

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT YEAR Laetare or Rejoicing Sunday 29th March 2020

MOTHERING SUNDAY: Today, we pray for all Mothers, that God may bless them as we honour them, for the gift of Motherhood and the creative love he has given them.

DUE TO THE DANGERS FROM THE CORONA VIRUS WE REGRET THAT OUR CHURCH CAN NO LONGER BE OPEN DAILY UNTIL IT IS SAFE.

At this time we pray for all working in the NHS and the Emergency Services, carers who look after the elderly and vulnerable in their own homes or care homes, we pray for those who are alone and dependent on the goodness of others, for our families, ourselves and those in need. We can reflect and pray on the Stations of the Cross and how many share in Christ's sufferings. We can light a candle at home (being careful and safe in doing so) and ask Jesus, the Light of the World to be a light and Saviour for all God's people in this time of great need, and ask Mary his Mother to intercede for us

PUBLIC MASSES with a congregation will not be celebrated in our or other Parishes this week or the near future due to the dangers from the Corona virus. This position will continue until our bishops, following advice from the Government & NHS, declare it safe for people to congregate and meet in numbers. Priests in our parishes will offer Mass in private daily, to invoke God's protection on his people. We will pray for deliverance from this illness that threatens the wellbeing of communities and nations, at home and abroad. Further information is on the website of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales and the statement by Cardinal Vincent Nicholls is at www.cbcew.org.uk/

WEDNESDAY, 25 March, is the FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION when we celebrate the Angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin, Mary that she had been chosen to be the Mother of Jesus, Son of God & Saviour of the world. We pray, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death and especially at this time. Amen".

SACRAMENT of PENANCE by request to the Parish Priest

UNIVERSALIS: www.universalis.com Daily Mass readings, Lectio Divina, Prayer of the Church in The Divine Office and Spiritual Readings for each day of Lent.

EWTN DAILY MASS and more at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/EWTN>

DAILY MASS is on the web from Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Leigh-on-Sea and from St Joseph and the English Martyrs Church at Bishops Stortford

DAILY SERVICES: www.churchservicestv.com

DAILY SERVICE on BBC RADIO 4 (198 meters Long Wave) at 9.4am

SUNDAY SERVICE on BBC RADIO 4 at 8.10am

BBC ESSEX: Sunday programme from 6.00am to 9.00am

SPIRITUALITY & LENT: <https://aleteia.org/category/spirituality/>

A LENT RETREAT 2020 – Journeying with Jesus daily: www.sacredspace.ie

SCRIPTURE READINGS for FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT Year A 22 March 2020

FIRST READING: 1 Samuel: 16: 1-13 The anointing of David as King of Israel.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 23 The Lord is my shepherd.

SECOND READING: Ephesians 5:8-14 The Lord is the Light in our darkness

GOSPEL: John 9:1-41 Jesus heals a man born blind & challenges spiritual blindness

The Immaculate Conception Catholic Church



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Our parish is twinned with Thistle Grove/Lebohang
Parish in the Diocese of Dundee, South Africa

FOURTH SUNDAY IN LENT A Rejoicing Sunday 22nd March 2020

Dear friends,

Jesus said to the blind man, "Go and wash in the pool of Siloam, a name that means sent" (John 9:1-18). There are a stages of healing in this Gospel for the man who was born blind and which might have challenged his faith and that of the people around him. Jesus sees the blind man, recognises his need for healing, spat on the ground and makes a paste with his spittle and then tells the man to and wash. Then he gets the gift sight having acted with faith and obedience to Jesus command.

Blindness is not just a physical condition affecting the body, for people can also have a mental or spiritual blindness. Blindness of the mind afflicts those unable to understand or sympathise with the thinking of others and can only see things from their own perspective. It is a real gift and grace to be able to see understand and see where others and coming from and sympathise with them and meet them halfway.

Spiritual blindness afflicts those like the Pharisees who do not have faith in Jesus as the Saviour of the world. They limit God with their restricted and narrow mind-sets and do not have the faith that God is working out his purpose and mission to save people through Jesus. In this situation, it is the man who was physically blind who has the insight of faith to profess his belief in Jesus. Equally today, there are so many who do not have faith in God or in Jesus his Son as the Saviour of the world. To have faith is a gift or grace given by God that enables a person to see God's presence in the world, in people and in our own person. Only with the gift of faith can we profess our faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

With the many crises that afflict people nowadays, we might ask "Could we ever have imagined these things happening, as a security we take for granted is quickly shattered. During Lent we are called to love of God and neighbour. At this time we need to show love of God by caring for our neighbour and showing real concern and care for our neighbour, especially those who are self-isolating, vulnerable or living alone. In recent weeks we saw people take all they could from super market shelves – seemingly thinking only of their own needs! By contrast, two thirteen-year-old girls in school uniform saw a poor man begging at a shop doorway. They went up to him and gave him two bars of chocolate. The joy they got out of their giving was as great as the delight that the man who was begging got in receiving!

