

The Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Twenty First Sunday in Ordinary Time

There are times when the situation is simply black or white. You are either in or out. You either stay or leave. There is no room for indecision. The time to choose is now. This is the situation in this Sunday's Gospel. People either accepted or rejected Jesus. Most did the latter. Only a few chose to stay with him.

This Sunday's Gospel is about coming to a decision and sticking by it. Jesus had the rare ability to offer a straight option—you were either for him, or against him. He himself was fully committed to his mission, and to all that was best for us, even if at times his disciples complained. He was used to being criticised by his enemies, but when he could not depend on the loyalty of his friends, he had to call them to account.

In a way it was hard on the disciples, because, by the nature of what Jesus offered, it could not just be some sort of an a la carte menu, from which they could choose whatever suited them. When some of his followers began to walk away, he didn't run after them and try to reason with them. That was not his way. Rather he turned to those who stayed and challenged them to commit themselves.

There are three types of people in every gathering: those who cause things to happen; those who watch things happening; and those who don't know what is happening! Peter was the one who stepped up to the occasion. "Lord," he said, "who shall we go to? You have the message of eternal life, and we believe; we know that you are the Holy One of God." For Jesus, losing the others was worth it, if it left him with loyal followers like Peter.

Jesus was not concerned with numbers. His whole life shows that the value of something does not bear any necessary relation to the number of people who support it. Popularity does not necessarily show where truth is to be found. Numbers are not everything. We follow Jesus not because he was or is popular but because, in the word of Peter in the Gospel, we recognise that he has the message of eternal life. He is the Truth.

Fr Antonio Pineda

Parish Note Friday 20th August 2021 and the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Twenty first Sunday in Ordinary Time

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

Fri 8/20/2021 4:11 PM

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

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

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Sunday Message on the Twenty first Sunday in Ordinary Time from Fr Antonio who we warmly welcome back to the parish after his short break away. This can also be found on our website.

This week, whilst very happily greeting everyone coming to Mass and continuing to quickly squirt on demand any open palm, I just happened to see with sanitising hand gel, I was the grateful recipient of the most wonderful gift. It really took me completely by surprise, but the effect every time I think about it has been extremely long lasting. I am certain that I was not the only person in the Church who also benefitted from it, but if I could have bottled up the magical experience, it would be priceless! The gift in question was simply seeing the most beautiful beaming, innocent, smile radiating from an adorable little baby boy as he came into the Church with his family. He was rather like an 'angelic lightbulb', who lit up the whole room. His perfect little face with twinkling eyes and gorgeous gummy grin immediately made everyone around him smile, it was so wonderfully infectious and heart melting at the same time. The power of his lovely smile was completely genuine and given so freely to all, being a very welcome reminder of how an action so simple can really make a difference and brighten everyone's day...

PLEASE KEEP IN YOUR THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS- the family and friends of Mrs Mary 'Paddy' Gladwyn RIP and Mrs Rosaleen Dusting RIP much loved parishioners who both sadly died on Thursday of this week. *Eternal rest grant unto Paddy and Rosaleen O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*

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.

CLEANING THE CHURCH AFTER MASS - If you are able to help to clean the Church by taking a cleaning wipe upon entering to just sanitise your own pew and kneeler after Mass or private prayer, that would be very helpful and much appreciated please, leaving our volunteers to sweep, wash the floor, sanitise everything else and 'fog' the Church each day or if you are in the position to donate disinfectant wipes or spray, that would be welcomed too. 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 4th October and Monday 11th October 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.

CONFIRMATION APPLICATIONS FOR 2022 NOW OPEN - If your date of birth is on or before 31 August 2007 (Year 10 and above) and you would like to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, Application forms are

available from Father after every Mass starting from this weekend. All forms must be completed and returned to 3 Windhill, Bishop's Stortford **by Wednesday 29th September 2021 at the latest**. The preparation sessions will take place between November 2021 and July 2022, with an introductory evening for parents and candidates to take place the week before half term. Further information will follow in due course. If you have any questions, please contact our Catechetical Coordinator Sophie Sullivan at bstortfordcatechist@rcdow.org.uk

ALTAR SERVERS MEETING - There will be a catch-up meeting and training session for **ALL** Altar Servers in the whole parish and those who are interested in becoming a Server, on Sunday 29th August 2021 at 3pm at St Joseph and the English Martyrs Catholic Church with Fr Antonio.

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.

ADVANCED NOTICE OF CLOSURE OF THE PARISH OFFICE - Debbie will be taking a two-week break from Monday 30 August (Bank holiday) - Friday 10th September inclusive. Any non-urgent enquiries during this time will be dealt with immediately upon her return.

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...

ADVANCED NOTIFICATION OF WORKS - The work on the new electricity cables on the four-way junction of Bridge street, Market Street, High Street and North Street starts on Saturday 28th August from 1800 hours to Tuesday 31st August 2021 at 0500 hours. From Wednesday 1st September a full road closure will take place on Bridge Street with a diversion put in place.

