

Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time



For me this Sunday's readings have a gardening theme running through them. We hear of God taking a cutting from a great cedar tree and planting it at the top of the mountain. It will, Ezekiel reminds us, become a noble cedar and every kind of bird will live in it – it will be a sign to all that Lord is the One that wills all life. In the Gospel Jesus reminds us that the tiniest seed can be the beginning of an enormous plant!

If the plants in your garden this year are anything like those in the garden of No 3 Windhill, then you will have, like me, had to think hard about the layout of your beds... The combination of the weather etc., has resulted in some usually medium sized plants becoming great thugs!

My silver leafed globe artichoke is already a good 5ft high with its flower buds beginning to rise up through the foliage;

The *cephalaria, gargantua* (that's a giant cream coloured scabius and rather fine!) is for the first time truly "gargantua" well up to 5 ft. too.

Our Lady's statue in one of the beds is being smothered by a couple of usually gentle, low plants...in fact much of the garden is going mad!

I did realise last year that my main Dahlia bed was going to need lifting and replanting, since I have left the Dahlias in for at least six years and they have grown very big, suffocating everything else in the summer. So, it was lifting and dividing time earlier this year. It has gone well and I took the opportunity to try and put everything back with the tallest at the back and the lowest at the front.. We'll see soon how well I have managed it.

So, it is not just mustard "trees" that can grow; we too can do the same and possibly amaze ourselves at how much we can grow and also astound ourselves at what tasks we can take on, putting out branches strong enough to hold the weight of others that the Lord might send us to carry for a while. What a delight and what a challenge to occasionally have to reassess ourselves and accept the great spurts of growth that God sends us!

*Fr Peter*

## **An Invitation...**

Lockdown, if you are anything like me, will have caused you to re-evaluate what's most important in life. The differing challenges we have all faced during the last year have forced us to dig deeper. If that's the case, you may find yourself coming out of lockdown asking yourself one of two questions:

- 1)What do I believe?
- 2)What can I do differently?

### **What do I believe?**

Do you have questions about the Catholic faith? The reality of living under the restrictions imposed by the pandemic may have stirred within you a growing desire to connect or – indeed – to *reconnect* with God. The lockdown may have caused you to look again at life's purpose and meaning.

Are you new to the parish, but are not a member of the Catholic Church and would like to find out more about what we believe?

Maybe you are from another denomination within the Christian Family, but have questions about Catholicism?

Or maybe you have been baptised a Catholic, but have lapsed and would like to understand the faith better?

If any of these apply to you, did you know that there are people within the parish who are dedicated to helping you to explore life's big questions? Everyone's journey to faith is very different, but we can assist you to find the right path. The RCIA is a programme aimed at helping you on this journey.

It can often be the case that we grapple with these questions for years, before we pluck up the courage to find out more. Well, why wait? There's no better time...

This post can direct you to webpages which you may also find helpful, including a personal sharing from one of our parishioners: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/2021/06/11/start-a-journey-to-the-catholic-faith/>

For an informal chat, do please get in touch (details below)!

### **What can I do differently?**

Some of you may be coming out of lockdown feeling like a different person; wondering how you can continue to make a difference in the lives of those we meet. You may feel you've been "away" from church for a long time and are keen to re-engage in a more meaningful way as things open up.

If that's the case, I invite you to prayerfully consider making a renewed commitment to taking an active role in our parish community.

Many of you have already been working really hard to serve and care for those in our parish community during lockdown – visiting the sick and elderly, keeping those isolated up to date with parish news, cleaning and sanitising the church, running online course and events and keeping our website up to date, in order to offer some spiritual and practical support to our online community. We are very grateful to you!

However, the work of building community and sharing the Gospel does not stop! As sacramental programmes and other activities gradually restart, it is the calling of each one of us to consider how we can best help serve the community.

Most activities involve a team of Catechists – volunteers from within the parish who journey with those preparing for the sacraments and share and celebrate faith with them. We already have a number of parishioners who are very dedicated to this and we couldn't do what we do without you – thanks! I know they would attest to how rewarding being a Catechist can be! Catechesis comes from the Greek meaning "to echo", because our first calling, as baptised Christians, is to transmit to others the Good News of Jesus Christ that we have received.

