

+THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

25th December 2016

THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

GOD'S LOVE is not expressed so much in beautiful words but in action, in deeds. So God came to live among us, to engage with us totally so that we might encounter God personally. In the Incarnation God comes to share our life on every level, excepting sin. God comes to us out of total love for us, and invites us to share our life with Him. The clearest way we do so is through the Holy Mass which is the extension of the Incarnation: at every Mass Our Lord comes fully among us, giving Himself completely to us in Holy Communion. We come to Him, like the shepherds and the Kings, falling on our knees to worship Him. Yet Christ came among us to bring everyone back to God, and so must we also share in this mission to the world.

Pope Francis expresses this very succinctly.

"If you want to find God,
seek him in humility,
seek him in poverty,
seek him where he is hidden:
in the neediest,
in the sick,
in the hungry,
in the imprisoned."

Fr David Barnes P.P.

+FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

18th December 2016

4th Sunday of Advent

COUNTDOWN TO CHRISTMAS

THIS FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT is our final week of preparing the way for the Lord, at this time to celebrate the Nativity of Our Saviour. It is a time to renew our hope and expectation: God is always faithful to His promises. The fourth CANDLE on our Advent wreath is seen as the MARY candle because the Nativity is the consequence of Mary's YES to God - her FIAT (let it be done....)

This week we should, together with Mary ponder the wonderful thing God has done for us in the Incarnation.

How does it touch us, move us? How do we want to respond to it? How, do I see my "YES" to God? Is it whole hearted? As we ponder this we shall be moved to confess our sins - all of which express our NO to God: every sin is a 'no-no" to God. A good confession is the best way to find a truly Happy Christmas, when we prepare the way for Our Lord to be born again in our heart , where we can treasure Him, adore Him, and love Him, like the shepherds. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is the God-given means of making the way for Him to enter us- so do go to confession. "Mary Immaculate, my Mother, keep me close to you, at one with you, so that I may imitate your wholehearted Yes to God."

Fr David Barnes

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT
11th December 2016

“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.

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

+2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT
4th December 2016

JOHN THE BAPTIST

preaches that the people should "Repent for the Kingdom of God is close at hand". Jesus ushers in God's reign, but God can only reign in our life insofar as we really want God to reign in our life! If we do, then we need to repent - to have a "change of heart" so that we no longer love and remain attached to sin but rather love and are wholly attached to Our Lord Jesus.

This journey begins in our Baptism, when God places us in His Son Jesus, and gives us the Holy Spirit, the fire of His love. God's reign grows in us insofar as we become detached from sin and so attached to Our dear Lord.

This journey is always possible and we are filled with hope when in the Scriptures we "see how people who did not give up were helped by God". (Romans 15:5). Remember the importance of a good confession to prepare for Christmas.

ADVENT is the season of HOPE: God is always faithful to His promises, as the Incarnation shows. Pray in these days that we will be filled with hope in God's promises, asking Our Lady and St John the Baptist that we know the blessing of believing that the promises made by the Lord will be fulfilled.

Our Lord is always saying to us "Courage, do not be afraid."

Fr. David Barnes P.P.

+1st SUNDAY OF ADVENT
27th November 2016

ADVENT

The Advent wreath is part of our long-standing Catholic tradition. The actual origin is uncertain, but by the middle ages Christians adapted this tradition and used Advent wreaths as part of their spiritual preparation for Christmas. St John tells us "Christ is the light that came into the world" to dispel the darkness of sin and to radiate the truth and love of God (John 3:19-21).

The symbolism of the Advent wreath is beautiful. The wreath is made of evergreens, signifying continuous life. The laurel signifies victory over persecution and suffering; pine, holly, and yew, immortality; and cedar strength and healing. Holly also has a special Christian symbolism. The prickly leaves remind us of the crown of thorns on Jesus' head. The circle of the wreath, which has no beginning or end, symbolises the eternity of God, the immortality of our soul and the everlasting life found in Christ.

All together the Advent wreath of evergreens depicts the immortality of our soul and the new and everlasting life promised to us through Christ, the eternal Word of the Father, who entered our world becoming true man and who was victorious over sin and death through his own passion, death and resurrection.

