



Our Lady of Compassion Formby

School Lane, Formby, L37 3LW

Served by the churches of Our Lady of Compassion, St. Jerome and St. Anne

Roman Catholic Archdiocesan Trustees In. Reg. Charity No. 232709

14th March 2021 - Fourth Sunday of Lent

Parish Priest: Rev. Mgr. John M Walsh.
Deacons: Rev. J P Moreland and Rev. J A McCarthy

Mass Times

(There are no public masses at this time)

LIVE STREAMED MASSES ONLY

Day	Time	Location
Sunday 14th March 2021	10:00am	St Jerome's, Greenloons Drive
Wednesday 17th March 2021	12noon	St Jerome's, Greenloons Drive

Requiem Masses and Services:-

Thursday 25th March 2021	11:00am	St Jerome's, Greenloons Drive - Mark GREENAN
Monday 29th March 2021	10:00am	St Jerome's, Greenloons Drive - Joan FLYNN

(Please remember COVID rules limit numbers at funeral services, please contact the families do not just turn up as you will not be allowed entry)

Please pray for the lately Dead including; Henry CASSIDY, Al HANLEY, Wilfred AIREY, Michael COLLINS, Tom FORSYTH, Mark GREENAN and Mary WIFORD and pray for all of their families.

And let us pray for those who are sick including Liz PAGE

Thoughts of Pope Francis: The beginning of the return to God is the recognition of our need for him and his mercy. This is the right path, the path of humility. I encourage you to dedicate time to the Word of God, to the Sacraments, and to fasting and prayer, in order to renew our relationship with God, ourselves, and our neighbour.

Lent is about discerning where our hearts are directed.

Let us ask: Where is my life's navigation system taking me – towards God or towards myself?

If any parishioner needs Father John for any reason whatsoever, particularly if someone is **sick or dying** and needs **Sacraments**, please call **07783354250**. If the phone is not answered, please leave a **clear message** indicating your **name, the reason** for your call and a **contact number**. If no message is left, then Father John does not know that you have called. You can also call the **parish office on 01704873230** again leaving name, contact number and reason for call. The answering machine is checked every day. Also, you can use the parish email:- **ourladyofcompassionformby@rcaol.org.uk**

PARISH NOTICES

Our Lady of Compassion Prayer Group:- Did you know that our new parish has a prayer group that meets on Friday mornings online over 'Zoom'. If you would like to join the group, please contact Andrea Dell on 07342692957

Churches Together: Following the meeting on Thursday it was agreed to convene a small group to explore some possible models for piloting a 'Pantry' type initiative for the 'just about managing ' in Formby. This will be presented to the next CTiFAH meeting in May. Please pray for those involved in this initiative and that a suitable model can be found.

Foodbank:- Please remember the Foodbank, donations can be left at Alice Joyce's home, 35 Freshfield Road, all donations need to be there before 12:30pm on a Friday. Here is the latest list of items that the Foodbank are short of - Desserts (not rice pudding), Savoury rice, Savoury pasta, Jam, Hot chocolate (small jars), Sauce -red, brown, mayo, Laundry capsules (15 tabs approx), Washing up liquid, Toilet roll, Male and female deodorant, Male and female razors and Cat food. Many, many thanks for all your regular donations of food and money to the Foodbank every week.

Dementia Care Week - 12th - 19th March 2021:- During this week let us keep in our thoughts and prayers all of those suffering from this disease, all those caring for sufferers and for all of the families touched by this disease also. The Redemptorists have provided us with the following prayer -

'It steals upon our loved ones,
it steals when we do not understand
what is happening; why it is happening?

The happening is that slow dying, the taking away of a precious loved one.
We see someone we loved and treasured, someone who won our respect,
we see that person denied of dignity and slowly losing an awareness of life
and living.

It hurts...oh, how it hurts. Let prayer be our help, let prayer be our strength,
let prayer rise like a fountain of love.

May we come together in prayer for our cherished one.

Dear God, we pray, may your will be done.'

Lent: Shared weekly morning / evening prayer for you to join during Lent

This is an opportunity to come together by Zoom for shared morning / evening prayer on Thursdays during lent. Prayers will be led by different member churches in CTiFAH. Here are the Zoom joining details which can be circulated on electronic church bulletins:

<https://zoom.us/j/7024105255?pwd=MUdhemlISmxJOGRVTFJZjRkczl2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 702 410 5255

Passcode: 063518

Date	18.02.21	25.02.21	04.03.21	11.03.21	18.03.21	25.03.21
Time	4.30 pm	9 am	7 pm	9 am	6 pm	9.30 am
Leader/s	St Stephen's Rev. Jan Ashton	St Peter's Rev. Anne Taylor	Formby URC Richard Lathaen	Formby Catholic Community Dympna and Bruni	Holy Trinity Rev. Mark Stanford	St Luke's Rev. Matt Davis

Lent courses for you to join

Several churches are organizing Lent Courses on Zoom to which members of CTiFAH are invited. Here is a summary of what is on offer and more information is attached.

