

## **CHRISTMAS 2015**

THIS YEAR the celebration of the Nativity of our Saviour is within the context of the Jubilee Year of Mercy. Inaugurated by Pope Francis on December 8th, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, and concluding on November 20th 2016, we are all invited to concentrate on the loving mercy of God. Passing through the Holy Door of Mercy expresses our desire to repent of our sins and so renew our commitment to Christ and His Church. We are called to open the door of our heart to both God and others – especially the poor, the sick and those on the margins of society.

Pope Francis says that this Jubilee Year of Mercy is “the opportune moment to change our lives! This is the time to allow our hearts to be touched.”

The “Plenary Indulgence” which is available to us lessens the effects of our sin. Pope Francis writes: “To gain an indulgence is to experience the holiness of the Church, who bestows upon all the fruits of Christ’s redemption, so that God’s love and mercy may extend everywhere. Let us live this Jubilee intensely, begging the Father to forgive our sins and to bathe us in his merciful ‘indulgence’.”

As well as the Holy Door in Westminster Cathedral, Cardinal Vincent has designated our parish, with others, as also having a Holy Door. Let us make good use of it and follow the Way of Mercy as detailed at the back of the church.

“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, the only Son of the Eternal father, full of grace and truth.” Pray that we may all see in the Incarnation God’s mercy in action, revealing His infinite love and mercy towards us.

Q: WHAT IS THE WAY TO TRUE HAPPINESS?

A: KNOWING GOD’S MERCY.

Merry Christmas.  
Fr David Barnes, PP

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## **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 20th December 2015**

### **THE DOOR OF MERCY**

Jesus Christ is the face of the Father’s mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him. The Father, ‘rich in mercy’ (Eph 2:4), after having revealed his name to Moses as ‘a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness’ (Ex 34:6), has never ceased to show, in various ways throughout history, his divine nature. In the ‘fullness of time’ (Gal 4:4), when everything had been arranged according to his plan of salvation, he sent his only Son into the world, born of the Virgin Mary, to reveal his love for us in a definitive way. Whoever sees Jesus sees the Father (cf. Jn 14:9). Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.

We need constantly to contemplate the mystery of mercy. It is a wellspring of joy, serenity, and peace. Our salvation depends on it. Mercy: the word reveals the very mystery of the Most

Holy Trinity. Mercy: the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us. Mercy: the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life. Mercy: the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.

At times we are called to gaze even more attentively on mercy so that we may become a more effective sign of the Father's action in our lives. For this reason I have proclaimed an Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy as a special time for the Church, a time when the witness of believers might grow stronger and more effective.

Pope Francis, Misericordiae Vultus 1-3

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### **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 13th December 2015**

“GAUDETE SUNDAY”

‘GAUDETE’, Latin for ‘REJOICE’, is from the opening of Mass for this Third Sunday of Advent. It heralds a shift in emphasis: the first half of Advent emphasises the Second Coming of our Saviour, concentrating on our staying awake, being prepared to greet Him when He comes again and putting more order into our life. This second half of Advent focuses on our preparations for the Nativity. Central in our preparing should be a good confession.

‘REJOICE’ too because last Tuesday Pope Francis inaugurated the ‘Year of Mercy’, a time to reflect on God’s merciful love. The Pope describes our Lord as “the face of God’s Mercy”, and it will be a wonderful year to grow closer to Our Lord and understand better God’s ways. ‘REJOICE’ too because Cardinal Vincent has named us as one of the churches with a Holy Door as well as the Cathedral. Bishop Nicholas Hudson will open our Holy Door next Sunday (20th) at the 10am Mass. Be there to welcome him and witness this historic event.

ADVENT is sometimes called mini-Lent, so amid all the secular razzmatazz let’s ensure we keep to daily prayer, some acts of self-denial in food and drink, and generosity to those in greater need than ourselves - we all need this if we are to prepare to celebrate well the Birthday of our Saviour at Christmas.

Fr David Barnes, PP

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### **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 6th December 2015**

ST JOHN THE BAPTIST is central in Advent. He came to prepare the way for the Lord through "a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins". OUR SINS blind us to seeing Jesus as Saviour, and deafen us to His words which are spirit and life. Without repentance - a change of heart - we live in darkness. Advent is a time to come out of that darkness of sin and move into the Light of Christ to hate sin so as to love our Lord. During Advent we should invoke the prayers of St. John the Baptist to gain for us a spirit of repentance. Repentance bears fruit in joy.

GOD prepared the way for the coming of our Saviour through THE IMMACULATE

CONCEPTION of Our Lady which we celebrate this Tuesday (8th December). From the first moment of her conception, Mary was preserved free from every stain of sin. In Jesus and Mary we see humanity as God intended it to be - free from sin. Through love of Jesus and Mary we prepare the way to freedom from sin.

ADVENT, with its emphasis on the Second Coming, proclaims the FOUR LAST THINGS - Death, Judgement, Heaven and Hell. These are realities which we must face up to! I am going to die, then there is my particular judgement before God, then Heaven or Hell. Living daily in the light of the four last things is a catalyst to repentance - that is, to reject our sinful ways and believe the Good News more wholeheartedly. Advent should therefore include celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation: will you?

Fr David Barnes, PP

#### YEAR OF MERCY

The Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy begins with Pope Francis opening the Holy Door in the Vatican on 8th December 2015.

The Cardinal will open the Holy Door in Westminster Cathedral in the context of Vespers and Benediction at 3.30pm on Sunday 13th December. You are very welcome to attend. Those making a brief pilgrimage during the Year to the Cathedral Holy Door or the others it through the Diocese may gain the Jubilee Indulgence for themselves or the Holy Souls.

Our closest Holy Door is here in our parish! The Cardinal has prepared A Pilgrimage Companion for the Year of Mercy by way of explanation and to help us experience God's Mercy to the full. Copies of the booklet can be bought for £1 from the Repository open at weekends or from the Sacristy either before or after any Mass. More information about events during the year, Holy Doors and the Indulgence is available on the Diocesan website: <http://rcdow.org.uk/year-of-mercy>

May this Holy Year before all, as Pope Francis wishes 'true moment of encounter with the mercy of God'.

Cardinal Vincent has designated our parish with a Holy Door! It is the second smaller entrance on Kingsway. Bishop Nicholas Hudson will open the Holy Door on Sunday 20th December at the 10am Mass: it is an historic day for the parish and an occasion to be present. You have the opportunity to meet Bishop Nicholas after Mass.

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#### **FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**29th November 2015**

#### ADVENT

GOD never fails us, and the season of Advent proclaims that God is always faithful to His promises. ADVENT (meaning "coming") is not only a time of preparing to celebrate our Lord's Nativity, but also preparing to greet Him when He comes again in glory at the end of time - hence the Advent message of "stay awake... stand ready... you do not know the day or the hour". It is a summons to live our life with integrity: we live what we believe.

So, how will I keep Advent?

How am I preparing to celebrate the Birthday of our Saviour?

Am I ready to greet Him at any time?

Unless we make some resolutions about what we are going to do in Advent, we will probably end up doing nothing - a sad waste of this lovely season of hope and expectation.

The best preparation is to deepen our love of the Holy Mass by coming more often: the Mass is the extension of Bethlehem where the Lord is born on our altars and we come to worship Him, and the Mass strengthens and renews us to greet Him for when He comes again.

ENJOY Advent! Come to our Lord with fresh hope and expectation: come to Him in the Mass and in Adoration. The Lord is always faithful to His promises. He is faithful to you: let us be faithful to Him.

Fr David Barnes, PP

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**OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST,  
KING OF THE UNIVERSE  
22nd November 2015**

**CHRIST THE KING**

TODAY, we celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. Our Lord ushered in God’s reign in human life. Where God truly reigns, there is the Kingdom of God. This celebration falls on the final Sunday of the Church’s year so we understand that all the feasts of the Church lead us to the Kingdom of God, of which the Church is the sign and the seed.

The more we “see” this, the more we understand God’s Mercy toward us. Pope Francis wants us to “see” this more and more and has proclaimed the Jubilee Year of Mercy, which will be inaugurated by him in Rome on 8th December 2015 and concludes on 20th November 2016. Cardinal Vincent writes that Pope Francis “knows that every person, whether they think of themselves as religious or not, longs for the embrace of mercy, the love that accepts us as we are and, at the same time, calls us to become what we are made to be”.

On 8th December Pope Francis will open the Holy Door in St Peter’s Rome. Christ identified Himself as “the door” through whom we enter the depths of God’s Mercy and come to know God’s reign. Each Cathedral will have a Holy Door - Cardinal Vincent opens ours in Westminster Cathedral at Vespers on Sunday 13th December.

The Cardinal has also designated several churches to have a Holy door: our parish is honoured in being so designated, the Holy door being the second, smaller door at the back of the church. On Sunday 20th December, Bishop Nicholas Hudson is celebrating the 10am Mass and will inaugurate the Holy Door in our parish. Through entering the door with faith, we can open ourselves to the wonders of God’s Mercy.

Fr David Barnes, PP

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**THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR  
15th November 2015**

**“PRAYER – A SURGE OF THE HEART”**

This is the title of a new DVD on developing our capacity for daily prayer. The makers write: “Finding time to pray can be difficult. Modern life is very busy with so many distractions at every turn and there’s always another job to be done. This inspiring presentation challenges us to make more time for God in our lives and highlights the importance of an ever-deepening life of prayer. It looks at the true meaning of prayer, the different types of prayer and how we can grow in our spiritual lives. It addresses how to overcome difficulties and temptations, how to find inspiration in the lives of the saints, the centrality of the Holy Mass, and the ultimate goal of prayer.”

This is the first of four Monday evenings over the next four weeks, aimed at helping us to grow in our love and practice of the Catholic Faith. The second DVD is entitled "Powers and Dominions" and deals with the reality of angels and demons, exorcism, the occult and spiritual warfare. The third is about the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the importance of confessing our sin, and the Fourth is about "The four last things", dealing with death, judgement, Heaven and Hell.