The four candles represent the four weeks of Advent. A tradition is that each week represents one thousand years, to sum up the 4,000 years from Adam and Eve until the birth of our Saviour. Three candles are purple and one is rose. The purple candles in particular symbolise the prayer, penance and preparatory sacrifices and good works taken at this time. The rose candle is lit on the third Sunday, Gaudete Sunday, when the priest may wear Rose vestments at Mass, Gaudete Sunday is the Sunday of rejoicing because the faithful have arrived at the midpoint of Advent, when preparation is now half over and Christmas is very close. The progressive lighting of the candles symbolizes the expectation and hope surrounding our Lord's first coming into the world and the anticipation of His second coming to judge the living and the dead.

Some modern day adaptations include a white candle placed in the middle of the wreath, which represents Christ and is lit on Christmas Eve and Christmas day. Another tradition is to replace the three purple candles and the one rose candle with four white candles, which will be lit throughout the Christmas season.

Since Advent is a time to stir-up our faith in the Lord, the wreath and its prayers provide us a way to augment this special preparation for Christmas. Moreover, this good tradition helps us to remain vigilant and not lose sight of the true meaning of Advent.

Sr. M. Lucina, Parish Sister

+OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, KING OF THE UNIVERSE
and the closing of the Year of Mercy
20th November 2016

TODAY is the final Sunday of the Church's year when we celebrate God's reign in our life. Jesus often talks about the Kingdom of God, where God reigns in human life. Today we can ask ourselves "Is Jesus the king and centre of my heart?", and "Have I enthroned him in my life?" the Church is the sign and seed of the Kingdom, but she can only witness to this the more all of us let God reign in our life.

Concluding the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis writes (13th November) "Today in the cathedrals and sanctuaries throughout the world, the Doors of Mercy are being closed. Let us ask for the grace not to close our eyes to God who sees us and our neighbour who asks something of us. Let us open our eyes to God, purifying the eye of our hearts of deceitful and fearful images, from the god of power and retribution, the projection of human pride and fear. Let us look with trust to the God of mercy, with the certainty that "love never ends." (1 Cor. 13:8). Let us renew the life that will not pass away and that awaits us in communion with the

Lord and with others, in a joy that will last forever, without end. And let us open our eyes to our neighbour, especially to our brothers and sisters who are forgotten and excluded, to the "Lazarus" at our door. That is where the Church's magnifying glass is pointed. May the Lord free us from turning it towards ourselves.

+++++

+33rd SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
NOVEMBER: MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

Each day this month, be sure to pray for the Holy Souls in Purgatory:
"Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace, Amen."

The one thing that is certain in this life is that we will die.

Our bishops have recently launched a website offering help and support to those grappling with issues around the meaning of dying and death. Based on Catholic tradition but open to all, it has real life stories about dealing with the journey through death to eternal life.

The Art of Dying Well is a new website that offers a helping hand to those grappling with issues around death and dying. We are all invited to look at the website

www.artofdyingwell.org

The Bishops' Conference has invited people to post pictures and memories of loved ones who have died to its instagram account, @artofdyingwell, throughout November. Their names and photos will be shared with five convents and abbeys who will pray for them. Let us act on these great initiatives!

TODAY (SUNDAY) we warmly welcome Bishop Nicholas Hudson who celebrates the 10am Mass during which he formally closes the Holy Door. Do stay, to meet him after Mass in the Parish Room.

+32nd SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
6th November 2016

NOVEMBER: MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

On ALL SOULS DAY (November 2nd) Pope Francis in his Angelus address said:
"Yesterday, and today many people visit the cemetery, which, as the word itself implies, is the "place of rest", as we await for the final awakening. It is lovely to think that it is Jesus who will awaken us. Jesus himself revealed that the death of the body is like a sleep from which he awakens us with this faith we stop - even spiritually' - at the graves of our loved ones, those who have loved us and done good deeds for us. But today we are called to remember everyone, even those who no one remembers. We remember the victims of war and violence, the many "little ones" of the world crushed by hunger and poverty.

