

The Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, millions of Americans were out of work and many thousands were hungry. Religious groups set up breadlines to feed the hungry. One of these was the Franciscan monastery in Cincinnati, Ohio. Every evening, the Friars, Brothers and lay volunteers prepared and gave a nourishing sandwich of bread and meat to hundreds of hungry men and women. It was interesting to note the reactions of the recipients. Many accepted the sandwich with a smile and a thank you. Others, with heads hanging, snatched the food package and shuffled off. Some tore the wrapper at once and started eating as they hurried away. Most of them ate every last crumb after a silent prayer and put the wrapping into a nearby container, though some would eat only the meat and discard the bread on the roadside. A few discontented ones just opened the package and then threw the entire contents away in protest.

The way those hungry people reacted to sandwich is a lot like the way Jesus' listeners received His words in this Sunday's Gospel. Along with the other readings, the Gospel challenges us to trust in the providence of a loving and caring God, and to hunger and thirst for the Bread of eternal life – the Holy Eucharist. As human beings, we hunger for many things besides food and material possessions. We hunger to be recognised and honoured, to love and be loved, to be listened to and to be appreciated, to help, to console, to encourage people, and to receive gratitude. But only God can satisfy our various forms of spiritual hunger.

Jesus not only gives the Bread of Life (John 6:11, 27) — Jesus *is* the Bread of Life (John 6:35, 48). The *Giver* and the *Gift* are One and the same. As the Bread of Life from Heaven, only He can satisfy man's spiritual hunger. While bodily food helps us to stay alive in this world, spiritual food sustains and develops our supernatural life which will last forever in Heaven. Through God's infinite love we are given, in the Blessed Eucharist, the very Author of the Gifts of Faith and Sanctifying Grace. Thus, the Eucharist is not a mere "symbol" of Jesus; rather, it is Jesus' Real Bodily Presence in His glorified, scarred, risen Body. This Bread of Life — Who is Jesus Himself — gives mankind a new relationship with God, a relationship of trust, obedience and love.

Fr Antonio Pineda

Parish Note Friday 30th July 2021 and the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

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

Fri 7/30/2021 2:38 PM

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

 1 attachments (26 KB)

The Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time.docx;

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time and below is an update from Fr Peter, both of which can be found on our parish website.

Fr Peter writes:

It has been good to see more of you coming together celebrating our weekday Masses in the light of the latest Government Regulations and on last Sunday morning there were just over 70 at the 9am morning Mass. (Still a far cry from the pre-Covid, 200 or so...) Great to be able to greet people who felt they wanted to return and who knew they were safe with all the precautions that are still being taken. Some were full of news about holidays that they had managed to take, mostly in the UK, and how good they found it to be able to have done that with their families. Lovely, too, to see old friends greeting each other with smiles on their faces. There is still a long way to go of course. Certain precautions will take longer to be removed than others, and we still have a serious responsibility to those in our Community who are still shielding and who remain very cautious.

We are eagerly looking forward to all three of our churches being open for Sunday Masses from the first weekend in September, and that will be a great cause for celebration. We will be asking parishioners at Most Holy Redeemer in Sawbridgeworth to give a hand in later August to clean and put to rights that lovely little church ready to welcome us all. We will also have to run Legionella tests on all the water there as well as the hot water cylinders in the Windhill Churches Centre, since no water has been drawn off for nearly a year – this was something that had not occurred to us till we had a recent health and safety inspection which turned out be very helpful.

Speaking of holidays, the time has come for Fr Antonio and myself to try and get a break. It has been a very long time since either of us has managed that. So, we are each taking just two weeks during August: Fr Antonio the first two weeks and myself, the second two weeks. That will include weekends so that we can have a proper bit of rest time completely away. Until a few years ago we usually managed to get "supply" priests in the summer but, of course, no one can come from abroad at the moment. As for "supply" priests in the Diocese, nearly all of those are over 75 and shielding still and are not available. You may remember that in 2018 we had Fr Angel from Spain the last of a long list of wonderful priests from overseas to look after us, but in 2019 it proved impossible and since then we have had to have August Masses only at St Joseph's, not celebrating Sunday Masses at Sawbridgeworth or Much Hadham. It will be the same this year to enable your priests to have at least a short rest. Priests in parishes are expected to take 4 weeks break in the summer and one week each after Christmas and Easter but we will probably be forgoing most of that for this year, for the moment taking just two weeks each. We hope to make some of it up perhaps later in the year but will wait and see.

