

The Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

On reading this Sunday's Gospel it occurred to me how strange it is becoming to me that we refuse to accept miracles for what they are – completely unexplainable events in practical terms, yet signs of God's goodness to us!

When you just look around there are daily miracles everywhere... to me the birth of every child is the greatest one; or how any beautiful flower comes out of a seed in the ground. Oh yes, you can learn all about botany and biology but what is the force that enables these miracles to happen? ...trillions of years of existence, maybe... maybe not...

Today's Gospel lays it out in front of us. The Gospel writer doesn't give any explanation...(oh, well, you see everyone had brought food along and it was only when they saw Jesus sharing his did they get their own food out and started sharing it..) ? Well, maybe, yes, or no: the point is it doesn't matter. What Jesus did was to feed the hungry crowd, not only with His words but with food for the body as well.

And, as my mother used to say, "never look a gift horse in the mouth", rather, let us thank God for His goodness and accept His gifts, so many of which we could be in danger of never even noticing !

Fr Peter

Parish Note Friday 23rd July 2021 and the Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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

Fri 7/23/2021 9:45 AM

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

 1 attachments (15 KB)

The Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary time.docx;

Good morning

Please find attached the Sunday Message from Fr Peter on the Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, which can also be found on our web site.

With the 2020 Summer Olympic Games due to start today in Japan, here are a few Olympic fun facts ..

- The first Olympic Games took place in 776BC. The original Olympics began as part of an Ancient Greek festival, which celebrated Zeus, the Greek God of sky and weather. The whole competition lasted for up to six months, and included games like wrestling, boxing, long jump, javelin, discus and chariot racing.
- In 393 AD, the Olympic Games were cancelled and didn't start up again for over 1,500 years. Emperor Theodosius I, a Roman ruler, banned the Greek Olympics due to the religious element of the celebration. He considered the Olympics to be a pagan festival, which had no place in his Christian country.
- The first Olympiads saw athletes compete in loincloths, a runner called Orsippus changed the face of the games when he appeared naked, appealing to the nation as a symbol of 'Greekness'. Nudity proved a sign of fearlessness, courage and power and was also considered a tribute to the gods. Participants would even lather themselves in olive oil to best show off their physique. Apparently the word 'gymnasium' comes from the Greek word "gymnós" which means naked.
- At the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, two Japanese pole vaulters Shuhei Nashida and his friend Sueo Oe were set for a tie-breaker to decide who took silver and who took bronze. The duo decided to decline the tie-break scenario and famously cut the two medals in half. They then fused the bronze with the silver to make two new 'friendship medals'.
- The Olympic rings were first produced in 1913, from a design created by the Games' modern founder – Baron Pierre de Coubertin. Their five colours (along with the white backdrop) reflect colours found on the flags of all participating nations, so everyone is represented. The overlaps also represent international cooperation, and the coming together of athletes from all over the world.
- Until 1912, first-place Olympic medals were made of solid gold but it's no longer the case. The heavy first-place medals are now covered in only 6 grams of gold.
- At the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, medals will contain parts of old electronics, in an effort to make the Games more sustainable. Japanese citizens are donating these materials by recycling their old devices...

CHURCH UPDATE

Following the lifting of restrictions, we remain committed to ensuring that our Churches are a safe place to gather to worship.

Do I still have to book a place to attend Mass?

No, there is no longer the requirement to book a place to attend Mass, simply turn up to worship as you used to do at St Joseph's and Holy Cross. We hope to return to our full schedule of Masses at the beginning of September. At the current time Most Holy Redeemer remains closed.

What happens when I arrive at Church?

You will be greeted by one of our volunteer Stewards who will provide assistance, should you require it. We still have a sign in QR code displayed at the entrance, so please feel free to use this. Please sanitise your hands with hand gel which is provided upon entry and decide where you would like to sit.

Where can I sit?

In St Joseph and the English Martyrs, we have maintained socially distanced seating on the **left-hand side of the Church**, with **every other pew available to use**. If you choose to sit on this side of the Church please ensure that you wear a face covering. On the right-hand side of the Church **every pew is available** to be used.

Do I need to wear a mask?

Face coverings are strongly recommended and welcomed in our Churches. If you sit in a socially distanced pew (on the left hand side of St Joseph's) please wear a face mask in consideration of those around you if able to do so.

What will happen at Mass?

We can now celebrate a full length Mass with singing. The physical Sign of Peace remains suspended and Holy Communion is distributed in the hand under one kind by Father Peter and Father Antonio, who will continue to wear a face shield. After receiving the Blessed sacrament, you are able to return to your seat and do not have to leave the Church.