We remember the anonymous who rest in common graves. We remember our brothers and sisters killed because they are Christians; and those who sacrificed their lives to serve others. We especially entrust to the Lord, those who have left us over the last year. Church tradition has always urged prayer for the dead, in particular by offering the celebration of the Eucharist for them. It is the best spiritual help we can give to their souls, particularly to the most abandoned ones. The foundation of prayers in suffrage of souls is in the communion of the

Mystical Body.

As the Second Vatican Council reiterates, "fully conscious of this communion of the whole Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, the pilgrim Church from the very first ages of the Christian religion has cultivated with great piety the memory of the dead" (Lumen Gentium, 50).

Remembering the dead, caring for their graves and prayers of suffrage, are witness of confident hope, rooted in the certainty that death is not the last word on human fate, death is not the last word, because man is destined to a life without limits, which has its roots and its fulfillment in God. Let us raise this prayer to God:

God of infinite mercy, we entrust to Your immense goodness all those who have left this world for eternity where you await all humanity, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ your Son, who died to save us from our sins. Look not Lord, at our poverty and human weaknesses when we present ourselves before you to be judged in happiness or condemned. Gaze upon us with pity, born of Your tender heart and help us to walk in the path of purification.

May none of your children be lost to the fires of hell, where repentance is no more. We entrust to you Lord, the souls of our beloved departed, of those who died without the comfort of the Sacraments or who did not have the opportunity to repent, not even at the end of their life.

May no one fear the encounter with You at the end of their earthly pilgrimage, in the hope of being welcomed within the embrace of your infinite mercy. May sister death find us in prayerful vigilance, and full of all the good we have done during our existence, be it long or short.

Lord may nothing distance us from You on this earth, may everything and everyone support us in our ardent hope to serenely and eternally rest in You. Amen

**31st SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
30th October 2016**

JUBILEE PLENARY INDULGENCE

The Jubilee Year of Mercy features a very special plenary Indulgence (the complete remission of all temporal punishment due to sin).

"I wish the Jubilee Indulgence may reach each one as a genuine experience of God's mercy which comes to meet each person in the face of the Father who welcomes and forgives, forgetting completely the sin committed."

Pope Francis Letter to Archbishop Rino Fisichella Sept 1st 2015

To refresh everyone's memories, here are the conditions for receiving a plenary indulgence:

It is necessary that the faithful be in a state of grace at least at the time the indulgence work is completed.

A plenary indulgence can be gained only once a day.

In order to obtain it the faithful must in addition to being in a state of grace have the interior disposition of complete detachment from sin, even venial sin

Have sacramentally confessed their sins.

Pray for the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff.

In our parish we have the great privilege of having a Holy Door. We have only two weeks left, so let us avail ourselves of this blessed opportunity. On Sunday 13th November Bishop

Nicholas Hudson is coming for the 10am Mass and will formally close the Holy Door. On Sunday 20th Pope Francis closes the Jubilee Year of Mercy.

THIS TUESDAY we celebrate ALL SAINTS: Vigil Mass on Monday at 6pm, Tuesday 9.30am (school Mass) 12.30pm, 6pm (sung)

WEDNESDAY: ALL SOULS' DAY Mass 8.30am, 12.30pm, 6pm (sung).

FRIDAY: do join us this Friday to pray for peace through recitation of the Rosary directly after the 6pm Mass.

30th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

23rd October 2016

A well known journalist, who witnessed the horrific tragedy of the genocide in Rwanda, wrote that seeing the senseless violence perpetrated by ordinary people on their neighbours had erased any lingering belief in a God of love. I'm sure many empathise with him. For the last two decades the people of Rwanda have been trying to heal the gaping wounds of division born of hatred. The journey to forgiveness is long and hard, requiring self-examination, repentance, reconciliation and reparation. On this journey those whose spirits were crushed and hearts broken will discover once again the God of love, who never left them, echoing the Psalmist cry "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted" Psalm 33(34). Missio continues to support the Church in Rwanda to be an agent of unity, peace and reconciliation. In this broken world where senseless violence is our constant companion, we desperately need the power of God's love to heal and transform. The World Mission Sunday collection, taken up in every parish in the world, will ensure God's mission of healing the broken hearted continues to be our mission. Please be generous.