I encourage all of you to come - you will not be disappointed!

Monday 16 November: Prayer - a surge of the heart

Monday 23 November: Powers and Dominions

Monday 30 November: Confession

Monday 7 December: The Four Last Things

all at 6.45pm in the Parish Room.

Fr David Barnes, PP

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## **THIRTY-SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**

**8th November 2015**

NOVEMBER

MONTH FOR REMEMBERING

During the month of November we are remembering all our loved ones who have gone to their eternal rest.

We pray for them each day and place their names in our Book of Remembrance at the foot of the altar so that others can remember them too.

Another fact of life is that we shall surely follow them, this month should remind us all that we must pray for ourselves and examine ourselves on how we are going about this. Going back to Fr John's sermon last week, the feast of All Saints, we heard, the secret of becoming a saint is:

Love God

Love your neighbour

Love yourself

From early childhood we have all been taught that we are made in the image and likeness of God. That we are made to know love and serve God through our neighbour. As Father said it all sounds very easy.

Do we find it easy to love our neighbour?

Do we find it easy to love ourselves?

Remembering that we are all pilgrims travelling the same road, let us thank God for this precious gift of support for each other. Let us pray God will be with us every step of the way.

Sister M. Lucina

Parish sister

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## **ALL SAINTS**

**1st November 2015**

**PASTORAL LETTER FOLLOWING THE SYNOD ON THE VOCATION**

## AND MISSION OF THE FAMILY

Last Sunday I joined thousands of people in St Peter's Square waiting to receive the blessing of Pope Francis. I was surrounded by families: babies asleep in prams, young children crawling on the cobbles, older children entertaining each other, teenagers looking studiously bored, fathers surveying the scene protectively, mothers holding up their children and pointing to the Holy Father, groups of families on holiday together, uncles and aunts, three or four generations.

I looked at them with fresh eyes, having just come from the closing Mass of the Synod of Bishops on the Vocation and Mission of the Family. There we had been fashioning fresh ways of thinking about the family in the plan of God. We had agreed that the family is an 'image and likeness of the Blessed Trinity', a reflection of the mystery of love which is the life of God. In the families around me I could contemplate that love being expressed in everyday ways, a love which strives so hard to be faithful, to overcome rows and difficulties with forgiveness, a love which gives energy for the day and rest in weariness. In the Synod we had talked of the family as 'a blessing for the Church': the place where we learn and share how to live by faith, where we teach and practice family prayer, and the place from which we reach out to others in their need.

All of this was summed up for me in a phrase: the family is the flesh of the Church. In St Peter's Square, and in every parish, I see in the families around me the very flesh of the Church, the life of Christ taking place before my eyes. It is they who so often show most clearly the work of the Beatitudes which we have just heard in the Gospel reading.

In our Synod discussion group we had shared together what we treasured most about our own family life. Doing this brought us together powerfully, even though we came from five different continents! The challenges faced by families today were in our own stories, too: poverty; an absence of faith; a reluctance to speak of faith at home; the drama of being refugees or migrants; the breakdown of a marriage in the pain of divorce and, of course, the fact of people entering a second civil marriage and finding there a new start, stability, and fruitful love.

Our main work in the Synod, over the last three weeks, has been to fashion the right response of the Church to many of these situations.

In our final reflections, we pointed out clearly that this must be a patient accompaniment, a readiness to listen, a gift of time and attention to one another. This is a pathway for us all to take, but especially us bishops and priests who are entrusted with the care of God's people.

Our final document of the Synod, which we presented to Pope Francis for his consideration, speaks often of this 'pathway of accompaniment', of that 'reverential listening', which is the first act of mercy, of the work of 'discernment', of wanting to come close to the reality of so many lives in their difficulties and trials. During the Synod discussions, many wanted us to express, humbly, a word of regret and apology that this often has not been the path we have taken. I am glad to do so now.

The purpose of this focus of our pastoral work is very clear. It was beautifully expressed in the first reading at Mass last Sunday:

'They left in tears. But I will comfort them and lead them back; I will guide them to streams of water ... For I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is my son' (Jer. 31.9). To all who have left in tears I want to offer a hand of welcome, especially during this coming Year of Mercy.

With time we hope to fashion a clear invitation for you to come to meet the Lord, to ponder His ways in your lives, to sense his mercy and his truth and to grow in strength as his baptised disciples in the family of the Church.

Today we honour all the saints. We see them gathered round the throne of God, praising God in joy and thanksgiving. We hear that in their trials and suffering they clung faithfully to Christ, so closely that 'they washed their robes white again in the blood of the Lamb.' They teach us so much.

We all have our favourite or patron saint. Perhaps we were given his or her name at baptism or at confirmation. They have so much to teach us about how to accompany each other through the dilemmas of life and of how to come to a mature understanding of the demands of the Gospel in our lives as the one true path of life. Today we also honour all those who may not be canonized but are surely saints. For so many of these, family life, with all its joy and challenges, was their path to heaven. Think how many saints there may be in your family, still helping you by their example and intercession!

May all the saints encourage and strengthen us today. May we draw from this Synod of Bishops great encouragement for our own family life and for the life of the family of the Church, as we each reach out for the great mercy of God, a mercy that will never fail us once we come, with penitent hearts, seeking its healing and peace.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols  
Archbishop of Westminster

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### **THIRTIETH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 25th October 2015**

#### **BE A BEGGAR**

GOD teaches us who we are through our pondering Jesus' encounters with others in the Gospels. Today's Gospel (Sun 25 Oct.) is the healing of the blind beggar Bartimaeus. What can we learn?

Bartimaeus knows his neediness and vulnerability - do I see my own blindness and poverty? He recognises Jesus can save him, and shouts out (despite others' protests) asking for mercy - he is bold and not put off by what others think or say: am I?

Jesus calls him and he "jumped up and went to him" - do I?

Jesus asks what he wants done: Bartimaeus knows what he wants, and has faith Our Lord can do it - do I?

#### **WORK OUT!**

Let us put the above encounter into practice: in the Collect at today's Mass we ask that God "increase our faith, hope and charity and make us love what you command".

How to proceed? We use our imagination!

In a prayerful mode, I imagine myself as a blind beggar sitting at the roadside - I see the poverty of my faith, hope, charity, and my lack of love.

I imagine Jesus in front of me, that He is calling me, and I jump up and go to Him.

Jesus asks me what I want Him to do for me: I respond, speaking of my desire for faith, hope and charity, for a loving heart - and I beg for these gifts.

The moral: if I truly desire and long for these gifts, and have faith that Our Lord can give them, they will be given.

Fr David Barnes, PP

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## **TWENTY-NINTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 18th October 2015**

### **WORLD MISSION SUNDAY**

What is World Mission Sunday?

World Mission Sunday is celebrated in every parish in the world. It is a special day in the year when we remember our own call to be missionaries. Our prayers and our donations to Missio on World Mission Sunday help the Church in countries that are poor to reach out to the vulnerable and those living in poverty so that they too can know the love and joy that comes from Jesus. This day helps us to remember that Jesus wants us all to be missionaries so that his love can reach everyone.

#### **Introduction**

In his message for World Mission Sunday 2015, Pope Francis says, 'Mission is a passion for Jesus and at the same time a passion for his people. All the Church's members are called to proclaim the Gospel by their witness of life.'

Pope Francis is saying that to be able to help with God's mission we need to know and love Jesus, and we also need to know and love all the people in our world. God calls us to look after everyone, whether we see them every day, or never even meet them because they live in another country. By helping Missio, we can show that we care for everyone around the world.

Pope Francis also reminds us that living out God's mission in the world is not just the responsibility of 'official' missionaries, like priests and sisters. Each and every one of us has a part to play, even if we're very young. He reminds us that the best way to bring people to know Jesus is through our actions and our example to other people. He asks us all to be good role models.

[Source: [www.missio.org.uk](http://www.missio.org.uk)]

TODAY there is a RETIRING COLLECTION for MISSIO.

Why do all parishes support World Mission Sunday? All parishes throughout the world celebrate World Mission Sunday because it is vital to the growth of the Church in predominately impoverished and remote areas overseas. The funds raised build much-needed infrastructure, from chapels and schools, to orphanages, clinics and dispensaries. Requested by the local community, the support from Missio transforms lives and creates a hub from which the young Church can flourish and grow: spreading the Good News of the Gospel, ministering to the faithful and delivering essential services in health and education. World Mission Sunday is one of only three Papal collections and has been especially chosen by the Holy Father as the means by which we share what we have with our brothers and sisters in need.

How can we continue supporting Missio after World Mission Sunday?

Missio raises funds for the overseas mission of the Church through the APF-Mill Hill Red Boxes which are in around 200,000 Catholic homes. Throughout the year, Missio works in partnership with the Mill Hill Missionaries to raise funds and awareness for overseas mission

through the Red Box. If your parish doesn't already promote the Red Box, please consider an appeal after World Mission Sunday. Other ways of supporting the mission of the Church include praying for the work of missionaries and volunteering for Missio. You can also support overseas mission by sending Mass stipends to overseas priests via Missio. An overseas priest can say Mass for your intentions and at the same time receive much-needed financial support. For more information, please call: 020 7821 9755 or visit our website: [missio.org.uk](http://missio.org.uk)

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**TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**  
**11th October 2015**

**WALSINGHAM**

This Saturday (10th October) we are on the Annual Parish Pilgrimage to Our Lady of Walsingham. We carry in our hearts the whole parish and all those who come to St Anselm & St Caecilia's to Our Lady of Walsingham.

Fr David Barnes, PP

In 1061 Our Lady appeared to Richeldis of Walsingham, asking her to build a replica of the Holy House of Nazareth, where the Angel Gabriel had sought her consent to become the Mother of God.

This Holy House, and the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham it contained, became the greatest Shrine of Our Lady in the world, and was ranked alongside Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostela. It was known as 'England's Nazareth' and was renowned for miraculous cures, answers to prayer, penance and thanksgiving.