And please let me be clear: A catechist is not somebody else; they are not a specially-qualified person in the parish who knows it all. YOU can be a catechist! You might be the one who someone is in need of encountering to make a positive difference in their lives! A Catechist does not need a degree in theology, but simply a willingness and enthusiasm to be a witness to the seed of faith planted in them and a sharer of the Gospel message of Christ's love to others; even in the unworthiness we sometimes feel to be able to do this!

What does this actually mean practically? Well, being a Catechist can involve anything from making cups of tea, to chatting with someone and making them feel welcome, to facilitating a discussion on a topic of faith. We all have such varied talents and gifts and all can be useful in journeying with people and sharing the joy of Gospel message!

We are currently especially in need of parishioners willing to accompany our young people, as they prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation and also in their journey towards adolescence and through the teenage years generally. But there are many other areas of sacramental preparation where your help is also needed.

(Depending on the further easing of restrictions, we may be able to organise a face-to-face meeting for anyone interested in finding out more about what being a Catechist involves – watch this space!)??

If you feel moved to find out more and get involved (even if you are not sure how!), then please do get in contact with me, Sophie Sullivan, in the first instance and we will be able to talk through the possibilities.

**Do get in touch!**

So, if you would like to find out about volunteering or have questions about finding out more about the Catholic faith, my email address is: [bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk) or ring the parish office and Debbie will direct your query along the right channels – 01279 654063

## Parish Note Friday 11 June 2021 and the Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

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

Fri 6/11/2021 2:16 PM

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

 2 attachments (371 KB)

Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time.docx; An invitation.docx;

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the Eleventh Sunday in Ordinary Time with some lovely photographs taken in the garden of number 3. This can also be found on our website. Also attached this week is a special invitation from Sophie, our Catechetical coordinator, particularly if lockdown has stirred within you questions about your Catholic faith. Are you interested in becoming Catholic? Or maybe during lockdown you have realised you'd like to get more practically involved in our parish community in some way? Please do have a read of the invitation for more details and see the post on our web site which tells a heartfelt story of one of our much-loved parishioners sharing their journey of how they became a Catholic <https://rcstortford.org.uk/2021/06/11/start-a-journey-to-the-catholic-faith/>

Looking at the beautiful blue sky today, although slightly overcast, it is difficult to believe that this time last week following the very heavy downpour of rain, we had a flood in St Joseph's Church. Assisted by Fr Antonio, we bailed out and mopped at least twelve full buckets of water which had found its way in, as we stood soaked to the skin, with very wet, squelchy feet, resembling deck hands armed with super mops, but without singing a hearty sea shanty (as that is not currently permitted under Government guidelines!) Thankfully no permanent damage was caused and looking in the church the following day, you would be none the wiser, not even knowing that Fr Peter had later secretly scaled the roof to inspect and clear the gutter!

Water seemed to be a feature of last weekend, as on Sunday afternoon, I noticed that I suddenly had water running down the walls of my utility room and the ceiling was not where it really should be, slumping downwards like a deflated, wrinkly, wet balloon, ready to pop at any moment. Remembering a scene from the 'Poseidon adventure', I prised my blissfully unaware, snoozing, significant other from the depths of the armchair to help me turn off the water and stem the leak from the hot water cylinder in the airing cupboard above. Emptying the space quickly of wet towels and bedding, some of which were new and others I hadn't seen for some years took a few minutes. Finding in pristine condition, a St Joseph's school tea towel which had self-portraits of my children on, carefully stored away approx. 15 years ago, never to be used(!) brought back happy memories and a brief lull of calm in a semi-frantic moment. We still await the fitting of a new hot water cylinder courtesy of British gas whilst we shower in cold water and heat up the kettle for a treat, with the walls emitting a musty, mildewy aroma as they continue to dry out.. but it could really be a lot worse..

**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: June 13, 2021, 08:30 AM London

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

Weekly: [https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/tZ0od-GogT8rHdIH0V5EvYx0CrmCXM8IRh-5/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqzsiGtORsR6BRpx5GYigWfTwtlclgqd0tE\\_TVgVFWxumFfBPEYpSSNTi](https://us02web.zoom.us/joining/tZ0od-GogT8rHdIH0V5EvYx0CrmCXM8IRh-5/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqzsiGtORsR6BRpx5GYigWfTwtlclgqd0tE_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

**MANY CONGRATULATIONS** to Patrick who celebrates a BIG birthday this weekend. We send our love and prayers to you and hope that you have a wonderful day!