Methodist Church:

Exploring the themes and theology found in the story 'The Shack' by William P. Young. Five sessions on Monday evenings 7.30 – 9pm, starting 22nd Feb – 29th March (excluding 15th March). Follow the link on the web site to join in: www.crosbymethodistcircuit.org

United Reformed Church

Listen to extracts from The Poet's Gospel (A Gospel in blank verse with rhymed parables). These began on Tues 23rd Feb. For more details please email Richard Lathaen: rlathaen@btinternet.com

Holy Trinity Church: 'East of Eden' - exploring the biblical image of the "garden" stretching from Eden to the new "garden-city" of Revelation. As well as drawing on Steinbeck's novel Mark will be dipping into the writings of C.S. Lewis, John Henry Martin and the songbook of Nina Simone. Five sessions on Thursdays at 2pm and repeated on Sundays at 9.45am. Session 2 is 4th March 2021. For joining details contact Mark Stanford: mark-stanford@hotmail.co.uk

Fr. John's Letter:

Dear Friends,

'I feel I've lost my faith.. everything seems to be getting darker'. 'All the things I used to believe in seem to have disappeared, evaporated'. These are just two examples of conversations I have had with people in the past few weeks. They have been quite brief and usually take place during my daily walks. Honest, open, sad and confused, I think these conversations are taking place among many in different places.

We are hearing more and more often of an epidemic of mental health. This surprises none of us, because it comes close to home. All of us have struggled in the past year. It will take time before the full effects of this epidemic become clear. Every part of our lives are affected, but I wanted to focus in this letter on the question of faith. Our faith.

Not surprisingly, the pandemic has laid bare all the 'working parts' of our lives; who we are, what we are and how we relate to people and things around us. In other words, the fundamental building blocks of our lives have been put under the spotlight. We are now able to see, in a way that was not possible before, where we have invested our time, energies, hopes and yes, faith. When investments fail and disappear, bitter disappointment awaits. We can spend a long time kicking around in the ashes, wondering how we could have been so foolish, so easily hoodwinked, so mistaken.

But what happens when we realise that faith is slipping away, evaporating? Previous faith habits, ways of seeing things, a sense of belonging, all seem to be fading away? Some find this a liberating moment, freed from habits of a lifetime, to find a new perspective, a new approach. Others struggle with guilt and anger, blaming themselves and others. Others ask 'what now?'

You might expect me to say at this point that this is all regrettable and sad. On one level it is. When the ground under our feet, at one time so solid, seems to have given way, we are left confused and struggling. But on the other hand, I am convinced that this is one of the greatest moments in our faith journey that any of us will experience. Here is an opportunity that involves both pain and the promise of a fresh, liberating joy.

So, let us begin by asking in what or in whom have we been investing in our faith life? It could simply be the force of habit that has carried us through all these years. It could be faith in the institution of the Church, or indeed particular priests or fellow believers. Once we see that our investment has not brought the yields we expected and that we have been left with very

little, we reach what seems to be a point of no return. Is walking through the door and closing it firmly behind us the only option? I don't think so.

My own experience over this past year has surprised me in many ways. My own prejudices and assumptions have been laid bare and I have had to spend uncomfortable times reflecting on my own piles of ashes! There have been moments of darkness too as I have struggled to make sense of the 'where now?' question. So many things that I had invested in over past years now seemed brittle and sad. There have been moments when I have realised that I don't have all the answers, when at one time I presumed that I did!

Like many, I reached my own fork in the road when, having kicked around in the ashes for a while, I was presented with a choice. To rescue what I could from what now seemed to be no more than ash and rubble, or to choose to walk in the direction of a growing light, a growing realisation. This light leads us away from a pit of despair and disappointment, and gently invites us to realise that we are part of a greater whole, a bigger reality. That all our attempts to live a transactional faith; I do something for God, He does something for me, comes to nothing. Perhaps for the first time, our true identity as sons and daughters, created, cherished, loved by our Father God becomes a little clearer. We do not worship a tyrant, a dictator who keeps careful note of every bad word and action, to imagine greater punishments for us. We are loved in our worst moments as well as our best. We do not have to snatch God's attention to say; 'look at me, see how good I am!'

This might all sound familiar to us, but as I have discovered in this past year, there is a vast gulf between hearing and speaking these words and actually making them our own and believing them. So when we think we are losing our faith, maybe we are actually losing a distorted understanding of God and my relationship with Him, the seeds of which were sown long ago.

So where is the path of this pandemic leading each one of us? Have we struggled with faith, with personal darkness, with doubt? Have we felt guilt or anxiety? Have we asked 'where now?' If so, then we are receiving a gift, not misery. Faith is not as fragile as we might think. When it is broken open, it reveals new lights, new possibilities and the opportunity to let go of all that had become unhelpful.

God is at work in each one of us; deep within us. He will not let all His work go to waste. He has invested nothing less than His whole self in each one of us. So maybe it is time to let go of what worked for yesterday and look forward to something new, something fresh that speaks to our time and our experience.

As we move forward, let us be wary of the temptation to settle back into what we think is 'normal', to seek the comfortable. How easy it would be to return to old prejudices, old stereotypes and old ways of seeing the world around us. God is not thrown off beam by the pandemic. He works through it for our good. He wants us to take the opportunities he offers. He wants us to find richness and depth in our Christian life. He wants us to be happy. All that is holding us back are those old ways of doing things, old and tired ideas.

'See, I make all things new'. These words from the Book of Revelation show us God's intention. New days lie ahead, born out of the hard days of the pandemic. Rich blessings lie ahead for us all!

A very happy and blessed Mother's Day to all our wonderful mothers!

May God bless you and your loved ones!

Father John