In 1538 the Shrine was destroyed under the orders of Henry VIII, and the sacred image, along with many others, was publicly burnt at Chelsea. The Augustinians who looked after the Shrine, and the Franciscans in the village, were dispersed, and their religious houses ruined. Some men were put to death; hung, drawn and quartered on what is known today as Martyrs' Field, trying in vain to save the Shrine and Priory.

The restoration began in 1897 with the creation of a new Holy House within the Catholic Church at nearby King's Lynn, for which Pope Leo XIII blessed a new statue. The first pilgrimage since the Reformation was made in that year to the fourteenth-century Slipper Chapel that had been preserved and restored. In 1934, the Slipper Chapel, containing a copy of the original image of Our Lady of Walsingham, was designated England's National Shrine of Our Lady, by the bishops of England and Wales, with the approval of the Pope.

Meanwhile, Anglicans too restored pilgrimage in 1922, by placing in their parish church an image of Our Lady of Walsingham. This was transferred in 1931 to a new Holy House and Pilgrimage Church built in the village. Walsingham today is once again a powerhouse of prayer, and a major centre of pilgrimage for Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox and others. It bears witness to the remarkable way in which Our Lady draws together the followers of her Son in unity and reconciliation.

Devotion centres on the mystery of the Annunciation and Our Lady's willing response to the Word of God, assisting us to respond in the same way to God's will and to live out the

meaning of the Incarnation, God made man, in our daily lives.  
[Source: Novena in Honour of Our Lady of Walsingham, www.stpauls.org.uk]

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**TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**  
**4th October 2015**

**OCTOBER: MONTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY**

Do ponder carefully the following quotes about the Rosary, and consider how they touch us.

1. "The Rosary is the most beautiful and the most rich in graces of all prayers; it is the prayer that touches most the Heart of the Mother of God...and if you wish peace to reign in your homes, recite the family Rosary." Pope Saint Pius X
2. "Go to the Madonna. Love her! Always say the Rosary. Say it well. Say it as often as you can! Be souls of prayer. Never tire of praying, it is what is essential. Prayer shakes the Heart of God, it obtains necessary graces!" St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina
3. "You always leave the Rosary for later, and you end up not saying it at all because you are sleepy. If there is no other time, say it in the street without letting anybody notice it. It will, moreover, help you to have presence of God." St. Josemaria Escriva
4. "Among all the devotions approved by the Church none has been so favoured by so many miracles as the devotion of the Most Holy Rosary." Pope Blessed Pius IX
5. "The Rosary is a powerful weapon to put the demons to flight and to keep oneself from sin...If you desire peace in your hearts, in your homes, and in your country, assemble each evening to recite the Rosary. Let not even one day pass without saying it, no matter how burdened you may be with many cares and labours." Pope Pius XI
6. "One day, through the Rosary and the Scapular, Our Lady will save the world." St. Dominic
7. "The greatest method of praying is to pray the Rosary." St. Francis de Sales
8. "The rosary is the book of the blind, where souls see and there enact the greatest drama of love the world has ever known; it is the book of the simple, which initiates them into mysteries and knowledge more satisfying than the education of other men; it is the book of the aged, whose eyes close upon the shadow of this world, and open on the substance of the next. The power of the rosary is beyond description." Archbishop Fulton Sheen
9. "The Rosary is the most excellent form of prayer and the most efficacious means of attaining eternal life. It is the remedy for all our evils, the root of all our blessings. There is no more excellent way of praying." Pope Leo XIII
10. "No one can live continually in sin and continue to say the Rosary: either they will give up sin or they will give up the Rosary." Bishop Hugh Doyle

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**TWENTY-SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**  
**27th September 2015**

**CAFOD HARVEST FAST DAY 2015**

Hundreds of thousands of refugees have arrived in Europe this year, escaping war, oppression and poverty. Many come from Syria, where more than 11 million people have been forced to flee their homes.

CAFOD has worked for years with Syrians whose lives have been torn apart by the war, providing food, shelter and healthcare. And with your support, CAFOD's Church partners are now also helping refugees as they arrive in Europe, ensuring that they have food, vital supplies like clothes and sleeping bags, and safe places to stay.

But no-one wants to be a refugee. People want to live with dignity, in their own communities, watching their children and grandchildren grow and flourish. That's why, as well as responding with compassion to emergencies, we need to think of people like Hamani.

Hamani is a man in his 70s who lives in a remote village in Niger the poorest country in the world country. Each year at Harvest time - about a month from now - he looks forward to a crop that will feed him and his family throughout the year.

And each year, as Hamani gets older, he hopes and prays that the harvest comes on time. That the rains come when they should. That they will bring enough life-giving water to feed the earth and the people. That the crop is enough to see him through to the next harvest. And that his children and grandchildren won't starve.

This is because in recent times, the harvest has got smaller because of longer and hotter dry seasons. This is a dry, punishing heat - strong enough to boil water if it's left outside for too long. Strong enough to burn crops as they grow in the fields.

On your behalf, CAFOD has been working with a Catholic Partner - Caritas Niger - to ensure that Hamani and his family can survive if his crop is destroyed. Following a disastrous harvest in 2011, your support ensured he was able to eat and to have enough seeds to plant for the next harvest. But perhaps more importantly, you are enabling work not just in one village, but in larger areas of Niger to ensure people don't have to live hand-to-mouth if a harvest fails.

With your support, and through our local Church partner, entire communities are being trained to grow different crops that can still be eaten, even if the burning sun cooks them on the stalk. People have been given livestock and ploughs so that they can farm land. And have been supported to grow a natural protection for their land - one that will prevent the earth from being scorched. This work is so vital because it means more and more people throughout Niger have the dignity of not relying on handouts. The dignity of being able to feed their family and the joy of sharing their abundance with others.

Please give what you can today, so that all our sisters and brothers, wherever they are in the world, can share in the earth's abundance. You'll see in your envelope two opportunities to give this Fast Day.

One for a single gift today, which will go towards supporting refugees and also towards our long term work. And one for a regular gift for CAFOD's long-term Hands On project in Niger. Hands On allows you to follow the progress of a specific project and to get regular updates from the community as they work towards a more secure future.

Please share the feast God spreads for us all. Imagine the gift that you can offer. Your gift - together with your neighbour's, with your parish's, with the whole Catholic community in England and Wales - together, our gifts will help to build a world where all God's children can flourish.

We are grateful for your support. Without your generosity and prayers, the work that CAFOD does to change the lives of thousands of people worldwide, would not be possible. On behalf of CAFOD and the communities we work with, thank you for your support. Please continue to pray for our global family, and please take a prayer card home with you after Mass.

CAFOD is the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, working with communities in over 30 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, supporting people to find their own solutions to poverty. The agency works with all people regardless of race, gender, religion or nationality. Charity no. 1160384 [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk)

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**TWENTY-FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**  
**20th September 2015**

HOME MISSION SUNDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2015  
Supporting the work of evangelisation in England and Wales

Theme: PROCLAIM's God's Mercy  
Home Mission Sunday is celebrated today and is themed: PROCLAIM God's Mercy. On this day we are encouraged to pray for the work of evangelisation in England and Wales, remembering in our prayers especially those whom we know are distant from the life of faith. Please support the second collection which funds the Bishops' national work of evangelisation and the development of this year's Proclaim '15: Building Missionary Parishes initiative. The collection also ensures that the Catholic Faith Centre is resourced to respond to those who have questions about the Catholic Faith. It is possible to donate online at: [www.catholicnews.org.uk/donations](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/donations)  
Commemorative prayer cards are available to take away. Please support the work of Home Mission through your prayers and generosity. For more information see: [www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms15](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/hms15)

Thank you for your support and God bless you.  
Bishops' Conference Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis

Home Mission Sunday is resourced by the Bishops' Conference Home Mission Desk in service of the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis. Email: [clare.ward@bccew.org.uk](mailto:clare.ward@bccew.org.uk)

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**TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**  
**13th September 2015**

**STATEMENT ON THE REFUGEE CRISIS**

'What ever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did to me' (Mt 25:40)

At last Sunday's Angelus, Pope Francis invited every parish, religious house and monastery in Europe to respond to the growing refugee crisis by offering a place of sanctuary to families fleeing from war and persecution in their home countries. The Pope calls on our generosity and solidarity to recognise and act upon our common humanity.

The UK government has agreed to receive and resettle up to 20,000 Syrian refugees from the camps in neighbouring countries over the next five years. The Catholic Church in England and Wales will work alongside government and local authorities to offer welcome and support to those in need. The refugee crisis is a huge challenge, not only in Europe and the Middle East, but in many other parts of the world where large numbers of refugees live deeply uncertain and perilous lives. Consequently as a Catholic community, and as a country, we need to be committed to helping refugees over a long period. To sustain that effort we need moral imagination.

We recognise that we can all contribute and play a part in helping to support the most vulnerable of refugees. Such assistance includes

Prayer

Financial support

Time and professional skills (e.g. language teaching, legal help)

Shelter and accommodation

We can all be attentive to those who are vulnerable and newly arrived in our communities and parishes. A warm welcome can be the most simple yet effective of gifts we can all offer.

Practically, we are working to ensure, as far as possible, that every diocese has a contact nominated to coordinate your parish/individual response; they will liaise with the local authority and other faith groups to match offers of time, talents and accommodation with the pressing humanitarian needs of the local area.

Please look at [www.catholicnews.org.uk](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk) for additional information which will be regularly updated.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols Archbishop Peter Smith

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**TWENTY THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**  
**6th September 2015**

POPE FRANCIS has named the period from 1st September to 4th October THE SEASON OF CREATION. Following on his recent Encyclical "Laudatory Si" on our common responsibility in caring for God's creation, he hopes thi period "...offers to individual believers and to the community a precious opportunity to renew our personal participation in this vocation as custodians of creation, raising to God our thanks for the marvellous works that he has entrusted to our care, invoking his help for the protection of creation and his

mercy for the sins committed against the world in which we live."

