the Acts of the Apostles is a reminder to be open to the possibility of God doing something new, to allow Him to take us out of our comfort zone so that we can do His will.

The story of Peter and Cornelius is a remarkable one and yet it would not have happened if these two men had not been open to God leading them to a new direction. To understand the First Reading more fully, we need to put it in context.

Let's talk about Peter first. Peter, a devout Jew, had never eaten anything "unclean." When God gave him a vision asking him to eat one of those forbidden animals, Peter was horrified. But when three men arrived asking him to come to Cornelius' house (who was a Gentile), Peter realised what the vision meant. Despite the strict separation between Gentile and Jew that had existed for centuries, God wanted him to go.

Now, about Cornelius. Cornelius was a "God-fearer," meaning he was a Gentile who worshiped the God of Israel. His openness to God had been nurtured through years of following the Lord. So when an angel appeared to him and told him to send for Peter, he obeyed. Then as Peter was proclaiming the Gospel, Cornelius received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues.

How can we be open to the Lord and whatever "new things" he may want to do through us? First, like Peter and Cornelius, we need to stay close to God in prayer. Because of their faithfulness, God was able to speak to both men and show them how he wanted to bring salvation to the Gentiles. Second, we should be careful not to place limits on God. Peter had to trust God with a new and different way of living out his faith. Cornelius had to be open to receiving new life in the Spirit through Baptism.

Many of us have drawn lines in the sand that indicates how far we think we can go in the name of God. We might think we have weaknesses that prevent us from doing good, or responsibilities that hinder us from becoming better Christians. But this Sunday's First Reading reveals that God can, and will, use you — as long as you remain open to him. I am still terrified of public speaking but I manage because I allow the Holy Spirit to guide my thoughts and my words.

Fr Antonio Pineda

Parish Note Friday 7 May 2021 and the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Sixth Sunday of Easter

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

Fri 5/7/2021 2:25 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 Sixth Sunday of Easter.docx;

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Sixth Sunday of Easter which can also be found on our website.

Well, there was a real flurry of elated excitement amongst the regular members of our 'Special Parish Gym' this week, as we took delivery of new 'exercise equipment', namely two rather flash, super mops with 'pull to squeeze action'. Our trusty older 'steeds' had seen daily toil from constant use of the plunge, soak, squeeze and slide method of cleaning, from our vigorous rubbing of the Church floors.

The best prizeworthy comment which caused much hilarity, was from one of the hardworking 'menfolk' on our team, who said, with sheer delight, 'It's like having a new car' and upon trying it out exclaimed, 'It's the Grand prix racing car of mops, it just glides across the floor!'. I now know what to buy my significant other for his birthday

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS- the family and friends of Julia Conti RIP beloved Mother of Andrew who recently died.

Eternal rest grant unto Julia O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.

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: May 9, 2021, 08:30 AM London

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

May 9, 2021, 08:30 AM

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

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZ0od-GogT8rHdIH0V5EvYx0CrmCXM8IRh-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

PENTECOST NOVENA - Visit our website for a wonderful Pentecost Novena for nine days of prayer with a special audio playlist <https://rcstortford.org.uk/thy-kingdom-come-2021/pentecost-novena-2021/>

THY KINGDOM COME - Join the global wave of prayer calling all Christians to pray between Ascension and Pentecost for more people to come to know the love and peace of Jesus Christ. May 13th - May 23rd, 2021, <https://www.thykingdomcome.global/> Thy Kingdom Come is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray for more people to come to know Jesus. It includes the Pentecost Novena, traditionally prayed from the Ascension to Pentecost for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Thy Kingdom Come also invites us to journey with Mary and to pray for five people we know who may stopped coming to church or never attended Mass. For more information, visit our Thy Kingdom Come page: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/thy-kingdom-come-2021>.

THY KINGDOM COME AT HOLY CROSS -The Thy Kingdom Come Prayer Journal will be given to anyone interested in engaging with this event. Hope Gilbert has copies so please ask her at the end of Mass

There will be a 9am Zoom slot each day, excluding Sundays, starting on Ascension Day and continuing until Pentecost , for a short act of prayer led by either an Anglican or Catholic.it is up to the individual to organise the time as they wish .

Thy Kingdom Come suggests that we choose 5 people for whom to pray during this period and they will be a focus for each day's prayer session.

MAKE MAY A ' MARATHON' OF PRAYER - Visit our web site for more info <https://rcstortford.org.uk/2021/05/01/make-month-of-may-a-marathon-of-prayer-pope-francis/>

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.

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: 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.

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/>

ANNUAL MASS OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY MATRIMONY via live stream from Westminster Cathedral, on Saturday 15th May 2021 at 3pm

The Cardinal will be celebrating a live-streamed Mass for all couples in the Diocese who are celebrating their 5th, 10th, 25th, 30th, 40th, 50th and 60th (and every year over 60) wedding anniversary of Catholic marriage in 2021. If you are celebrating an anniversary, please give the parish office the following details: husband and wife's names, wedding date, full postal address and email (or telephone number if no email), and these details will be sent to those organising this celebration. An Order of Service can be downloaded from the Cathedral website before the event – www.westminstercathedral.org.uk.

HOLIDAY BIBLE WEEK -The Holiday Bible Week committee are continuing to meet online to pray and plan for HBW 2021. The situation remains difficult in the UK and around the world and we are sad to say we cannot hold HBW in person this year for all the safety of all involved. HOWEVER - we are feeling very hopeful as we explore plans for an online virtual HBW with games and teaching and various things to teach and entertain the children of our town! We need your help to do this: do you or anyone you know have the skills to help with producing material to share online - perhaps in filming or sound mixing? Or do you want to be involved with the live week? There are lots of plans and ideas for this online adventure so people would be joining this team effort. You can also be involved at "prayer points" in the town churches during the week.