What about Altar Servers, Readers and Eucharistic Ministers?

If you are an Altar Server, Reader or Eucharistic Minister and would like to continue with your service or have decided that you no longer wish to continue, please advise the parish office, so that we can start to prepare a rota, plan any training that is needed, along with any required DBS updates.

Can I use the toilet in the Church?

Regrettably our toilets remain closed at the current time.

Is the Repository open?

Yes, the Repository at St Joseph's is now open for the sale of cards and gifts

Is the Church still being cleaned?

Yes. We have a fantastic team of volunteer cleaners and stewards at our churches, who have done and continue to do an amazing job. After each Mass, all of the pews/ kneelers are wiped down, as are all touch points (door handles, hand gel bottles etc), the floor is swept and mopped. The whole of the Church is then 'fogged'. We leave out anti-bacterial wipes, spray and paper towels at the entrance alongside our hand-gel and ask you to help us by wiping down your own pew if you have entered the Church for private prayer. All donations of anti-bacterial wipes and spray are very gratefully received as we do go through a lot! We also continue to need help, so please stay after Mass for a few minutes to assist us if possible as many hands make light work! Thank you.

PLANNING THE RETURN OF READERS, ALTAR SERVERS, EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS - If you have been a Eucharistic Minister (either at Mass or visiting the Sick or Housebound), Reader, Altar server, Musician or Welcomer, and are now willing to continue in your volunteer role, or no longer wish to continue, please do let us know now (if you have not done so already) so that we can start to plan the way forward. Please send a simple email to our parish office— bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk (or call 01279 654063) giving us your details and telling us which ministry, in due course, you might be willing to return to, either immediately or in the future. Thank you very much to everyone who has responded so far.

CONGRATULATIONS! - to Monica and Spencer Lynch who celebrate their 55th wedding anniversary today. We send our love and prayers to you both and hope that you have a wonderful time.

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: July 25, 2021, 08:30 AM London

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

Weekly: https://us02web.zoom.us/join/tZ0od-GogT8rHdIH0V5EvYx0CrmCXM8IRh-5/ics?icsToken=98tyKuGhqzsiGtORsR6BRpx5GYigWfTwtilcgqd0tE_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

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.

Monday 2nd August and Monday 9th August 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. If you have not yet completed a Baptism application form, please contact the office so that we can send you one for completion so that we have your details on file.

CONFIRMATIONS 2021-2022- As you know, with the challenges brought on by the pandemic, we decided to put a pause on Confirmations this year and concentrated on ensuring that last year's group were able to celebrate the sacrament, after it had been postponed in 2020.

We plan to kick-start our Confirmation programme again this autumn. What form it will take (i.e. in person or virtual) has yet to be established, as we are awaiting up-to-date government announcements and also need to make the necessary decisions regarding use of our parish facilities. However, we would like to gauge interest, as this will enable us to plan accordingly.

If you are a young person with a birthday on or before 31 August 2007 and would like to make your confirmation in 2022, please do get in touch, in the first instance, with our Catechetical Coordinator, Sophie Sullivan, by Friday 30th July, to express your interest. Please email her at bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk or phone the parish office on 01279 654063 to leave your details.

CATECHISTS WANTED - The parish is currently looking for some parishioners willing to volunteer their time to journey with individuals in the parish who maybe finding out more about their faith – in particular, we would love some extra support for our young people preparing for Confirmation. You do not need to be an expert in theology or have a halo to polish in order to volunteer! In fact, enthusiasm and a readiness to develop yourself is all that is needed to get started. Training and support will be given.

If you would like to find out more, please get in touch with Sophie Sullivan at bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk or call Debbie in the parish office.

You may also like to look at the Catechists' page on our website: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/ministries/catechists/>

RCIA - "Do you have questions?"

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.

Do any of these questions apply to you?

- 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 specifically and want to know more?
- Or maybe you have been baptised a Catholic, but have lapsed or would simply like to understand the faith better?

Whatever the case, 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. For more information, please contact Sophie Sullivan at bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk or leave your details with Debbie in the parish office."

FAITH AND REASON RESIDENTIAL COURSE- For those wishing to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith, as well as to spend time in the beautiful surrounds of the Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst in Lancashire, this residential course called "Faith and Reason: A Catholic Integration" takes place between 5-8 August 2021. Lectures are from experienced tutors. There is an opportunity for discussion, questions and social time and full board and lodging in en-suite accommodation is provided. Please see our web post for more details: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/2021/06/24/faith-and-reason-residential-course/>

LOURDES PILGRIMAGE MASS- Cardinal Vincent will celebrate the Lourdes Pilgrimage Mass at Westminster Cathedral on 28th July at 2pm. With restrictions removed on the 19th July, the Cathedral will be at increased capacity, so all are welcome in person and via livestream at www.westminstercathedral.org.uk.