We are all invited to think and pray about how we are caring for the created order, including how we use our personal possessions, our food and drink and how we dispose of everything. We are invited to see how all things are to be restored in Christ. As in the Mass the gifts of bread and wine are transformed through the Holy Spirit to become the Body and Blood of Christ, so in our common care for the created order as men and women of the Spirit we can move toward restoring all things in Christ. Everyone and everything find their meaning and purpose in the Light of Christ.

Each period of Adoration in this season will be offered for this and Pope Francis' intentions.

Fr David Barnes, PP

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## **SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 26th July 2015**

### **HOLIDAYS**

Summer and holidays are inextricably bound up. We all need a break from the daily round, our work and duties. Freed for a while from this, what is a holiday for? Unless we are clear as to the aim of our holiday, it can easily end up being a waste of time and money.

The origin of the word is 'holy days', days to recapture and deepen our connection with God. Being consciously in touch with God can get marginalised in the busyness of daily life. A holiday is above all time to discover the Holy at the centre and heart of our life. This is expressed in very practical and concrete ways:

on arrival, find ASAP the nearest Catholic church and times of Mass. Go not only to Sunday Mass but also during the week. We have more time: give some specifically to God. If we do not, what does this say about us?

renew our commitment to daily prayer, perhaps through making also a daily visit to the Blessed Sacrament.

Pope Francis tells us we should develop the habit of reading some verses from the Gospel every day - so, do you have a pocket version of one of the Gospels always with you? Pope Francis is asking us to do so! Again, if I don't, what does this say about me?

carry the Rosary always in your pocket, and say a decade here and there. This will add focus and context to your holiday.

a novel (or two!) is often part of a holiday, but read also a good spiritual book - there are very good informative booklets in our Repository.

make a good confession: through a good examination of life and receiving forgiveness for wasting God's love and graces, we can resolve how to live our life better on our return home. So do not take a holiday from God, but find God rather at the heart of your holiday. Holy days bring us joy and peace and a true sense of fulfilment.

Have a good one!

Fr David Barnes, PP

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## SIXTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

19th July 2015

PROCLAIM 15 is an initiative of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales and is coordinated by the Department for Evangelisation and Catechesis.

The "New Evangelisation" is a term used by Pope St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Francis to encourage a new missionary impetus in the life of the Church.

Pope Francis reminds us that the parish is essential to the mission of the Church. If the parish proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be "the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters." The parish is the presence of the Church in a given territory, an environment for hearing God's Word, for growth in Christian life, for dialogue, proclamation, charitable outreach, worship and celebration. In all its activities the parish encourages and trains its members to be evangelisers. It is a community of communities, a sanctuary where the thirsty come to drink in the midst of their journey, and a centre of constant missionary outreach. (Pope Francis *Evangelii Gaudium*, 28)

The unity of the Catholic Church in England and Wales was very evident in Birmingham last Saturday 11th July 2015, people from all over England and Wales were present together with Cardinal Vincent Nichols, 20 Bishops and over 800 laity, praying together, as were the parishioners not present, all working towards the success of this mission. "At the heart of all we do must be prayer. It is from our own relationship with Jesus that our desire, readiness and ability to share our faith flows. All we do and say should be for the greater glory of God." (Cardinal Vincent Nichols)

Sr. M. Lucina, Deanery Rep. at the above Conference

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FROM CARDINAL VINCENT

On Friday 11th September the House of Commons will debate and vote on a Bill to legalise assisted suicide. This will put the most vulnerable people in our society at risk. Please contact your MP, urging them to attend the debate and vote against the Bill. You can send an e-mail to your MP via the Catholic Bishops' Conference website ([www.catholicnews.org.uk/assisted-suicide](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/assisted-suicide)) or send a letter by post, a draft of which can be found below or at the back of the Church. Even better, you could ask to see your MP and express your concerns directly. Alternatively. email: [keir.starmer.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:keir.starmer.mp@parliament.uk) Telephone: 0207 219 6234

Example of letter for your MP: Mr. Keir Starmer QC. MP House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

Dear

I am contacting you regarding Rob Marris MP's Private Member's Bill on Assisted Dying which is due to have its second reading in the House of Commons on Friday 11th September.

If passed, this Bill will have a profoundly negative impact on some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

As my Member of Parliament, I hope that you will attend the debate and vote against the Bill

at its second reading.

I would be very grateful if you could let me how you intend to vote on this important matter and how you have taken my views into account.

I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely

Excellent resources can be found on the Bishops Conference website:  
[www.catholicnews.org.uk/assisted-suicide](http://www.catholicnews.org.uk/assisted-suicide)

and the website of the Anscombe Bioethics centre: [www.bioethics.org.uk](http://www.bioethics.org.uk)

What is needed is more and better palliative care. not assistance with suicide.

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**FIFTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**  
**12th July 2015**

**ALWAYS 'THE GREATER'**

GOD should be offered the best that we can give. Hence the work in our church is to make it ever more beautiful, as surely befits 'the House of God and Gate of Heaven'. The beauty of our churches is to reflect the beauty and splendour of God, and should raise our whole being to the source of all beauty - God. Worship, above all in the Mass, is a conscious attempt to imitate the worship of heaven.

The people carrying out the work in church are therefore doing something beautiful for God. Each has their skills which enable the project to move forward. I want to encourage you all to

thank God that we can carry out these improvements, and have the money to do so  
pray for those carrying out the work that God guide them and enable them to do their best.  
Pray too for their families and loved ones.

St. Ignatius of Loyola encourages us not only to do everything to the glory of God, but to the greater glory of God (ad maiorem Dei gloriam).

When I was a student in Rome, I was advised always to write at the top of each sheet of paper AMDG (ad maiorem Dei gloriam), so as to remind me to do my work to the greater glory of God. May the work now begun be carried out indeed to the greater glory of God.

Fr David Barnes, PP

From "LAUDATO SI' (Praise be to you, Lord): on care for our common home"

Pope Francis' recent Encyclical, paragraph 237

On Sunday, our participation in the Eucharist has special importance. Sunday, like the Jewish Sabbath, is meant to be a day which heals our relationships with God, with ourselves, with others and with the world. Sunday is the day of the Resurrection, the "first day" of the new creation, whose first fruits are the Lord's risen humanity, the pledge of the final transfiguration of all created reality. It also proclaims "man's eternal rest in God". In this way, Christian spirituality incorporates the value of relaxation and festivity. We tend to demean contemplative rest as something unproductive and unnecessary, but this is to do away with the very thing which is most important about work: its meaning. We are called to include in

our work a dimension of receptivity and gratuity, which is quite different from mere inactivity. Rather, it is another way of working, which forms part of our very essence. It protects human action from becoming empty activism; it also prevents that unfettered greed and sense of isolation which make us seek personal gain to the detriment of all else. The law of weekly rest forbade work on the seventh day, "so that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your maidservant, and the stranger, may be refreshed" (Ex 23: 12). Rest opens our eyes to the larger picture and gives us renewed sensitivity to the rights of others. And so the day of rest, centred on the Eucharist, sheds its light on the whole week, and motivates us to greater concern for nature and the poor.

PLEASE NOTE: Copies of the Encyclical are on sale (£4.95) from the Repository and Sacristy.

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## **FOURTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 5th July 2015**

### **A VISIT TO ST ANSELM AND ST CÆCILIA'S**

Back in London I was walking up Kingsway in the middle of the afternoon when an impulse compelled me to start running. With joy in my heart, and in a state of almost sexual excitement, I ran until I reached the little Catholic church there (St Anselm and St Cæcilia) which I had never entered before; I knelt; caught my breath, and for ten minutes was lost to the world. Coming out into the glare of the day, mingling with sensible citizens on their lawful occasions, I wondered what on earth had possessed me and if I had become momentarily deranged. I decided that I was still fairly sane, that it had just been an unexpected, rather nonsensical gesture of love. My friend, Richard Leech, when I told him, about it, was rather distressed, thinking my tiresome, covert enthusiasm had gone too far, but I argued that if a religion meant anything at all it meant that the whole man worshipped, mind, and body alike: that it was a totality and indivisible. There was some reassurance when I discovered that the good, brilliant, acutely sane, Ronald Knox had found himself running, on several occasions, to visit the Blessed Sacrament.

Time has slipped by and I don't run anywhere; I am passed by joggers of all shapes and ages, while for me the fat accumulates. And yet I do not feel myself a slave, whatever bad habits I may nourish and treasure, having given, at any rate, part of myself to something which spans the centuries. One of Chesterton's most penetrating statements was: 'The Church is the one thing that saves a man from the degrading servitude of being a child of his Own time.'

Just a little more effort, I hope, and I may deny myself that extra pat of butter, the third glass of wine, one lascivious thought, and achieve a moment when irascibility is controlled, one bitchy remark unsaid, and, more positively, find a way to make some small generous gesture without forethought, and direct a genuine prayer of good-will towards someone I dislike. It is a fairly pitiful ambition after a quarter of a century of genuflexion.

[From Blessings in Disguise by Alec Guinness]

### **THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION INTENTIONS**

Be a missionary through prayer: Whoever and wherever we are, we can all be missionary: joining together in prayer with the wider Church, volunteering for Missio or giving generously through the Red Box. These are all valuable ways to further the work of mission. You can find out more about what we do, and discover additional suggestions for prayer, by

taking a look at our website: [www.missio.org.uk](http://www.missio.org.uk)

### MORNING OFFERING

Eternal Father, I offer you everything I do this day  
my thoughts, works, joys and sufferings.  
Grant that, enlivened by the Holy Spirit and  
united to Jesus in the Eucharist,  
my life this day may be of service to you and others.  
And with Mary and the whole Church  
I pray especially for the Pope's mission intention this month.  
Amen .

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### **SS PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES** **28th June 2015**

The Church founded by Christ has SS Peter and Paul as its principal pillars.