**JUNE IS THE MONTH OF THE SACRED HEART** - The month of June is dedicated to the Sacred Heart. The Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the Friday following the second Sunday after Pentecost, which this year is 11 June. In addition to the liturgical celebration, many devotional exercises are connected with the Sacred Heart of Jesus, including the Sacred Heart of Jesus novena which you can find on our website and a link below.

<https://rcstortford.org.uk/sacred-heart-of-jesus-novena-2021/>

**BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSE** - We are pleased to advise you that Sophie Sullivan, our Catechetical Coordinator and her husband Mike shall be running the next two-part Baptism preparation course on the dates below via Zoom. The places will be limited to a maximum of 10 couples on each.

#### Course 4

Monday 14th June and Monday 21st June 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.

As you will appreciate, we have a large number of Children still to be baptised since the first lockdown in 2020 and have prioritised those who had their Baptism date cancelled at that time to start with. If you have not yet completed a Baptism application form, please contact the office so that we have your details on file.

**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/>

**DEADLINE IS APPROACHING !! 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](http://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families)), from the European Commission ([www.eurights.uk/what-you-need-to-know](http://www.eurights.uk/what-you-need-to-know)) or from the charity Settled ([www.settled.org.uk](http://www.settled.org.uk)). Please note, Irish citizens do not need to apply.

**COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP OF REFUGEES**- Monday 14th June 2021 6:00pm .The government has recently announced the long-term future for Community Sponsorship of refugees – a national scheme co-designed and piloted by Catholic parishes. All are invited to join a national Catholic celebration of the scheme via Zoom co-hosted by Caritas Social Action (CSAN) and Reset. Caritas Westminster is lead sponsor for two groups in the

diocese. Find out how you can get involved and hear from refugees and parishes about its transformative impact. To register visit: [www.communitysponsorship.org.uk/events](http://www.communitysponsorship.org.uk/events)

For further information on the event please do contact CSAN via: [sean.ryan@csan.org.uk](mailto:sean.ryan@csan.org.uk)

**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 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](mailto:adriancullen@rcdow.org.uk).

**CALLING ALL YOUNG PEOPLE** - aged 18-35yrs. Do you like to make music? Do you wonder what your path is and what God's plan is for your life? Everyone is called by God, be it in the specific vocation to marriage or to a consecrated life, but also in general in every moment of our lives. Why not share your thoughts and ideas about your own life's journey and God's calling to each of us through the lyrics and music of a song that may help others on their own journey. You will have the chance to not only win cash prizes but also be part of a professional CD production with your song and receive feedback from accomplished musicians on the jury. See our web site for more info <https://rcstortford.org.uk/2021/05/21/vocation-music-award-2021/>

Apply now with your song for the Vocation Music Award 2021: <https://www.vocation-music-award.com/uk/>

**RIGHT TO LIFE** - Ask your MP to sign a Parliamentary motion to stop 'DIY' abortion. Carla Lockhart MP has launched a parliamentary motion calling on the Government to end 'DIY' home abortion. It is therefore vital that as many MPs as possible sign Carla Lockhart's motion to send a clear message to the Government that they must end dangerous 'DIY' home abortion services as soon as possible. Right To Life UK has launched an easy-to-use tool which makes it simple for you to send an email to your MP asking them to sign the motion. Please click the link below to contact your MP now. **It only takes 30 seconds!**  
[www.righttolife.org.uk/DIYmotion](http://www.righttolife.org.uk/DIYmotion)

**DAY FOR LIFE** - 20th June - This year's theme for 'Day for Life' focuses on assisted suicide and the respect owed to life. Online resources have been produced to inform Catholics about this threat to life and to share with people our response to such a threat: a true compassion as the just response to the immense value of the human person.

'Day for Life' adds an authenticity to our witness to the dignity of life and this is enabled by the generosity of people in supporting our work. In 2020, we were unable to hold our annual 'Day for Life' collection due to the pandemic, our funds are very much depleted and the threats to life have never been greater. 'Day for Life' is a simple practical response which pushes back against 'the use and throwaway logic' often at the heart of a culture which seeks to abandon its elderly, sick and dying when 'they no longer serve our interests.' The Day for Life website is <https://www.dayforlife.org>

**BEDA COLLEGE DISCERNMENT WEEKEND** - For men between the ages of 30 and 55, the Beda College in Rome is running a discernment weekend from 3rd to 5th September 2021. It will take place at St Beuno's Spirituality Centre in North Wales and is aimed at reaching those not already in touch with their diocese to explore the possibility of priestly vocation. Information and registration forms can be found at <https://www.pathwaystogod.org/courses-events-retreats/discernment-weekend-older-men-1>.