May God bless and protect all his people in these difficult days. Fr John

RECENTLY DECEASED: CHARLES DERENGE RIP, father of our parishioner Margaret Steggle, died on Saturday 7th March, **May he rest in peace.** We offer our sympathy to Margaret and her family at and pray that: *The Lord sends his Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to console and strengthen them and all who mourn at this time.*

IN NEED OF URGENT HELP: If you, or someone you know is in need of urgent help at this time, please contact the Priest's House and we will do what we can to help, either through the church, parishioners, the Foodbank or other local agencies. Our parish has sent a donation of £1000 from parish funds to Epping Forest Foodbank in this time of urgent need.

CORONA VIRUS CHANGES: Please see letter in church and poster in the porch from the Bishops of England and Wales on this matter and visit www.cbcew.org.uk/.

OUR BIBLE COURSE in Lent, based on "The Big Picture" will NOT continue at this time but may resume later.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CHANGES: First Holy Communion preparation and the First Holy Communion Masses have now had to be postponed and new dates will be set when it will be declared safe for people to congregate again in church.

SAFEGUARDING children & vulnerable adults in our Parish: Our Parish Safeguarding training scheduled to take place next **Tuesday, 24th March has now been postponed.** We ask **ALL in a parish role** in contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults, to see the information on the church notice board.

EPPING LENT LUNCHESES: Unfortunately all remaining lunches, including our own, have had to be cancelled for this year due to concerns about the Corona virus.

BAPTISM: *Congratulations to the family of Ruby Rosina Iris Lea Evans who was baptised at our Church last Sunday. May the Lord bless them and help them to bring up their child in the knowledge and love of God.*

THE TRADITIONAL LATIN MASS according to the Traditional Tridentine Rite due to be offered in our Church on Sunday, **22 March at 3pm has been postponed.**

SVP RAFFLE: Thanks to all who helped with the raffle and bought tickets or made donations. **£491** was taken in tickets & donations. The draw will be on March 27th and winners' list will be put on the church notice board soon after. Many thanks.

WE PRAY FOR OUR SICK IN HOSPITAL & AT HOME: Frances Wells, Paula Hall, Ann & Bill Dowd, Marcheta Swift-Daley, Mark Toohey, James Bullen, Fr Paul Dynan, Fr Tom Jordan and Fr Niall Harrington. **Please contact a Priest or Hospital Chaplain if you, your relative, or a parishioner, is ill at home or in hospital so that they can have the sacraments.**

OFFERTORIES: Offertory Envelopes: **£249.92**; Loose: **£128.50**; Standing Orders: **£800**; CAFOD BOX: **£37.57** & LENT FAST DAY: **£10**. Many thanks.

COVID-19 DOMESTIC CHURCH PARENT RESOURCES: Please find a link to the Diocesan news page, where they have published an article with recommendations for parents with school-aged children to enable them to continue to worship in the home, and continue to mark the season of Lent / Easter period with their families without gathering publicly for Mass.

<https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/news/domestic-church-resources-parents-covid-19/>

CORONA VIRUS VOLUNTEERS: Everything Epping Forest is managing a contacts database of people willing to act as "community volunteers" who could assist with deliveries etc to "self-isolating" people in the district during this outbreak. If you would like to be added to the database, and are happy to have your contact details passed on to anyone who requests them, please email everythingeppingforest@gmail.com with: your name, contact number, Area (town, village, streets) you are willing to volunteer in.

IF YOU NEED HELP - if you are in need of assistance and would like to contact a volunteer in your area, please email everythingeppingforest@gmail.com with "REQUEST" in the subject line or text 07710 447868 and state where you live. Please note that Everything Epping Forest will not be responsible for any arrangements made between parties. Anyone taking part in this initiative does so on the understanding that the arrangements between volunteers and anyone in need are the responsibility of the individuals themselves.

Everything Epping Forest will only pass on contact details to anyone requesting them as part of the volunteers' initiative.

YOUTH MASS: at 6pm, Sunday, 29th March, at St. Edmund's, Loughton, has had to be postponed, like many other congregating events at the present time.

THE PASSAGE is raising funds through the **Big Give** from **12 noon Tues 17th March – 12 noon Tues 24th March 2020** to support its work Helping Homeless People to move away from the street to a new home and to return to work. **Double your Donation, Double your impact.** This is a matched giving scheme for online donations. For more information ring Andrew Hollingsworth 020 75921886 andrew.h@passage.org.uk. Donate at <https://bit.ly/334RmGH>. Many thanks.

JUMBLE SALE: Our Jumble Sale will now not go ahead as planned. Therefore, for the time being, please **DO NOT** leave any more jumble in the church porch

CATHOLIC SINGLES is an organisation helping single Catholics of all ages (over 18 years) meet other single Catholics, either one to one or through social events. For further information visit www.catholicsingles.org.uk or tel. 0161 941 3498.

HALL BOOKINGS: Contact Arnold Verrall, preferably telephone 01992 001995 and dial 01992 even in Epping, or mobile 07764404813 or by email arnold_verrall@email.com. **Preferential rates for parishioners & for charities**