



St John Boste Parish, West Durham
Esh, Esh Winning, Langley Park and Ushaw Moor

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R C Chaplain Father Paul Tully Tel. (01388) 818544

Please telephone the Chaplain if you have someone in hospital who would like a visit.



Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady : 16 August 2020

The Assumption of Our Lady into the Glory of Heaven: When we communicate with one another we use words - but not *only* words. There is body language, such as smiles, frowns and posture. There is our manner which can be aggressive or relaxed. This, of course, is why, without 'expression', we can so easily misunderstand the tone of texts that have been sent to us. Similarly, we express what we believe not only in cold words but through art, poetry, music. These all add different layers to what we are trying to communicate. And this can be the danger in taking the message of the bible too literally: it focuses only upon the words, with no nuances of meaning. This can also affect our understanding of church doctrine. Which brings us to today's feast of the Assumption. The actual wording of the Church's teaching says that "when the course of her earthly life was over, Mary was taken up body and soul into the glory of heaven". Over the years, some people taken have this to mean that Mary didn't die; she simply ascended from this world into God's presence. But that is not what the teaching says! It says: 'when the course of Mary's earthly life was *over*' she was taken up, assumed, caught up totally into God's presence. This is God's guarantee, not only to Mary,



but to each one of us. Our friendships are hugely important since they assure us that we are deeply loveable, despite our imperfection. Friendship gives us a glimpse of how God sees us: fragile, sometimes messed up, yet immensely loveable. Our ultimate destiny, though, lies not just in this world with all that takes up time and space in our lives. Our destiny is to be at one with the God who, in his love, first brought us into being. This time of lock-down started with stunned silence then, perhaps, something of an enjoyment of the stillness, then both a frustration and a reticence to venture out of the house. Something deep within us was yearning for more, something that would make sense of our lives, something that would satisfy our inner hunger. We become fully human not through all the things that we have which surround us in this world, but through being absorbed into God's presence, through being accepted *as we are*, caught up in God's embrace. Mary's being assumed into heaven is God's guarantee to each one of us. So, interestingly, our second reading at mass today speaks about 'resurrection':

'Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Death came through one man and, in the same way, the resurrection of the dead came through one man. Just as all die in Adam, so all will be brought to life in Christ; but all of them in their proper order: Christ as the first fruits and then, after the coming of Christ, those who belong to him. After that will come the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, having done away with every sovereignty, authority and power. For he must be king until he has put all his enemies under his feet, and the last of the enemies to be destroyed is 'death', for everything is to be put under his feet.' (1 Corinthians 15: 20-26)

In today's gospel Mary says:

'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my Saviour, because he has looked upon his lowly handmaid. Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me. Holy is his name, and his mercy reaches out from age to age for those who fear him. He has shown the power of his arm, he has routed the proud of heart. He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly. The hungry he has filled with good things, the rich sent empty away. He has come to the help of Israel his servant, mindful of his mercy to Abraham and his descendants for ever.' (Luke 1 :39-56)

Recently deceased: Robert Roche (Langley Park) died suddenly on Tuesday; Fr Tony Duffy (Birtley).
May they rest in peace.

Anniversaries:

Our Lady Queen of Martyrs: Julia Sands, Kathleen Emmerson, Mary Quinn, Violet Vizard, Ralph Murray, Raymond Shoulder, James Hamill, Thomas Finnegan, Hughie Richardson, Agnes Halpin.

St Joseph's: Alice Joyce, Winifred Brown, Patricia Edwards (nee Goodwin), Andrew Wilson.

St Michael's: Tom Seed, Mark Mendoza, Annie Corrigan, Philomena Outterside.