Father Anthony Chantry Missio National Director

Find out more: missio.org.uk/wms

29th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

16th October 2016

"Jesus urges us to have mercy that embraces everyone and is found in every corner of the world. There is no place beyond the reach of his mercy, no space or person it cannot touch."
Pope Francis

The Prison Advice and Care trust (Pact) is a Catholic Social Teaching into action. Our staff and volunteers work day in, day out, for the Common Good, and for a safer society for us all. We work inside prisons, and in communities, to support individuals and families who are desperate for a new life. We offer real hope, encouragement, and practical support, to enable people to live crime free lives, within stable loving families. We are not soft on crime. We are crime fighters. Pact is here to support your parish to open a door of Mercy, to those within your own community who may be suffering in Silence. We can provide opportunities and training to get actively involved. All this is dependent on the support of the Church, I ask you to please support the Prisoners Sunday Appeal.

Andy Keen-Downs, CEO, PACT

Envelopes for your gift are on the table at the back of the Church, or call 020 7735 9535 or prisonadvice.org.uk

28TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
9th October 2016

"PROCLAIM THE GOOD NEWS"

Our parish has now joined many others in the uK and Ireland so that our Masses and other liturgies are available through the internet. It is a totally free service to view, and you can also view Mass throughout these Isles. The whole project is the work of CHURCHSERVICES.TV

You can find us each day on

www.churchservices.tv/lincolnsinnfields

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/lincolnsinnfields/>

This initiative enables our sick and housebound to follow our parish liturgies.

For marriages and funerals it enables those who cannot attend because of distance or other factors, to follow the marriage or funeral as it happens.

We commend this initiative to our Lady - may it be a means of bringing many to the knowledge and love of our Lord and His tender mercy.

OCTOBER: MONTH OF THE HOLY ROSARY

There are many beautiful prayers to Our Lady. Someone recently sent me this one. It is an ideal one to include in our Morning Offering, or at the end of the day.

"Mary, my dear Mother, I thank you for the special protection you have provided for me throughout this day. Obtain for me the grace of always being faithful to my commitments. Let purity and sacrifice be my daily bread, humility and obedience my comfort, the tabernacle my relaxation, and you, dear Mother, the School where I learn to practice every virtue.

I cannot praise Christ while I sleep, so offer Him my heartbeats as fervent acts of love. Keep me free from any act or thought that could dishonour His regard for me, and give me your tender motherly blessing."

27TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
2nd October 2016

POPE FRANCIS' FIVE-FINGER PRAYER

Using the fingers on your hand, start with the thumb and pray these intentions in this order:

- 1) The thumb is the closest finger to you. So start praying for those who are closest to you. They are the people easiest to remember. To pray for our dear ones is a "sweet obligation".
- 2) The next finger is the index. Pray for those who teach you, instruct you and heal you. They need the support and wisdom to show direction to others.
- 3) The following finger is the tallest. It reminds us of our leaders, the governors and those who have authority. They need God's guidance.
- 4) The fourth finger is the ring finger. Even though it may surprise you, it is our weakest finger. It should remind us to pray for the weakest, the sick or those plagued by problems.
- 5) And finally we have our little finger, the smallest of all. This finger should remind you to pray for yourself. When you have finished praying for others, you will be able to see your own needs but in the proper perspective, and you will be able to pray for your own needs in a

better way.

26TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

25th September 2016

REVIEWING THE YEAR OF MERCY

As we are coming towards the end of this time of grace, I have been thinking to myself, what use have I made of this God given gift?

Pope Francis has been more than generous with his advice, support and encouragement. Let us ask ourselves, how have I received these benefits. Am I more attentive to my own spiritual development? Has my prayer life deepened? Am I more aware of my neighbour, the lonely and homeless?

Do I show reverence towards the Blessed Sacrament or do I continue to talk to all and sundry in Church, disturbing those parishioners who have come to pray? Do I still criticise others, or do I pray for those people around me? These are just a few of the questions I have been praying about.

Let us together thank God for giving us this grace filled time and pray that we use this final stage of the Year of Mercy, for the glory of God and the good of our soul.

Sr. M. Lucina, Parish Sister

^^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^*

25th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

18th September 2016

HOME MISSION SUNDAY

Theme: Proclaim the Joy of Love

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 for evangelisation. 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: catholicnews.org.uk/donate-hms www.catholicnews.org.uk/donate-HMS

Commemorative prayer cards are available to take away. Please support the work of Home Mission through your prayers and generosity.