ADVANCED NOTICE OF A PLANNED EVENT IN THE MONASTERY GARDENS - On Saturday 28 August 2021 at 2.30pm and 6.30pm there will be two open air Children's shows, 'Mr Stink' held on the Monastery gardens organised by Bishop's Stortford Town Council. No parking will be permitted behind St Joseph's Church. If you are planning to attend the 6pm Mass, please be aware that there may be an increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic from 5.30pm onwards when the event opens.

BEDS AND HERTS HISTORIC CHURCHES TRUST - Bike 'n Hike - Saturday 11 September 2021 9am - 5pm. have fun visiting over 600 Churches and Chapels, raise funds for your local church and help save other churches in Beds and Herts. For more info www.b-n-h.co.uk . Sponsorship packs are available at the back of St Joseph's Church if you would like to take part.

STORTFORD KICKSTART - Job hunting? Helping people back to work. at the Methodist Church, South Street, Bishop's Stortford, open Thursday and Friday 10am -12.30pm with free professional advice on CV's, cover letters, internet job search, interview training and skills. www.stortfordkickstart.org.uk Tel; 01279 501745

SCHOOLS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED - Looking for a new challenge? Could you visit schools in your local area to deliver assemblies and workshops about CAFOD's work and encourage young people to take action, fundraise and pray with CAFOD? No experience necessary. Full support, resources and regular training provided. We are especially in need of volunteers happy to visit schools in Hertfordshire, Ealing, Brent, Hounslow and Camden.

SCHOOL VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR NEEDED (VOLUNTEER POSITION) - CAFOD Westminster is looking for a well-organised and friendly person to help coordinate their school visits programme from September. This role would suit someone who is comfortable speaking to other volunteers and schools and also in using spreadsheets and databases.

If you are interested in either of these volunteer roles, please contact Chris Driscoll

at westminsterschools@cafod.org.uk or call 07776 493162

COLD CALLING SCAM - Hertfordshire County Council Trading Standards is warning of fraudulent cold calls being made to residents who have had spray foam loft insulation applied in the past. The fraudsters may tell you that there are issues with the original installing company, and they may frighten you by talking about fire risks associated with that insulation. They will tell you that you will be able to claim back the cost of the installation and that they will be able to remedy the works essentially for free.

None of those claims are true. What is true however, is that customer lists have fallen into the hands of scammers who are making these targeted sales calls. Once in a property, they produce a 'report' indicating safety problems and then arrange to carry out 'remedial' works themselves. Although they say the work is free, they will need paying first, telling you to try to claim money back from your bank for the original defective works. In the absence of a genuine inspection report, this will not happen. If payment was made by cheque or bank transfer, there is no obligation for the bank to pay anything back in these circumstances anyway. It is a scam.

If you, or anyone you know, has had this work done in the past please be prepared for these calls and tell them that you are not interested. Please do not allow the trader to enter your home.

If you have had this work done and need advice, please contact Hertfordshire County Council Trading Standards via Citizens Advice on 0808 223 1133. They have a small stock of call blocking devices that they can lend to victims of landline telephone frauds, please contact them to discuss if appropriate.

To report a fraud to the Police, please contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or at www.actionfraud.police.uk

CAFOD - is responding to significant crises across the world this week. We are working with local Church organisations in Haiti to deliver emergency aid to people affected by the catastrophic earthquake and tropical storm. In the tragic situation in Afghanistan, we are working to ensure the safety of our local partners and their communities. We are supporting local aid workers to deliver urgent food and water supplies to hundreds of thousands of people facing extreme hunger in Tigray in Ethiopia, South Sudan and north-east Nigeria. You can read more about how we can all express solidarity with our sisters and brothers affected by these emergencies on the CAFOD website: <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Emergencies-news>. Your compassion, generosity and prayers have helped us to stand together and enable us to continue to support communities in these difficult times. Thank you.

PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK - This week a special mention to Martin from Holy Cross who has been looking after the Church now for many years. With a wedding at the Church on Thursday, he went out of his way to open up extra early and was as always, super-efficient and helpful! Also Big thanks to Fran, Gregory, Joe, Pauline, Piotr, Marie and Tessa who helped out this week at St Joseph's wiping down pews, sweeping & mopping. A special mention to Monica and Bernadette for assisting to clear away when Father had to rush off to an appointment. Finally, Thank you to Alan, John & Dominic for helping to clear the grounds at Most Holy Redeemer in preparation for September- Excellent job! Many hands really do make light work. Thank you Everyone!

To finish this week on the theme of a smile, a poem by Helen Steiner Rice.

MEET LIFE'S TRIALS WITH SMILES

There are times when life overwhelms us and our trials seem too many to bear,
It is then we should stop to remember, God is standing ready to share,
the uncertain hours that confront us and fill us with fear and despair
for God in His goodness has promised that the cross He gives us to wear,
will never exceed our endurance or be more than our strength can bear,
and secure in that blessed assurance we can smile as we face tomorrow
for God holds the key to the future and no sorrow or care need we borrow.

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*

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

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