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION OF OUR LADY INTO THE GLORY OF HEAVEN

Re-opening our churches: We are planning to have mass at St Joseph's again next Sunday, 23 August at 10.00am. If we have a considerable number of people wanting to attend then we can increase the number of masses. Do remember, though, that our maximum number is very low: social distancing means that there needs to be 2 metres from other people in every direction, meaning a maximum of 23 people in the church (though this can increase a little if people from one household/ 'bubble' arrive together and sit together). Remember too that since 8 August it is now obligatory to wear a face covering in all enclosed public spaces, including churches. You will need to sanitise your hands on coming into the church and then be led to a specific seat by a steward (not necessarily your *favourite* seat, I'm afraid). Since some people have specifically asked, you may wish to leave your collection envelope/cash donation in a basket *before* sanitising your hands. There will be no singing at mass because, in projecting the voice, there can be more chance of spreading germs. Holy Communion will be distributed *at the very end of mass* with people unhooking their face covering just before receiving Holy Communion, then fastening it immediately afterwards; communicants then leave by the side door without congregating outside. People often bring keys, glasses, purse, bag, missal etc to church but please bring as little as possible with you as you will need to carry everything as you proceed for Holy Communion and then leave the church. In early days we had a number of people volunteer to be stewards and cleaners. Over recent weeks we have had fewer extra volunteers. We will need more stewards who can welcome people and explain the procedure. This procedure is not difficult, but different to what we are used to. Quite understandably, this may well put some people off coming to church but please remember that, at present, the obligation to come to mass remains relaxed. You only need to come to church *if you feel comfortable in coming*. And, because of so few people able to attend mass at any one time, we will need to have a booking system. **If you would like to come to our mass next Sunday please phone Christine Brennan on 0191- 366 9465 between 2.00 – 6.00pm this coming Wednesday.** And, in a spirit of fairness, I ask that you do not book a place for mass every week; we can only have 23 people, so we need to give a chance to all who may wish to attend over the weeks. As I have mentioned a few times recently, each building needs a thorough deep clean before its *first* opening but then needs a simpler cleaning of benches and surfaces before every further opening of every church for prayer, masses, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Once the initial deep clean has been done we follow a strict cleaning protocol which is straightforward and the cleaning can now be done in less than 30 minutes. However, it wouldn't be fair to expect the same group of people to have to clean churches in advance of every service so we have now started to compile teams, with four cleaners in each, from across the whole of our new amalgamated parish and not just from Ushaw Moor. We currently have three groups of four. So, having said all this, would **you** like to lighten the load by helping with cleaning or stewarding?

- If you are in the [clinically extremely vulnerable group](#), you must not volunteer at this time.
- If you are in the [clinically vulnerable group](#) you could be at a higher risk of severe illness from Covid-19.
- For more information please [read page 3 of our handbook for the reopening of churches](#) on the diocesan website [redhn.org.uk] This includes links to HM Government guidance.

If **you** would like to volunteer to help, please contact the Parish Office: you can phone 0191-373 0219 or you can email: stjosephs.ushawmoor@btopenworld.com

News from the diocese: Remember, you can keep up with all sorts of news about support and resources in our diocese by looking at the diocesan website: redhn.org



Hospital visits: Throughout the Covid-10 pandemic our Catholic Chaplain has been into hospital almost every day and is still able to visit patients, and to bring them Holy Communion and the Sacrament of the

Sick. If you know of a patient who wants a visit from the Catholic Hospital Chaplain, please inform Fr Paul Tully on 01388 818544 or frpaultully@outlook.com

Contributions: Because we don't have the same opportunity to put money into the collection baskets at mass just now then a number of people have recently been seeking information about direct debits, standing orders and on-line contributions. This is certainly an easier system to use in our present situation. If you are interested in doing this then let us know at the Parish Office and someone will be in touch with how best to do it.

Ushaw Moor Catholic Club now open from 7pm Friday, Saturday and Sunday (bingo).



NEPACS is a North-East charity which aims to promote a positive future for prisoners, offenders and their relatives by supporting family ties at every stage of the criminal justice system. Some of our parishioners volunteer with NEPACS, and we regularly support their appeal for toiletries and other basic items to help prisoners on their release. A representative of NEPACS will give us a Zoom presentation on the work of the charity on **Thursday 20th August at 7.00pm**. Put the date in your diary now then contact Christine Brennan on 366 9465.

Readings next week: (21st Sunday, Year A): Isaiah 22: 19-23; Ps 137; Romans 11: 33-36; Matthew 16: 13-20