PETER was chosen by Christ to be His first Vicar on earth, endowed with powers of the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven (Mt 16: 13-19) and charged with the role of Shepherd of Christ's flock (Jn 21: 15-17). In Peter and his successors, the visible sign of unity and communion in faith and charity has been given. Divine grace led Peter to profess Christ's divinity. St. Peter suffered martyrdom under Nero, in A.D. 66 or 67. He was buried at the hill of the Vatican, where recent excavations have revealed his tomb on the very site of the Basilica of St. Peter's.

PAUL was chosen to form part of the apostolic college by Christ himself on the road to Damascus (Acts 9: 1-16). An instrument selected to bring Christ's name to all peoples (Acts: 9: 15), he is the greatest missionary of all time, the advocate of pagans, the Apostle of the Gentiles. St. Paul was beheaded in the Tre Fontane along the Via Ostiense and buried nearby, on the spot where the basilica bearing his name now stands.  
(from Daily Roman Missal. 1989 STF)

TODAY (Sunday), there is an annual collection for PETER'S PENCE. The gift you make is sent to Pope Francis, who uses it to help those in great need (e.g. victims of famine, natural disasters etc.): it is NOT used for the upkeep of the Vatican! This annual collection started in this country when, toward the end of the 8th century, Anglo-Saxons' love for the successor of Peter led them to send an annual gift. May we imitate their generosity.

Fr David Barnes PP

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### **TWELFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR** **21st June 2015**

'LAUDATO SI' .... (PRAISE BE TO YOU...  
is the title of Pope Francis' new encyclical, published last Thursday. The day before, Pope Francis said, "My appeal is, therefore, to responsibility, based on the task that God has given to man in creation: 'to till and tend' the 'garden' in which humanity has been placed (cf. Gen 2:15). I invite everyone to accept with open hearts this document, which places itself in the

line of the Church's social doctrine."

The Encyclical sees the world as our common home and Pope Francis states that. "Our 'house' is being ruined and that hurts everyone, especially the poorest among us."

St. Francis of Assisi (1182 -1226), after whom Pope Francis is named, wrote the 'Canticle of the Sun' in which St. Francis praises God for Sister Moon, Brother Wind and Air, Sister Water, Brother Fire and Mother Earth.

Considering the damage done to our planet, which comes from the irresponsible use and abuse of the goods that God has given us, Pope Francis invites us to consider our lifestyle - in essence, a call to a more simple lifestyle, less dependent on consumerism and more open to the life of the Spirit and to others. Pope Francis is full of hope because he believes that God does not abandon us and never backs down on His plan of love, and Pope Francis concludes that we still have the ability to co-operate in building up our common home. The Encyclical is to all peoples and so we have the responsibility to acquaint ourselves with Pope Francis's teaching. Our Parish bulletin will endeavour to help us in this.

Father David Barnes, P.P

FEAST OF ST JOHN FISHER (1469 - 1535) AND ST THOMAS MORE (1477 - 1535), this Monday, June 22nd.

This Feast honours two martyrs of the Catholic Church in sixteenth century England, one a bishop and the other a layman. They were canonized in 1935 and their feast was placed on the day of the martyrdom of St. John Fisher. Thomas More died a few days later, on July 6th. John Fisher was born in Yorkshire, England and was ordained a priest at the age of 25, after a brilliant career at Cambridge University.

He distinguished himself by combatting the Protestant heresies and especially the theses proposed by Martin Luther. At the age of 35, while remaining Chancellor at Cambridge, he became bishop of Rochester. He was confessor to the mother of Henry VIII, Elizabeth of York, and renowned for his humanistic as well as his theological learning. He was a friend of Erasmus of Rotterdam, to whom he gave a Chair at Christ's College at Cambridge. Erasmus said of Fisher: "There is not a man more cultured, more admired or more holy."

Fisher's episcopal residence was like a monastery because of its austerity and the daily Liturgy of the Hours as well as the discipline of the domestics. Because he defended the validity of the first marriage of Henry VIII, he was imprisoned for the first time in 1533. Later, he was interned in the Tower of London because he refused to take the oath of loyalty after the king married Anne Boleyn and rejected papal authority over the Church in England. He was beheaded a month after Pope Paul III had named him a cardinal.

Thomas More was born in London and studied at Oxford and in London. He was twice married and was a member of Parliament. Together with Pico della Mirandola (whose biography More had written in 1494) and Erasmus (who was More's close friend), More was an outstanding humanist. His most famous work, Utopia, is a book of political philosophy, showing a society based on the natural virtues.

Eventually More became Chancellor to Henry VIII, succeeding Cardinal Wolsey. He was opposed to the king's divorce and after three years he resigned as Chancellor and refused to recognise the king's spiritual supremacy. After imprisonment in the Tower of London, he

was beheaded on July 6th at the age of 57.

(Extract from: Saints of the Roman Calendar. Enzo Lodi)

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## **ELEVENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**

**14th June 2015**

Pope Francis on the Sacred Heart of Jesus

The month of June is traditionally dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the greatest human expression of divine love. In fact last Friday we celebrated the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and this feast sets the tone for the entire month. Popular piety highly values symbols, and the Heart of Jesus is the ultimate symbol of God's mercy. But it is not an imaginary symbol; it is a real symbol which represents the centre, the source from which salvation flowed for all of humanity. In the Gospels we find various references to the Heart of Jesus. For example there is a passage in which Christ himself says: "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Mt 11:28-29). Then there is the key account of Christ's death according to John. Indeed this Evangelist bears witness to what he saw on Calvary, that is, when Jesus was already dead a soldier pierced his side with a spear and blood and water came out of the wound (cf. Jn 19:33-34). In that apparently coincidental sign John recognizes the fulfillment of the prophecies: from the Heart of Jesus, the Lamb sacrificed on the Cross, flow forgiveness and life for all people. The mercy of Jesus is not only an emotion; it is a force which gives life that raises man! Today's Gospel also tells us this in the episode of the widow of Nain (Lk 7:11-17). With his disciples, Jesus arrives in Nain, a village in Galilee, right at the moment when a funeral is taking place. A boy, the only son of a widow, is being carried for burial.

Jesus immediately fixes his gaze on the crying mother. The Evangelist Luke says: "And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her" (v. 13). This "compassion" is God's love for man, it is mercy, thus the attitude of God in contact with human misery, with our destitution, our suffering, our anguish. The biblical term "compassion" recalls a mother's womb. The mother in fact reacts in a way all her own in confronting the pain of her children. It is in this way, according to Scripture, that God loves us.

What is the fruit of this love and mercy? It is life! Jesus says to the widow of Nain: "Do not weep" and then he calls the dead boy and awakes him as if from sleep (cf. vv. 13-15). Let's think about this, it's beautiful: God's mercy gives life to man, it raises him from the dead. Let us not forget that the Lord always watches over us with mercy; he always watches over us with mercy. Let us not be afraid of approaching him! He has a merciful heart! If we show him our inner wounds, our inner sins, he will always forgive us. It is pure mercy. Let us go to Jesus!

Let us turn to the Virgin Mary: her Immaculate Heart, a mother's heart, has fully shared in the "compassion" of God, especially in the hour of the passion and death of Jesus. May Mary help us to be mild, humble and merciful with our brothers.'

From Pope Francis' Angelus Address. June 9th 2013.

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## **CORPUS CHRISTI**

**7th June 2015**

THE EUCHARIST is the Sacrament of communion with God, and with one another. The bread we offer God at Mass becomes really, truly and substantially, the body of Christ - what we call TRANSUBSTANTIATION. Receiving Holy Communion is the way Christ gives himself fully to us, and this communion bears fruit insofar as I give myself fully to Him.

COMMUNION with Christ implies communion with the Church, since the Church is in essence His mystical Body, the Body of Christ: Christ and His Church are one reality, rather like two sides of the same coin. We are his members, members of the Church, and receiving Holy Communion should bear fruit in a deeper communion not only with Him but also with one another.

ADORATION is a wonderful way to open ourselves to Our Lord's real presence as the Bread of Life. Our capacity for Adoration enables me to find "Him whom my heart seeks", to wait upon Him, and to realise that I am His companion. To be "a companion of Jesus" is a wonderful way to see myself - a person who recognises Jesus as the Bread of Life, and who teaches me who I really am! I encourage you to visit Our Lord often in daily Adoration.

June is the month of the Sacred Heart. He is calling us: "Come to me...I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

David Barnes, PP

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## **THE MOST HOLY TRINITY**

**31st May 2015**

Philosophy enables us to assert that even through the use of human reason alone it is reasonable to claim that God exists (e.g. St. Anselm, St. Thomas Aquinas), but in the Sacred Scriptures God reveals Who He is. For Moses, in the incident of the burning bush, God says "I am who I am": God is being, life, existence itself. In the coming of Jesus, God is revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit - three Persons but one God. This could never be known through human reason: God reveals this out of love for us. So we can know God as our Father, Jesus as Lord and Saviour and as friend and brother, and the Holy Spirit as helper and guide. The Trinity is the face of God.

BAPTISM immerses us in the life of the Trinity and so the Trinity is always present in us and with us. The more I live in this mystery and love this mystery of the Trinity, the more God reveals to me also who I really am: God makes known to me my very self! . . . The following poem by Helen Mallicoat helps us to understand this:

"MY NAME IS I AM"

"When you live in the past,  
with its mistakes and regrets,  
it is hard. I am not there.  
My name is not - I WAS.

When you live in the future  
with its problems and fears  
It is hard.  
I am not there.  
My name is not - I WILL BE

When you live in this moment,  
It is not hard. I am here.  
My name is I AM."

Fr David Barnes, PP

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## **PENTECOST SUNDAY** **24th May 2015**

### **THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH**

Today's Feast of Pentecost (Pentecost means fiftieth - the 50th day after the Resurrection) celebrates the fulfilment of Jesus' promise that in returning to the Father (the Ascension) He was not abandoning us, but we would receive the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete (meaning Advocate, Helper.). The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Most Holy Trinity, the Spirit of Love, that unites the Father and the Son: He reminds us of everything Our Lord said and leads us into all truth. The Holy Spirit enables the Church to proclaim the Gospel with boldness. The first disciples of Jesus were timid and afraid until the coming of the Holy Spirit who enabled them to preach the Word of God with boldness. The same is true today: it is the Holy Spirit who empowers us to proclaim the Gospel. The colour today is red, symbolising the tongues of fire seen on the apostles - they were set on fire to communicate the Gospel. How devoted are we to the Holy Spirit? Do we pray every day to the Holy Spirit?

THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT are: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. THE TWELVE FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT are: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control and chastity. Our Lady opened her whole being to the Holy Spirit: let us imitate her and invoke her help.

Fr David Barnes, PP

### **THE SECRET OF SANCTITY and HAPPINESS**

I am going to reveal to you the secret to sanctity and happiness. If every day during five minutes, you will silence your imagination, close your eyes to things of sense and your ears to earthly sounds in order to enter into yourself and therein the sanctuary of your baptised soul, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit, speak to this Divine Spirit and say:

"O Holy Spirit, Soul of my soul  
I adore you.  
Enlighten, guide, strengthen and console me;  
tell me what I should do;  
give me your orders.  
I promise to be submissive  
in all that You desire of me  
and to accept all that You allow to happen to me.  
Grant only to me to know Your will."

If you do this you will pass your life happily, serene and consoled, even in the midst of pains, because grace will be in proportion to your trials giving you strength to bear them. Thus you will arrive at the Gates of Heaven full of merit.

This submission to the Holy Spirit is the secret of sanctity.

Cardinal Mercier (1851-1926)

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## **THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD**

**17th May 2015**

### **MARY STAR THE SEA**

With a hymn composed in the eighth or ninth century, thus for over a thousand years, the Church has greeted Mary, the Mother of God, as "Star of the Sea". Ave Maris Stella. Human life is a journey. Towards what destination? How do we find the way? Life is like a voyage on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route. The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by - people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way. Who more than Mary could be a star of hope for us? With her "yes" she opened the door of our world to God himself; she became the living Ark of the Covenant, in whom God took flesh; became one of us, and pitched his tent among us (cf John 1:14).

Holy Mary, Mother of God, our Mother, teach us to believe, to hope, to love with you.  
Show us the way to his Kingdom!  
Star of the Sea, shine upon us and guide us on our way!  
Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi

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## **SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**10th May 2015**

### **A MOTHER'S LOVE**

May is Mary's month, a time to grow closer to the Mother of the Lord and our Mother too. The more we open ourselves to her, the more she can form us in the way she formed Her Son. Pope Francis often encourages us to go to Mary, and this is one of his prayers to her:

Mary, woman of listening, open our ears: grant us to know how to listen to the word of your son Jesus among the thousands of words of this world; grant that we may listen to the reality in which we live, to every person we encounter; especially those who are poor; in need, in hardship.

Mary, woman of decision, illuminate our mind and our heart, so that we may obey, unhesitating, the word of your Son Jesus; give us courage to decide, not to let ourselves be dragged along, letting others direct our life.

Mary, woman of action, obtain that our hands and feet move "with haste" towards others, to bring them the charity and love of your Son Jesus, to bring the light of the Gospel to the

world, as you did. Amen.

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## **FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**3rd May 2015**

### **MARY'S "MONTH OF MAY"**

These 50 days of Eastertide spent celebrating the wonder of our Lord's Resurrection are now complemented "by increasing our devotion to our Lady who, by her "FIAT" (yes, let it be done), made the Resurrection possible. Mary knows and loves Her Son like no other, and she longs for us to know and love Him also with all our heart. She wants us to "do whatever He tells you": the secret of doing so is to share the spirit of Mary - Her spirit .

Listens to God by waiting on God: she ponders and treasures in her heart the things of God.

Wants to do God's will rather than her own.

Expresses her love through fidelity.

The greatest way we let Mary lead us to Her Son, by influencing our thinking and turning our love to Him, is through daily recitation of the Rosary.

As we begin May I encourage you all to love the Rosary carry one with you at all times. Hold it in your hand in times of temptation. Let your daily faithfulness to God be expressed through faithfulness to your daily rosary.

"The greatest method of praying is to pray the Rosary" said St Francis de Sales. St John Paul II said "The rosary is my favourite prayer" : through his intercession may it become ours too. Pope Francis said "The Rosary is the central devotion of my life and my family. It is the way in which I chiefly come to know and understand my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Fr David Barnes. PP

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## **FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER**

**26th April 2015**

### **WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS**

And the good news is that, here in our diocese, 35 seminarians are currently training for the priesthood - which is around double what it was ten years ago. This is very encouraging, but it also means that we need to continue supporting them through our prayers and donations. I would like to spend a few minutes telling you why.

The decision to commit your life to the service of God and His people as a priest is a huge one. As Pope John Paul II set out back in 1992, it involves human, spiritual, intellectual and pastoral formation.

This cannot be rushed because, in addition to discerning God's will a seminarian needs to develop skills required to work in a world that has changed over the last century.

As always, he will need to develop the personal and intellectual skills required of a priest.

But he will also need to be able to proclaim the Gospel in an increasingly secular society.

This often means focusing on the needs of adults who may have little knowledge of our faith

but who are searching for a spiritual underpinning of their lives.

It also means reaching out to people outside the confines of the parish be it in schools, in hospitals, in soup kitchens, in hospices, in prisons and elsewhere.

So our seminarians must develop and grow not simply in the classroom but also in the world that we live in:

Spending time in local communities.....working with the young, the old, the sick, the poor, the imprisoned, the vulnerable and with those who just want to explore and strengthen their faith in an unthreatening environment.

Gaining the necessary experience and graces required of a priest in today's world.

Vocations to the priesthood are gifts from God and expressions of the Catholic faith we all share. As a community, it is our responsibility to nurture and contribute to these gifts. The formation process costs approximately £25,000 a year for each seminarian.

The Cardinal is very grateful for the generous contribution made to the Priest Training Fund by parishioners over the last four years, through Growing in Faith. I too am aware of the financial pressures on many of you and know that many of you are already growing to the parish. But this annual collection still remains a vital part of the Priest Training Fund, and is entirely dependent on donations.

All that I can ask is that you respond generously to this appeal through your prayers and donations, so that we can continue to prepare our priests to spread the Gospel.

If you are a taxpayer, could I urge you to complete the Gift Aid form on the back of the donation envelope, as this will add 25p to every £1 that you give, at no extra cost to yourself.

Thank you.

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### **THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER 19th April 2015**

Anselm, as co-patron of our parish, and whose feast we celebrate this Tuesday (21st April) has much to teach us. He was born in Aosta (Piedmont Northern Italy) in 1033.

Our parish grew out of the Sardinian Embassy whose church was dedicated to St Anselm. In 1059 Anselm became a monk of Bec Abbey (in Normandy) and eventually became Abbot in 1078. It was here he became a great theologian. His aim was always to study and teach the sublime truths of revelation, and his definition of theology was "faith seeking understanding." So, for Anselm, theology was not mere intellectual research.

His approach is seen in his famous work PROSLOGION, where he asks: "My soul, have you found what you are looking for? You were looking for God, and you have discovered that He is the supreme being, and that you could not possibly acquire anything more perfect. You have discovered

that this supreme being is life itself, light, wisdom, goodness, eternal blessedness and blessed eternity. He is everywhere and he is timeless."

Anselm is well known for his teaching "Credo ut intelligam" (I believe in order that I may

understand), emphasising that we should be guided by the light of faith and not by the light of reason alone. Anselm writes: Oh Lord my God, I am trying fully to understand your nature - my mind is not capable of that! But I do so long to understand something of the truth which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand so that I may believe, but I believe so that I may understand."

Anselm became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1093 and remained as such until his death in 1109. He was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1720.

Fr David Barnes. PP

A prayer from St Anselm

O my God teach my heart where and how to seek you,  
where and how to find you...

You are my God and you are my all and I have never seen you.  
You have made me and remade me,  
You have bestowed on me all the good things I possess;  
Still I do not know you...

I have not yet done that for which I was made....  
Teach me to seek you...

I cannot seek unless you teach me  
Or find you unless you show yourself to me.  
Let me seek you in my desire, let me desire you in my seeking.  
Let me find you by loving you, let me love you when I find you.

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**SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER (Divine Mercy Sunday)  
12th April 2015**

**A HOMELESS EASTER**

THE KINGSWAY FIRE which started on Wednesday of Holy Week left us without our church for the whole of the Triduum. The Rectory had to be evacuated. How strange it was to be homeless for the three most important days in the Christian Year! Thank God we have very good neighbouring parishes who hosted us over those days.

GOD will teach us much through this experience not least the fragility and unpredictability of life, care for the homeless and refugees, and greater appreciation for what we have in our beautiful Church of Ss Anselm and Cæcilia.

THE LORD IS RISEN: the Easter Proclamation remains true whatever has happened on the human level, and this must be our focus. Our Lord is calling us to be His witnesses: how do I witness to the risen Lord by what I say and do? MERCY is God's motive for the Resurrection: for while the human race suffers sin and death, and can find no escape, Our Lord comes to save us from the power of sin and death, reconciling us to God our Father, and empowering us through the gift of the Holy Spirit to live no longer for ourselves but for Him. This is the Divine Mercy in action! How infinitely each of us is loved by God!

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY is celebrated every 2nd Sunday of Easter. If we have not already celebrated the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of our Easter preparation, then we

should do so today - or as soon as possible. Let us invoke the prayers of Our Lady, Mother of Mercy, that we may live Our Lord's teaching: "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36.)

Fr David Barnes, PP

#### THE CHAPLET OF DIVINE MERCY

The Lord said to St. Faustina

"You will recite this Chaplet on the beads of the Rosary in the following manner".