For more information see: catholicnews.org.uk/hms16

In choosing this year's theme, two priorities are proposed for prayer and reflection. Inspired by our 2015 National Catholic Evangelisation Conference, the first priority is to "Proclaim".

As a fruit of prayer we'd like every Catholic family, every family and every parish to take a new step to share their faith more joyfully and confidently, and so build missionary parishes. Our second priority, as the Year of Mercy draws to an end, is to encourage everyone to share

the joy of love - that Catholic individuals, engaged and married couples, as well as families, will consider afresh how they can witness to "the joy and love" to others.

POPE FRANCIS is making a pilgrimage to Assisi on 20th September to mark the 30th anniversary of the first inter-religious World Day of Prayer for Peace convened by Pope John Paul in 1986. He has extended an invitation to the Church throughout the world to join him in prayer on this day. Here at Ss Anselm and Cecilia we shall do so during Adoration (4-5.50pm): do join us.

Prayer

O God, who sent your Son into the world as the true light, pour out the Spirit he promised to sow the seeds of truth in people's hearts. Awaken our faith, we pray, so that, walking in the ways of salvation and love, we may call all people to become one in Christ. We make this prayer through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

+ * + * + * + * + * + * + * + *

24th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 11th September 2016

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Our stations are back in place-thanks be to God. The artist has taken off the heavy lacquer that obscured the original colour, and has brought out the background detail which had been painted over. The faces are expressive and the bodies have movement. The frames have been gilded. Each station now has come back to life. I hope, like me, you find each station a joy and delight to behold. The stations are not just to be admired! They should help us share more fully in God's merciful love revealed in our Lord's passion.

Let us make sure we "use" them. "Doing/making the Stations, should be part of our spiritual exercises, not just in Lent but regularly. Why not "do the Stations" every Friday? Beginning this coming Friday we will have the Stations of the Cross after every Friday lunchtime Mass. We can do the stations individually at anytime.

The continuing work on our church (new sanctuary, marble flooring at the back, the redecoration of the church and the nave parquet flooring) has been funded mostly through the "Growing in Faith" initiative. There has been no other appeal for this work. Now I am asking that you consider making a donation for the stations. Each has cost over £1600 (sixteen hundred!). Can you help?

If you can, please put your offering in any envelope and mark it "Stations", and either put it in the offertory plate or give it to Sr Lucina or me, or put it through the Rectory letter box.

Thank you.

Fr David Barnes PP

+++++

17th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 24th July 2016

HOLIDAYS

The end of the school term signals the Summer holiday season ahead. Our English word comes from "holy days", which makes clear the nature and purpose of a holiday - a re-orientation of our life to God, and to growing in wholeness / holiness. This is the way to a

happy and restorative holiday.

Central to our holiday should be:

Mass: make sure you find out the location of the nearest Catholic church.

Daily prayer

A good spiritual book

A good self examination and a good confession.

AUGUST in the parish: please remember there is NO LUNCHTIME Mass during August nor will there be a weekly bulletin.

ADORATION of the Blessed Sacrament will be Monday - Saturday 4.00pm to 6.00pm.

This is the last bulletin until early September. I wish you all a good holiday and summer: remember to pray for each other, and especially our sick and housebound.

Fr David Barnes, PP

16th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

17th July 2016

SEA SUNDAY

Cardinal Vincent with a Seafarer

Cardinal Vincent Nichols with a Seafarer at Tilbury Port

This Sunday we are celebrating Sea Sunday, which is your chance to offer your support to seafarers, through prayer and giving.

The Apostleship of the Sea is the Catholic Maritime Welfare charity, known internationally as Stella Maris, and it provides spiritual and welfare support for seafarers visiting Great Britain. Did you know that over 90% of everything we use in this country - cars, electrical goods, fuel - comes to us by sea?

There are 16 Apostleship of the Sea port chaplains, and 120 ship visiting volunteers.

Together, in 2015, they visited 9,821 ships around the country, assisting 196,420 seafarers.

Assistance included practical things such as transport and phone cards, but also Masses, Sacraments and faith resources such as bibles.