If you are able to help, please email David King at davidholidaybibleweek@gmail.com or Sue Vassell at h14vas@yahoo.co.uk

COVID PANDEMIC IN INDIA -Upon seeing the devastation in India following the spread of the pandemic, the St Joseph's SVP and others in East Herts are supporting a number of parishes in different parts of India with some funds to buy essentials and with our prayers. It is only a year or two since they experienced the devastating floods, please remember them in your prayers over the coming weeks as the situation continues.

STOP DISABILITY ABORTION -Earlier this year the Northern Ireland Assembly voted on the Severe Fetal Impairment Abortion (Amendment) Bill and it passed Second Stage by 48 votes to 12. The Northern Ireland Health Committee is now undertaking a consultation on the Bill and is seeking submissions from the public. It is important that as many people as possible submit to the consultation in support of the Bill to clearly show that there is widespread support for this important change. Right To Life UK has set up an easy-to-use tool on their website that makes it simple to complete your submission. You can do so by following the link below. It only takes 30 seconds! www.righttolife.org.uk/nidisabilityconsultation

MARRIAGE WEEK -This year Marriage week is from 10th - 16th May, and the theme is called 'Naked Marriage'. Before you jump to the wrong conclusion, the theme reflects the fact that during the Covid 19 epidemic, the law insisted that marriages had to be scaled down. Numbers were restricted, big indoor receptions were banned and couples who had not been able to afford a big wedding suddenly found they could actually afford to get married. So, the message is that it is not necessary to have all the gloss and all the expense. The essential thing is that couples get married and they mustn't be afraid to scale down expenses, whether it be the cost of the reception or the extravagant honeymoon. Maybe something good could come out of Covid 19 after all! For more details see the Marriage Week website, <https://marriage-week.org.uk/>

JOB VACANCY - The Christian School, Takeley, are currently have a vacancy for a part-time primary teacher to join the teaching staff from September 2021. This is a small, faith-based and close-knit school community. You may be interested or know someone who would be interested. The link below includes all the information about this post: <https://www.tcst.org.uk/vacancies/>

CHILDREN'S LITURGY - If you haven't already discovered our wonderful online resources for children and families, do have a look at our portal: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/children-and-families-portal/> Given that we are not all able to attend Sunday Mass together - and there are many parents that may be struggling engaging their children on Sundays in these unusual times - do also look up our dedicated Children's Liturgy page, where we provide weekly-updated videos for the family to enjoy, which break open the Sunday readings and are presented specifically with children in mind! You will also find weekly Ichthus and Look activity sheets there too: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/childrens-liturgy/>

VACCINE CONFIDENCE WEBINAR - 15 May 10-11.30am. Organised by the Dioceses of Brentwood, Southwark and Westminster, together with local authorities. Chair: Bishop Paul McAleenan. Panel of eminent medical experts led by Prof Kevin Fenton, Regional Director of Public Health London. Opportunity to ask questions anonymously. Join <https://zoom.us/j/99627319556> Passcode: 546617

ALLSORTS DEMENTIA GROUP - will be returning to Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club every Thursday, with activities adapted to suit a Covid 19 risk management plan. There are very limited places available. Please contact 01279 498938 or email allsortsdg@gmail.com

CARDS FOR BRAVERY - is a non-profit organisation that distributes positive handmade cards to hospitalised and seriously ill children founded by local 19-year-old Katie Callaghan during a four-month hospital stay. Recently cards for Bravery have taken on more hospitals to distribute to and desperately need more cards. No real artistic ability is needed, it is a great activity and will help make a big difference. For more info on card making guidelines and where to send cards please visit www.cardsforbravery.com

MARY'S MEALS - www.marysmeals.org.uk Delivering hope to 1.8 million chronically hungry children by providing one meal every school day and encouraging education that can lift them out of poverty in later life. A donation of £15.90 will feed a hungry child every school day for a year.

PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK - This week a special mention and 'BIG' thanks to Sighle Hill and Ann Wocjik who have continued to volunteer their services to sing so beautifully for the Requiem Masses celebrated at St Joseph's, and also at the Sunday 11am Mass accompanied by Duncan Lane. Thank you very much!

FREE 'SPECIAL GYM' MEMBERSHIP - It's still open daily and now with new equipment! Sessions on a Monday - Friday at 9.30am, Saturday at 6pm and even on Sundays 9am and 11am. All equipment provided and friendly instruction given in beautiful spiritual surroundings. Designed to burn off a few calories at a time within a fun team building environment. There are various exercises to suit, starting with the 'Dettol wipe pew action', door handle spritz, broom sweep floor challenge, mop and bucket marathon and finishing up with a gentle cleansing fog spa. Free membership for life and rewarded with huge grateful thanks, all the while knowing that you are helping to keep the Church clean and safe for others. If you are interested, please contact the parish office or simply join in for a free 15-minute taster session after Mass one day! Also available at Holy Cross at 11.30am. Thank you very much :)

If you are unable to 'join in' with the cleaning of our Churches, we would gratefully accept any donations of anti-bacterial/ anti-viral cleaning wipes or spray, as we do get through quite a lot! Thank you very much.

To finish, a prayer to the Holy Spirit, which as a past pupil of St Mary's Convent, we said every day..

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of Thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.
Send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created.
And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Amen*

I hope that you all 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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