Begin with:-

Our Father....Hail Mary....The Creed

On the five large beads:

Eternal Father. I offer You the Body and Blood. Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son. Our Lord Jesus Christ in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

On the ten small beads:

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion

Have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Conclude with:

Holy God. Holy Mighty One. Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world." (three times)

#### THE THREE O'CLOCK PRAYER

You expired Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls and the ocean of mercy, opened up for the whole world. O Fount of Life,

unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us.

"O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a Fount of Mercy for us, I trust in you. Jesus, I trust in you!"

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#### **EASTER SUNDAY**

**5th April 2015**

Rejoice, heavenly powers!

Sing, choirs of angels!

Exult, all creation around God's throne!

Jesus Christ our King is risen!

Sound the trumpet of salvation!

May God fill you all with Easter joy!

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#### **PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION**

**29th March 2015**

HOLY WEEK...

is the most important week in the year. Our Lord is calling us to share His journey from the triumphant entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, through his trial, passion and death, through to His Resurrection on Easter Sunday. His Paschal Mystery (His Passion, Death and Resurrection) is the most important event in human history, transforming our relationship with God and with one another, and He is calling us to participate in it more fully so as to

share its fruit more fully.

We respond by sharing as much as possible in the Holy Week Liturgies. The key Liturgies to attend are:

- The Mass of the Lord's Supper - Thursday 6.00pm
- The celebration of the Passion of the Lord - Friday 3.00pm
- The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night - Saturday 8.00pm

Our Lord is calling us, inviting us: why would we not respond? What would this say about me?

In Holy Week we confront two of the most difficult areas in human life suffering and death. Often we prefer not to face them. Yet in Holy Week, through sharing Our Lord's Passion and Death, we can find freedom from our fears and anxieties about suffering and death: this is the healing Our Lord wants for us, and is offering us.

Fr David Barnes, PP

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**FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT**

**22nd March 2015**

**WHY PURPLE VEILS?**

TODAY (Sunday) we begin Passiontide, when, through the Mass readings and prayers, Our Lord's Passion and Death are our focus. When Our Lord told the religious authorities He is the Son of God, some took up stones to throw at him and so He hid from them. The veiling of the crucifixes reminds us of His being hidden, and how, in the Passion, His divinity is hidden from us we see only His rejection, humiliation and suffering. The veiling of the statues also reminds us of how special these days are and that our focus should be on Our Lord's Passion. The veiled crucifix makes us use our imagination! Especially through the Stations of the Cross we can imagine and awaken within us Our Lord's Passion. So the veiling helps develop the solemn and sombre nature of Passiontide, and the colour purple speaks of penance and contrition. At the same time, remember to see all this in the light of the Resurrection so that Passiontide is not experienced as simply doom and gloom!

This Wednesday is the FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION: "the Word made flesh and dwelt among us." Through the Incarnation Our Lord becomes fully human as well as being fully divine.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.' John 3. 1 6).

We have much to ponder and pray about!

Fr David Barnes. PP

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**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (LAETARE SUNDAY)**

**15th March 2015**

**"LAETARE" (REJOICE) SUNDAY**

This fourth Sunday, of Lent is called "Laetare Sunday" because of the opening antiphon at Mass, "REJOICE, Jerusalem, and all who love her...." The Holy City is symbolic of God's presence where the people are able to exult and be satisfied like an infant at the breast. In

Catholic Christianity the Church is now Jerusalem, and is called Holy Mother Church. The Church mothers God's People through her teaching the Sacraments and pastoral care. Mary is Mother of the Church. MOTHERING SUNDAY then is another name for this Sunday, a joyful celebration of MOTHERING be it God's love, Our Lady's, the Church's, or our own immediate mother. Today we pray for all mothers that they may grow in their capacity for "mothering."

Laetare Sunday also encourages us to rejoice because the coming celebration of the Paschal Mystery is fast approaching. Are we ready to celebrate the Paschal Mystery His Passion, Death and Resurrection with mind and heart made new? What do we still need to do? Today's Second Reading reminds us that God's love for us is expressed in His mercy: God wants to save us from sin and death, and so gives us Our Lord's Paschal Mystery. "We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it " (Eph 2:10) Do I see my life in this way? If not, why not?  
Fr David Barnes, PP

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**THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**8th March 2015**

**MY HOUSE IS A HOUSE FULL OF PRAYER**

Most of us can say we have had a bad day when everything goes wrong.

In today's Gospel, some people might say Jesus was having one of those days. In fact he was once again proving His total humanity to us. He was angry with those who were abusing His Father's house, making it into a market place. What would our feelings be if suddenly Jesus came among us for treating his house on earth in such a way? Can you imagine him flinging us out of the church with our mobiles and newspapers, our food and long conversations in church? How would we react to such actions? Jesus' anger was necessary, it was a just anger. What did he say? "My house is a house of prayer."

We come to the church to talk to God, the most important action of our day. We try to make our short visits as reverent and meaningful as possible, remember when we pray the whole church prays with us, that includes the angelic hosts and all the saints, we are in wonderful company. Let us rejoice and exalt and praise God for this extraordinary experience we have every time we visit the Lord in the tabernacle or at exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Remember God is waiting for us with open arms! Why are we so slow to welcome Him? Let us join with the angels and saints, singing, Holy! Holy! Holy!

Sr M. Lucina, Parish Sister.

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**SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**1st March 2015**

**SEEING AND LISTENING**

Our Lord takes the apostles, Peter, James and John to a high mountain: in the Jewish thinking this is a place of encounter with God. He is transfigured and they see Him in a new light. They see Him as He really is, the fulfilment of the Law (symbolised by Moses) and the Prophets (symbolised by Elijah) - in other words, He is the Messiah. The voice of God our Father is heard: "This is my Son, the Beloved: listen to Him". The Transfiguration calls us to develop two aspects of our daily life

1. We should take time away from the business of our daily life - why not make a daily visit to the church (the equivalent of the high mountain) where we can spend time with Him? He is there in the tabernacle: He is calling you, waiting for you. "Come to me..." He says to you. What is your answer to Him?

2. "Listen to Him" says God our Father. Do we? Does the Bible have a place of honour in our home? If not, what does that say about us? Do we read it? Pope Francis encourages us all to carry a pocket-size copy of one of the Gospels so that we can read it at spare moments through the day, so God's word can nourish us and form us. Do we? If not, why not? YES - why not? Pope Francis relates that St Cæcilia, co-patron of our Parish, always carried a copy of the Gospel with her, so let's imitate her, and ask her to gain for us a deep love of the Gospel.

Fr David Barnes. PP

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## **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT** **22nd February 2015**

Why not try one of these?

With Lent starting last Wednesday, what will you do, if anything? Give up chocolate, alcohol? How about trying a new diet? What should I give up, you wonder? Give up nothing. Why not do something to make a wee bit of difference?

Promise to make someone smile every day this Lent.

OK - promise to make someone smile once a week.

Contact a relative you have been ignoring for a long time.

Sit down, yes sit down, with someone who is homeless and talk to him or her.

Buy a religious book and read it - to the end.

Thank God for how fortunate you have been in your life.

Give a day's salary to a charity, if you can afford to. Yes, a day's.

Go to confession and clear all that stuff out.

Have lunch with an enemy. You pay.

Have lunch with a friend.

Read Mark's Gospel - the whole of it.

Do a wee pilgrimage to the nearest holy place.

To your grandparents and parents : thank them or pray for them.

To your children: surprise them by delighting them.

To yourself: give yourself a break for a whole day.

Give God a break: tell him you love him, whatever.

Go to Mass and pray for those who are suffering.

Empty your wallet or purse on the table. Count. Give the contents to CAFOD.

Have a great Lent... and, please, add your own!  
Denis McBride C.Ss.R

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**SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**  
**15th February 2015**

**LENTEN ALMS APPEAL FOR CARITAS WESTMINSTER**

Pope Francis writes:

"A way has to be found to enable everyone to benefit from the fruits of the earth, and not simply to close the gap between the affluent and those who must be satisfied with the crumbs falling from the table, but above all to satisfy the demands of justice, fairness and respect for every human being."

Pope Francis's commitment to the fight against poverty and injustice in all its forms has inspired the Diocese to increase still further the work that it undertakes to support projects which provide practical help to the poor, the hungry, the lonely and the marginalized in London and the wider diocese.

For this reason, a decision has been taken by Cardinal Vincent and the Archbishop's Council to ask parishioners in every parish in our diocese to consider giving at least some of their Lenten Alms to CARITAS!

Launched in 2012, Caritas has been created by the Diocese to help parishes to set up and run projects designed to tackle for example:

- Homelessness and housing
- Debt and the management of money
- The social isolation of vulnerable people and those at risk of marginalization
- Hunger.....particularly among the very, young and the very old

CARITAS does this in three key ways:

- Initiating new projects
- Providing "seed" funding to get projects started in parishes
- Building and sharing expertise and skills within parishes

CARITAS is also at the forefront of a new initiative to support the victims of people trafficking. You will find a leaflet about CARITAS at the back of the church and I would invite you to take a copy.

You will also find a Lenten Alms donation envelope and I would invite you to put any money that you feel able to give to Caritas - as part of your Lenten Alms - into the envelope and to return it on Holy Thursday - or Easter Sunday. Could I also invite you to complete the Gift Aid declaration on the back of the envelope if you are a taxpayer.

Thank you.

Fr David Barnes PP

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## **WORLD DAY FOR THE SICK**

**8th February 2015**

(Wednesday 11th February, feast of Our Lady of Lourdes)

Pope Francis writes: This year's theme invites us to reflect on a phrase from the Book of Job: "I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame" (Job 29:15).

I would like to consider this phrase from the perspective of "sapientia cordis" - the wisdom of the heart. This "wisdom" is not theoretical, abstract knowledge, the product of reasoning. Rather, it is as St James describes in his Letter, "pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty or insincerity" (3:17). It is a way of seeing things infused by the Holy Spirit in the minds and hearts of those who are sensitive to the sufferings of their brothers and sisters and who can see them in the image of God. So let us take up the prayer of the Psalmist: "Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). This "Sapientia cordis (wisdom of the heart), which is a gift of God, is a compendium of the fruits of the World Day of the Sick".