For example, Apostleship of the Sea Dover and Medway port chaplain, Deacon Paul Glock, organised Mass on All Saints Day for the crew of La Richardias, a bulker carrying a consignment of steel docked at Thamesport. The crew were all Filipino and hadn't been able to attend Mass since their ship visited Canada three months before. 'The crew were immensely happy to have the opportunity and brought out a lot of personal items which they wanted to be blessed,' said Paul.

So, let us give thanks today and every day for all seafarers - those unsung heroes - and for the work of the Apostleship of the Sea. Please remember them all in your prayers. And please give what you can to support their vital work. If you are able to complete a Gift Aid envelope, that would really help too. A donation today would be wonderful, but please consider also whether you can give regularly or leave a gift in your Will.

Thank you.

Roland Hayes, London Officer, Apostleship of the Sea

**15th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
10th July 2016**

COLUMBAN MISSIONARIES

The Society of St. Columban is a Catholic organization working in 15 countries with a special commitment to Asia and Latin America. Columbans are missionaries who go in the name of the Church to announce, by deed and word, the good news of Jesus Christ.

Our specific objectives are to:

establish the Church where the gospel has not been preached.

help local Churches grow into evangelizing communities open to all peoples.

promote dialogue between Christians and those of other religious traditions.

facilitate interchange between local Churches, especially those from which we come and those to which we are sent.

help people become fully human, to help establish a world of peace with justice and care for the integrity of creation in solidarity with the poor.

We strive to identify with Jesus of Nazareth who said, 'He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind new sight, to set the downtrodden free and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour'. (Lk 4:18)

Within this framework, we often find ourselves working with and accompanying people who are suffering great injustices. We believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ demands that his followers, i.e. the Church, challenge the scandals of poverty and violence.

Nearly 700 Columban missionaries – including priests, seminarians and lay missionaries – currently work in Asia, North and Latin America, Oceania and Europe.

Columban missionaries cross boundaries of country, language and culture to evangelise and to promote dialogue between Christians and those of other religious faiths.

[Source: www.columbans.co.uk]

**14th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
3rd July 2016**

**JUBILEE OF MERCY:
the Corporal Works**

"Lord, When did we see you...

Hungry

Thirsty

Naked

Homeless

Prisoner

Sick
Dead

'When you did this to the least of my brethren... you did it to ME.' Mt 25:40

'The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life'. Prov 11:30

+*+*+*+*+*+*+*+*+*+*+*

13th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
26th June 2016

'MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER'

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy we have heard and experienced how Divine Mercy should encourage us to be "Merciful like the Father". Each one of us reading this is working to absorb this mercy in our life.

Blessed Pope Paul VI writes "sharing the Cross of Christ is to receive its fruit which is mercy. By asking for forgiveness of our sins. We are responding to God's mercy". Let us remember, we have been redeemed by the Cross of Christ, this is the centre of all we believe and love, and which leads us to love of our neighbour and all creation.

When I was a teacher in school we used to sing "Love is something if you give it away, you end up having more". Love is meant to be shared, not hidden" as we see in the second reading today. St. Paul reminds us to love one another and if we go on snapping at each other and tearing each other to pieces we had better watch or we will destroy the whole community. St Paul doesn't mince his words. Whereas if we love one another led by the Holy Spirit no law can touch us.

Let us remember. God is a jealous God, as revealed in today's Gospel, He wants our undivided love, Jesus rebukes his friends for wanting revenge on the Samaritans, and for another would-be-follower wanting to turn back and say goodbye to family and friends. Our love for God will be revealed in our compassion and mercy towards our neighbour.

Sr. M. Lucina.
Parish Sister.

12th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
19th June 2016

JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY

POPE FRANCIS has given us this Year of Mercy as a time for opening fully the door of our heart to God's merciful love. In this way we can open wide the door of our heart to forgive others.

In our parish we have the privilege of a HOLY DOOR. Pope Francis suggests we stand before the Holy Door and pray "O'Lord help me to open the doors of my heart".

"Therefore as the Holy Door remains open because it is the sign of the welcoming that God Himself reserves for us, so also our doors - those of the heart - must always be open to not exclude anyone, not even those that bother us. No-one!

