



## Sacred Heart, Leighton Buzzard

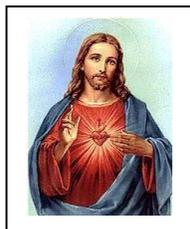
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### 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter, Year A

The Year of the Word

26<sup>th</sup> April 2020

The God who Speaks

#### MESSAGE FROM FATHER JOHN

A number of years ago I visited the National Gallery intending to visit every room. It took me over 6 hours, three visits to the café (plus cakes!), and my eyes were hanging from their sockets by the end of it, but I did it.

One of the most memorable paintings for me was Caravaggio's Supper at Emmaus, capturing the moment when Cleopas and another disciple recognised Jesus at the breaking of bread. Caravaggio employed all the tricks at his disposal: dramatic lighting, dark background, remarkable foreshortening effects and so on. Particularly skilful was his painting of one of the disciple's hands stretching out towards the viewer (hands are always difficult to draw, even at the best of times) almost reaching out to touch you. The other disciple's elbow also "pokes" out of the painting's surface, whilst a bowl of fruit (beautifully realised) almost topples off the front of the table at our feet. Even Christ's hand reaches out towards us as he blesses the bread and wine. Caravaggio uses all of these tricks to convince the viewer that we are actually there, at that instant.

It is very satisfying for the artist when you achieve this 3-D effect. All too rarely in my case, but recently I was rather pleased with myself with the painting of a church apse (rounded end of a church) which seemed to protrude out from the paper, giving the effect of a reality (the church) emerging from another reality (the paper).

These experiences are counter-intuitive, they breach our sense of reality, and it is exciting (even a little confusing and bewildering) when it happens. Like jumping into a painting, for example Mary Poppins and her friends jumping into the chalk painting on the pavement, entering another world and singing Supercalifragilistic etc)

Another instance came in a recent edition of The Repair Shop, which I mentioned on Easter Sunday. A lady had brought in a leather covered music stool to be reupholstered and when it was uncovered, fully restored, she gasped, because for an instant she was transported back to when she was a 4 year old and seeing the stool as it then appeared.

Yet another example: the first Jurassic Park film I saw at the cinema. To see the Tyrannosaurus Rex plod out through the fence for the first time was electrifying. At last one could see what a T Rex actually (or might have!) looked and sounded like, in a way that was completely convincing.

These are different examples of how reality can play tricks on us, and usually we enjoy the thrill. When Jesus was transfigured on Mount Tabor, Peter asked if they could erect three tents, one for Jesus, and one each for Moses and Elijah. He wanted to tarry there a bit longer, for all his terror he wanted the moment to last. But these experiences are all too transient.

Going back to the Supper at Emmaus, of course, this "moment of transcendence" that I have been trying to describe in different ways happened to them, when suddenly they recognised Jesus. And the moment was very transitory, because, as we are told, Jesus immediately disappeared. That is the nature of the phenomenon. Caravaggio tries, literally, to "capture" that moment for us, keep it in safe keeping, and also reminds us, that no matter how transitory that moment might be, it is still captured and kept safe for us in the Eucharist. Our eyes need to be "opened", as were the two disciples, to that moment of Jesus' presence in the celebration of the Mass, that moment of transcendence, when we are truly united with Christ in the Eucharist.

This is especially challenging during this time of lock down: Do we recognise Jesus in the Eucharist, (even if we celebrate the Mass "on line") like the two disciples? Do we respond, like St Thomas, with the words: My Lord and my God?

#### VIRUS – UPDATES

Our Church continues to remain CLOSED until further notice.

Details of Live streaming of Masses from our Cathedral can be found on:

<http://www.northamptondiocese.org>

In addition, daily Mass is shown on EWTN and live-streamed from other parishes, eg Beaconsfield, Walsingham and Knock.

Regular updates from the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales are also found on <http://www.cbcew.org.uk/>,

**YOUTUBE:** <https://youtu.be/mvWJEZSNy14>

Again thanks to modern day technology, my message can now not only be read on the Newsletter, but you can see and hear me giving it on YouTube!

#### SUNDAY AND WEEKDAY READINGS

The readings for Mass for Sunday and through the week can also be accessed through the link on the Sacred Heart website.

#### MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Masses will be said this week for the repose of the souls of: Clarice Emblow RIP, Michael Brady RIP, Christina Traynor anniv, Ray Mahony anniv, Roger Harris RIP, Brian & Debbie Perrett RIP, Tony Dunne RIP and Patricia Gallagher RIP.

On Monday Mass will be offered for the Victims of the Pandemic, with readings and prayers specially chosen to be used for the Diocese. This Mass, and all weekday Masses are offered at 10.00am (11.00am on Sundays).

#### BISHOP LEO McCARTIE RIP

Bishop Leo passed away on 23<sup>rd</sup> April, aged 94. He was Bishop of Northampton from 1990 to 2001. He was ordained as an auxiliary bishop of Birmingham in 1977, so he was a bishop for nearly 43 years, which is the longest for any Catholic bishop since the Restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850. But more importantly, he was very pastoral and had a great love for his clergy. May he rest in peace.

**100 CLUB APRIL DRAW**

And a little something normal (and somehow reassuring, well, at least to the winners!):

No 36: £75 – Mark Casey

No 56: £25 – Fernando Negro

**SVP: HERE TO HELP**

Mike Stothard has received many offers to help following his message, but still no request thus far. Perhaps we're just good at looking after each other. But there may yet be a few who have slipped through the net. If you, or anyone you know, may be in need of help with shopping, or money, or just a chat on the phone, please contact Michael on [Michael.stothard1@outlook.com](mailto:Michael.stothard1@outlook.com)