**WORLD ELDER ABUSE AWARENESS DAY** - 15 JUNE - <https://www.un.org/en/events/elderabuse/>

**HOLIDAY BIBLE WEEK - HBW 2021** - Monday 2nd-Friday 6th August 2021. It will be happening this year but in a different format!

Due to the current pandemic situation, we will be running the morning sessions over YouTube and Facebook.

These will include Stories/Puppets/Music and games. Everything that your children will have seen and enjoyed in previous years.

In the afternoons there will be an opportunity for your child to attend one afternoon "live" session at the Baptist Church Centre. Each day will be age specific and are planned to be: Monday 5's and 9's, Tuesday 6's and 10's, Wednesday 7's and 11's, Thursday 8's. Friday- all sessions live on social media.

**Your child/children must be signed up in the usual way using the link on our website:**  
**[www.holidaybibleweek.co.uk](http://www.holidaybibleweek.co.uk)**

**The final date for signing up will be Friday 18th June 2021. There will be a maximum of 20 children per age group, so it is important that you sign up as soon as possible to have a chance are of your child being given a place.**

If you are unfortunate to not receive a place on one of the afternoons, you will still be able to collect a craft pack free of charge which will be available from the Charis Centre in Water Lane and the Emmaus Centre at St James' Church, Thorley. We will also have the Hotline team at each of these centres so your children will be able to have a chat and pray with them if they wish.

HBW will be different this year, but it is the organisers intention to keep the feel and spirit of it alive during this week in August. It is our hope and prayer that we will be back to normal for 2022.

**CATECHISTS WANTED** - We are in need of more Catechists to serve our community. The invitation is extended to each one of you! Please do read this week's insert for more details and do get in touch if you think you could help: [bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk)

**RCIA PROGRAMME** -Do you have questions about the Catholic Faith? The RCIA programme seeks to journey with people in your situation. If you would like to find out more about becoming a Catholic or just want to find out more about your faith, please do get in touch [bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk) or call Debbie for more info 01279 654063

**ST JOSEPH'S IS NOW OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER DURING THE WEEK** - Following a Diocesan Health and Safety assessment, we are pleased to announce that St Joseph's is now open for private prayer during the week from 10.30am to 3pm ( the times may be subject to change to accommodate other events in the Church taking place such as a Requiem Mass or Funeral service ). The Church is closed immediately after the 9.30am Mass, so that our thorough daily deep clean can be completed and then re-opened afterwards. There is still the requirement to use the Track and Trace QR Code upon entry, sanitise your hands and wear a face mask if not exempt from doing so for private prayer. In order to assist us in keeping the Church open, we have left out disinfectant spray and wipes and kindly request that you help by cleaning your own pew and kneeler after you have finished praying, please.

At the current time we still require you please to **book** a seat at Mass until further notice as we continue to have limited seating available to allow for social distancing.

**PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK** - This week a special mention and 'BIG' thanks to Yvonne who kindly volunteered to weed Cardinals walk this week. It has made a huge difference! Thank you also to our regular Sunday morning teams who steward at Holy Cross and St Joseph's each week. Our fabulous St Joseph's Choir and Duncan too have been a continuous help and support to grieving families, devoting so much of their time and talent to sing so beautifully at funerals. Thank you SO much to you all!

To finish, *'Lord, help me to hasten the flowering of God's kingdom of justice, peace and love by being a seed, a leaven, in the life of my Church and my community. 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**

*St Joseph and the English Martyrs, Bishop's Stortford*

*Holy Cross, at St Andrew's, Church Lane, Much Hadham*

*Most Holy Redeemer, Sayesbury Road, Sawbridgeworth*

3 Windhill, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2ND

Telephone: 01279 654063

*email: [bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk)*

*Parish Website: <https://www.rcstortford.org.uk>*

*Follow our Live streaming on [www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford](http://www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford)*

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