Fr David writes: If you are sick or are going into hospital, please do let me know. If you know a parishioner who is sick, please do let me know. If you are housebound, or know someone who is now no longer able to get to church, please do let me know.

THIS SUNDAY (8) we are asked by our Bishops to pray for "Victims of Trafficking and those who work to combat it".

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## **EDUCATION SUNDAY**

**1st February 2015**

The mission of the Church is to proclaim the good news given to us by the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This is the promise of eternal life and an invitation to live life to the full as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The Catholic school makes a vital contribution to this mission by enabling each child to develop his or her God-given gifts to their fullest potential, to know the abundant love of God and to become friends of Jesus Christ. A foundation in prayer and friendship with Christ will serve them in later life so that they make their unique contribution to the world around them and foster the values of God's kingdom and the common good - justice, peace, love and joy. As Pope Francis wrote, 'Catholic schools, which will always strive to join their work of education with the explicit proclamation of the Gospel, are a most valuable resource for the evangelisation of culture. . .' (The Joy of the Gospel 134).

What do we mean by the 'evangelisation of culture'? Pope Francis answered this question in the following way, 'To give witness with joy and simplicity to what we are and what we believe in.' Such witness is infectious and attracts others to the life-giving message of Christ and his Church. The Catholic school is called to witness with joy and simplicity to the goodness of each and every- person, especially the vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The school is called to be a beacon and witness to God's gracious gift of mercy shown us by the actions and words of Jesus Christ who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Christ is at the

centre of the Catholic school.

Bishop John Sherrington, Auxiliary Bishop of Westminster  
Chairman, Diocese of Westminster Education Commission

Full text available at the back of the church.

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### **THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME** **25th January 2015**

#### CONSECRATED LIFE

"If anyone wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me." Luke 9:23

Pope Francis has dedicated this year to meditate and pray for consecrated life. By our baptism we are all in our different ways living a life of consecration, whether it be marriage, the priesthood, consecrated virgins etc., our baptism makes us all members of God's family and we are all dedicated to the praise and glory of God and his Church.

In my own case I have had the privilege of spending sixty years in the Lord's service in Religious life. It has been a busy and active life. Our founder Antonio Rosmini tells us 'In silence and in prayer will your strength be' and 'pray and work.' When we make our vows we say 'I ask for neither bread or water', and to be ready to drop whatever we are doing at the call of obedience, to be prepared to be sent to any part of the world. This was the way things were in 1954 and right up until Vatican II. One did not question decisions made by ones superiors.

Nowadays there has to be dialogue before decisions are made, which is one of the reasons I am lucky to be living in London and working in this beautiful parish of SS Anselm & Cecilia. I am still expected to observe the rules and constitutions of the Sisters of Providence, Rosminians. My days are divided by work and prayer. It has been a blessed life, and like Simeon I would like to end my days in the house of the Lord. Only once in my lifetime I have said no to obedience. but felt so guilty afterwards I changed my mind and accepted the work, and as Juliana of Norwich would say, "and all will be well." And it was. Please pray that I will persevere in the Lords service, as I pray for you.

Sr M. Lucina Parish Sister

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### **SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME** **18th January 2015**

#### PEACE SUNDAY

The Bishops of England and Wales invite us to make today a day of prayer for world peace and to reflect on the theme chosen by Pope Francis for the annual World Day of Prayer for Peace (celebrated in Rome and elsewhere on January 1st): 'Slaves no more, but brothers and sisters'. Perhaps we thought that slavery was a thing of the past, ended in the British Empire. Through the efforts of William Wilberforce, and long-since driven from the plantations that supply our food and the factories that produce the goods we use. But in recent years we have

begun to recognise many new forms of slavery alongside the older ones - the child soldiers in many foreign wars, for instance, and (more shocking still) people trafficked for domestic service, for sexual exploitation and for the drugs trade hidden within our own communities. What all those forms of slavery have in common is a lack of respect for the God-given dignity of each person. And we are caught up in this violation of the rights of our brothers and sisters whenever we choose not to care - about how our goods were produced and at what cost to others.

Pope Francis says in his message for Peace Sunday:

"For this reason I urgently appeal to all men and women of good will...not to turn away from the suffering of our brothers and sisters... may we have the courage to touch the suffering flesh of Christ, revealed in the countless persons...'the least of my brethren".

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**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 18-25 January 2015**

Theme: Jesus said to her: "Give me to drink" John 4:7)

The theme for this year's week of prayer for Christian Unity is the above verse. The whole of chapter four (John 4: 2-42) is proposed for our reflection.

In this theme-verse Jesus asks help from a woman from a different tradition. The Samaritans had their own beliefs and rituals. Jesus is teaching us to be willing to learn from other Christian traditions. In his exhortation 'The Joy of the Gospel', Pope Francis says...'in the dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and sisters. We Catholics have the opportunity to learn more about the meaning of episcopal collegiality and their experience of synodality.' (No. 246)

The text for this year is a pressing invitation to us to seek unity through dialogue. Dialogue is a matter of give and take, (or as in our text, of take and give).

After Jesus had taken a drink from her, he promised her living water which would become in her a spring of water gushing up to eternal life (V14). Dialogue is one way to go out, go to, go share. And notice that it is Jesus who initiates the dialogue. So what of us? The week of prayer is a privileged moment for us to initiate dialogue and organise joint prayer for Christian unity. But if we do not manage to do this, remember that the theme and text stand for the whole year! Pope Francis suggests a strategy which we could examine. He says: If we concentrate on the convictions we share...we will be able to progress decidedly towards common expressions of proclamation, service and witness. (N 246)

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## **THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

**11th January 2015**

**BUILDING MISSIONARY PARISHES PROCLAIM '15**

New National Initiative in 2015 to Support Parish Evangelisation.

Proclaim'15: BUILDING MISSIONARY PARISHES' is the name of a new national Bishops' Conference initiative being launched in 2015 to support the development of parish

evangelisation. It is inspired by Pope Francis' writings and has five parts which include:

The provision of free parish small group materials;

The organisation of a National Catholic Evangelisation Conference in Birmingham on 11 July 2015 for 850 evangelisation representatives from across England and Wales;

An invitation to parishes to host a parish Prayer Vigil on the night of 11th July 2015 with free prayer materials provided;

An invitation to dioceses, deaneries and parishes to have their own Proclaim 15 event in Autumn 2015;

The publication of new evangelisation resources as a fruit of the National Conference to equip local evangelisers.

Please do get involved in what is a significant new step in the service of the proclamation of the Gospel in our area.

Parish Priests have been asked to bring parishioners engaged in Evangelisation to meet with the Bishop and Agency for Evangelisation to introduce them to the Parish Materials.

These meetings have been arranged in three venues:

Wednesday 21st January 2015 7.30-9pm at St Mary & St Michael, 2 Lukin St, Commercial Rd, E1 0AA

Monday 26th January 2015 7.30-9pm at St Alban & St Stephen 14- 16 Beaconsfield Rd, St Albans AL1 3RB

Tuesday 3rd February 2015 7.30-9pm at Vaughan House, 46 Francis Street, SW1P 1QN

Please register to attend one of the meetings by emailing [living-faith@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:living-faith@rcdow.org.uk) or by calling/leaving a message on 020 7931 6078.

When registering please provide your name, parish name and your phone number or email address.

For more information go to <http://rcdow.org.uk/faith/proclaim-westminster> or email [livingfaith@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:livingfaith@rcdow.org.uk)

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## **EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

**4th January 2015**

**POPE FRANCIS OPENS 2015 WITH CALLS FOR PEACE, LOYALTY TO THE CHURCH, AND DEVOTION TO MARY.**

Here is the text of his Angelus address on 1st January 2015

On this first day of the year, in the joyful atmosphere of Christmas, the Church invites us to fix our gaze of faith and of love on the Mother of Jesus. In her, the humble woman of Nazareth, "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (Jn 1:14). Because of this it is impossible to separate contemplation of Jesus, the Word of life, Who is made visible and tangible (cf. 1 Jn 1:1), from contemplation of Mary, who has given Him her love and her human flesh.

Today we hear the words of the Apostle Paul: "God sent his Son, born of a woman" (Gal

4:4). That "born of a woman" speaks in an essential manner, and for this reason even more strongly, expresses the true humanity of the Son of God. As a Father of the Church, St. Athanasius, affirms, "Our Saviour was truly man, and from that comes the salvation of all humanity" (Letter to Epictetus: PG 26).

But St Paul also adds "born under the law" (Gal 4:4). With this expression he emphasizes that Christ has taken up the human condition, freeing it from the closed, legalistic mentality. In fact, the law deprived of grace becomes an insupportable yoke, and instead of being good for us it is bad for us. This, then, is the end for which God sent His Son to earth to become man a finality of liberation: indeed, of regeneration. Of liberation, "to ransom those under the law" (v. 5); and the ransom occurred with the death of Christ on the cross. But especially of regeneration: "so that we might receive adoption as sons" (v. 5). Incorporated in Him, men and women really become children of God. This amazing transition takes place in us with Baptism, which grafts us into Christ as living members, and inserts us into the Church.

At the beginning of a new year, it is good to remember the day of our Baptism: we rediscover the gift received in that Sacrament which has regenerated us to new life - the divine life. And this through Mother Church, which has as a model Mother Mary. Thanks to Baptism we were introduced into communion with God and we are no longer at the mercy of evil and sin, but [rather] we receive the love, the tenderness, the mercy of the heavenly Father.

This closeness of God to our existence gives us true peace, the divine gift that we want especially to implore today, the World Day of Peace. "No longer slaves, but brothers": this is the Message of this Day. It is a message that involves all of us. We are all called to combat every form of slavery and to build fraternity - all of us, each one according to his or her own responsibility.

To Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, we present our good intentions. We ask you to extend the mantle of your maternal protection over each and every one of us in the new year: "O Holy Mother of God despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin"  
(Sub tuum praesidium).