

Father Paul writes:

PARISH HARVEST FESTIVAL

Many apologies for the cancellation of Masses last weekend due to the terrible weather and flooded roads. Because of this, our Harvest Festival Mass will be held this weekend instead. Huge thanks to those who have already donated bags full of food for the Foodbank – it will be very much appreciated by those in need.

Coinciding with CAFOD FAMILY PAST DAY, we will celebrate Harvest Festival in our parish this weekend, joining Christian communities the length and breadth of the country in praise and thanksgiving for the gifts of creation. We have a creator God whose gifts to us are countless, and this is the time of year when we acknowledge the gifts of creation and offer prayerful and practical thanks.

This part of England sometimes seems to be a wealthy area, but the appearance is deceptive. Government figures tell us that throughout the county there are pockets of deprivation with high levels of child poverty, low income, high unemployment, poor health and other related problems. Our part of Sussex is no exception.

We all know what it is like to feel hungry, few of us know what it is like to have real hunger imposed upon us by the circumstances of our life. Harvest Festival is a time when we acknowledge this and thank God for all the blessings we experience in our lives, lives which if they are not of plenty are of enough. Sometimes it is easy to take all that we have and are for granted, not always giving it that much thought. Harvest Festival is a time to stop, reflect and thank God for all the good things that fill our lives, especially the most basic thing of all, food.

Harvest Festival is a time for thanksgiving and for sharing, reaching out to others who at the moment do not have that most basic of life's necessities, food. Being prepared to reach out to others in their need is the most appropriate action of those who call themselves disciples of the Master, the Lord who chose the hungry and those on the edge of society to hear the Good news of the Kingdom before all others. Failure to follow his example is to deny our Christian calling.

While you are shopping this week, it would be really good if you found space in your basket for one or two extra items to bring to Mass this Harvest Festival weekend so that they may be placed at the altar, blessed and then set aside for those who, at the moment and for whatever reason, are needing to share what you have to offer. Any non-perishable items will be welcomed – tins, packets, jars...

PLEASE HELP IN WHATEVER WAY YOU CAN

Whatever you bring to Harvest Festival will be sent to the local Foodbank. What is Foodbank? Foodbank is a venture which works at a local level providing food and fellowship, breathing space and support especially for those who are facing a crisis during those few days before the statutory and other help organisations are in a position to step in.

It might help if you see Foodbank as an opportunity to share Christ's love through the very practical offering of food to those in immediate need in our locality and the surrounding villages. Foodbank has the support of many local Christian communities.

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"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you?
When you did it to least of my brothers and sisters, you did it to me." (matt 25:37, 40)