YOUNG CHRISTIAN CLIMATE NETWORK RELAY - Westminster Justice and Peace is hosting two events to contribute to the Young Christian Climate Network Relay on Friday 6th August. The first will be a lunch at Farm Street parish and walk to Westminster Cathedral from 1pm to 3pm. Sign up at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/163375276851>.

The second event taking place on the same day is an ecumenical prayer service at Westminster Cathedral from 3.30pm to 4pm. Sign up at <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/163372454409>.

SELF-CARE FOR VOLUNTEERS - 13 July and 14 September, 13:00 – 14:00, on Zoom 'You can't pour from an empty cup - take care of yourself first'.

As we are volunteering to support others, who is it that helps the helper when the pressure of a role becomes too much, when we disagree with another volunteer or client, or we have a bad day?

Come to one of the regular support sessions run by Caritas Westminster and the Irish Chaplaincy, to learn some tips and strategies for self-care, with opportunities for further support if you need it.

Please register on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/self-care-for-staff-and-volunteers-tickets-138513887767>

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTEERING - 21 September, 10 – 11:30 am, Zoom. Eventbrite link:

Thinking about volunteering? Find out how to get started at a free interactive session run by Caritas Westminster. It is for people thinking about or just starting out in volunteering. Explore what your perfect role could be and how to find it, discover what your first days might be like, and how to deal with issues that may crop up along the way. This event covers all the basic need-to-knows about becoming a volunteer.

Book your place on Eventbrite: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/introduction-to-volunteering-tickets-159672389415>

VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITY WITH THE CARITAS VOLUNTEER SERVICE - The Caritas Volunteer Service is growing! We are looking for a couple of volunteers who share our passion for social action and volunteering. This is an opportunity to help transform lives throughout the Diocese by helping charities and outreach projects find volunteers. Deadline for applications: 31 July. For more information please contact: <https://www.caritasvs.org.uk/volunteer-with-us.php>

ADVANCED NOTICE OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2022 - For parents of children in Year 3 in September 2021 (born on or before 31st August 2014)

First Holy Communion classes will begin in January 2022. **Application forms will be available from 1st September 2021** and should be returned by half term - Friday 22nd October 2021. Further information will follow in due course...

CONTACTLESS GIVING MACHINES - We now have 3 new 'Dona Contactless Giving Machines' at St Joseph's which will gratefully accept all donations and also payments by debit card, thus reducing the need to handle amounts of cash. The system has pre-set amounts but also has the option to enter a specific amount of your choosing. It is very easy to use and in time will also capture Gift aid. Thank you to Martin, our first donor on 'Dona!' <https://rcstortford.org.uk/2021/07/16/arrival-of-new-contactless-giving-machines/>

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL NEWS - Our parish website has a dedicated direct link to the websites of St Joseph and St Mary's schools and also the St Elizabeth's Centre. Please visit our 'About us' section where you will find all of this information. St Joseph's School Governors have just produced their 'End of Year report' which is attached on the link below. We wish all of our Pupils, Parents, Teachers and Staff a very restful and relaxing summer break.
<https://www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk/attachments/download.asp?file=4790&type=pdf>

FIRE MARSHALL TRAINING - We are pleased to announce that Precision are presenting a second opportunity for the free training of Fire Wardens in our Deanery Churches. It will be held on Thursday 29th July 2021, 6.30pm, and will take place in the Benson Hall next to the Parish Church (St Richard of Chichester) in Buntingford, where there is ample car parking. If you would like to attend, please let Debbie in the Bishop's Stortford parish office know, so that we can advise Fr Cyril who to expect. Thank you.

PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK - This week a special mention to Brian and Gregory, who in the midday heat helped lift and move all of the heavy pews in St Joseph's. Thank you very much indeed gentlemen, you did a sterling job!

To finish this week on the theme of the Olympics.. Pope Francis spoke about the value of a defeat, stating, 'the greatness of a person is more evident when he or she falls rather than in a moment of triumph, both in sport and in life'. In a long interview with the Italian newspaper "Gazzetta dello Sport", the Holy Father remarked: "Victory gives you a thrill that is difficult to describe, but there's also something marvellous about a defeat. (...) Wonderful victories can be born from certain defeats because you unleash the desire for

redemption after identifying the mistake. I would even add that winners don't know what they're missing out on."

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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Most Holy Redeemer, Sayesbury Road, Sawbridgeworth*

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

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