We continue here at No 3 Windhill to do everything we can to protect everyone in the parish and now to plan the final re-opening of our three churches. Fr Antonio and I are very grateful to all those parishioners who have helped us both to carry the burden of these very difficult times; there have been times of exhaustion and deep frustration but, please God, we are all finding a way through to a safer future.

Most truly, with my thanks and prayers,

Fr Peter

PLANNED WORKS ON WINDHILL - We have today received the following letter re connecting electricity to the new hotel being built near to the train station. We do not believe that the disabled parking bays will be affected but there will be disruption to the footpath and road. We have advised the company of the details of our Mass times and all other Church events.

Lydon Contracting, on behalf of UK Power Solutions, will be excavating along the footpath on Windhill (from The Granary to St Michaels Church) between 04/08/21 – 29/08/21 to allow for new HV electricity ducts to be installed. During this time, we kindly ask that you refrain from parking within the works area outside of these properties. As soon as the barriers are removed from the parking bays you may park your vehicle again. Our prime objective is to ensure the works are carried out in a safe and efficient manner with every effort being made to keep disruption to a minimum. On completion, all trenches will be backfilled and reinstated to the required highways specification. Your co-operation and patience during these essential works are appreciated.

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) providing your details and telling us which ministry , at which mass and which church 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.

SOCIALLY DISTANCED SEATING - If you sit in the 'socially distanced ' seating side of the Church, we thank you for continuing to wear a face mask.

END OF THE ZOOM MASS - For the last 16+ months, every Sunday morning at 9am without fail a stalwart group of parishioners have shared their time and talents for the benefit of all hosting a Zoom Mass complete with music, singing and virtual refreshments providing faithful friendship and support. This has attracted many from different parishes and also different parts of the country, even Fr Stephen from New Zealand one day! Huge thanks to John, Clare , Izzy and the Wright family, Dom and the Tisi family and Dave, Eleanor and the Ring family - you really have all been absolutely fantastic- Thank you very much!

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/>

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...

CHOIR AND SINGERS WANTED -It is hoped to have a choir to sing at the service for the 800th anniversary of St Andrews/ Holy Cross Church on Saturday 18th September 2021. Singers who have previously sung with the regular choir for Christmas Carol Services are warmly invited to join for this, as are any other singers who have not previously joined us. Please send an email indicating interest to stephen@penton.eclipse.co.uk by 15th August. There will probably be two or three rehearsals on Saturday mornings prior to the weekend.

PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK - This week a special mention to those members of our RCIA group Alison, Dom, Gillian, Jonathan, Kate, Marie and Mary who along with Fr Antonio and Sophie met to plan the way ahead this week. Grateful thanks also to Marie who hosted the event.

To finish this week on the theme of the Olympics, something which made me smile and will definitely consider during our daily Church cleaning regime...

Housekeeping staff at Las Vegas hotels have an added incentive to work hard and hone their skills on the job. Every year they are invited to take part in the Housekeeping Olympics, held by the International Executive Housekeepers Association to celebrate their work.

The "Olympics" comprised five events including the Mop Relay where employees had to weave their mops around a slalom course comprising more than a dozen "Caution, wet floor" signs before handing over to a teammate. (I think we could definitely win a Gold at this event!)

Also, part of the games is a vacuuming event which sees cleaners competing to Hoover up hundreds of pieces of confetti from a patch of carpet in the fastest time.

A bed-making contest assesses contestants on their speed and accuracy, and other events are the Buffer Pad Toss, where staff hurl floor pads to team-mates on the other side of a room with the aid of a toilet plunger handle; and the Toilet Paper Toss where entrants throw as many toilet rolls into a bin as they can against the clock.

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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