"The Holy Door indicates Jesus Himself who said: "I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture". Going through the Holy Door is the sign of our trust in the Lord Jesus who did not come to judge, but to save".

With His love He tells us that we recognise our sins He is yet closer to us and spurs us on to

look ahead. When we recognise our sins and we ask for forgiveness there is a party in Heaven. Jesus throws a party! This is His mercy: do not be discouraged".

11th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
12th June 2016

THE DRYING OF TEARS...

The visit of our bishop Cardinal Vincent Nichols last Thursday evening was a most moving encounter. The theme of Mass and his catechesis was inspired by a vigil led by Pope Francis on "the drying of tears": if all the tears of suffering in the world were put together there would be "an ocean of desolation".

Cardinal Vincent asked us to consider the sources of our own tears, and spoke movingly of his own tears at the recent death of his younger brother, John. Our Lord too wept at the death of his close friend Lazarus, and so, as Pope Francis says, "In our pain we are not alone: Jesus too knows what it means to weep".

Faith in Jesus Christ is decisive in transforming suffering into hope.

"The Cross is not beautiful to look at" the Cardinal said, but reflecting on and entering His sufferings we understand better that (in the words of Pope Francis) "Reason by itself is not capable of making sense of our deepest feelings, appreciating the grief we experience, and providing the answers we are looking for. At times like these more than ever do we need the reasons of the heart which alone can help us understand the mystery which embraces our loneliness". And so the Cross interprets our life, most especially our sufferings.

Our Lady of Perpetual Succour/Help was the next focus of the Cardinal's teaching. On the icon, the instruments of the Passion are raised in triumph like trophies, signalling our liberation from suffering, loneliness, sadness and death. And most importantly Our Lord has both hands placed in the hands of His Blessed Mother. This is the way for us too: with our hands placed lovingly in Hers, we can experience Her perpetual help.

Fr David Barnes Parish Priest

10th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
5th June 2016

CARDINAL TO VISIT PARISH!

On Thursday 9th June Cardinal Vincent is visiting us, and will give a Catechesis on the Jubilee Year of Mercy:

- 6.00pm Mass celebrated by the Cardinal
- 6.30pm Catechesis on the Jubilee Year
- 7.15pm Question and Answer Session
- 8.00pm Social gathering in the Parish Room

29th May 2016
THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

CORPUS CHRISTI –
THE TRUE VALUE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

Asked what inspired his great love for the Blessed Sacrament, Archbishop Fulton Sheen shared a story he had been told about Communist soldiers overrunning one Catholic village during the revolution. Archbishop Sheen was one of the first priests to promote the Faith through the media: he was declared Venerable in 2012. He recounted how the Communists rounded up the village's inhabitants, forced them to gather in the church, and made them watch as they destroyed the Tabernacle, throwing the consecrated Hosts down on the floor. The soldiers' captain warned the people never to return to the church.

But that night, one little girl went to the church despite the risk to her own life. After an hour of prayer in reparation for the desecration, she knelt and received Jesus in Holy Communion, picking up a host from the floor with her tongue. The girl came back every night. She kept this up for more than a month, but on the 32nd night, after reverently consuming the final host with her tongue, she was discovered and killed.

What a wonderful witness to faith and reverence for the Holy Body of the Lord.

At the time when we celebrate Corpus Christi, we need to examine our consciences and ask some important questions.

Do I receive Our Lord's Body in a state of grace?

When did I last confess my sins?

Do I receive Him devoutly and with love for Him in my heart?

Do I prepare to receive Him?

Do I offer thanksgiving after having received Him?

Fr John Osman

"O Sacrum Convivium" (O Sacred Banquet) is a traditional prayer honouring the Blessed Sacrament.

O Sacred banquet, in which Christ is received, the memory of His passion is renewed, the mind is filled with grace, and a pledge of future glory given to us.

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

22nd May 2016

TODAY we celebrate the wonder and majesty of who God really is. Our Lord Jesus reveals God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit - three Persons yet one God, bound in perfect relationship. The source and end of life and love, our Triune God calls us to live out the purpose of our creation: to live in communion with God and with each other.

The Trinity, which is the union and communion of Life and Love, is the model for all human relationships. Pope Francis writes: "We are not called to live without the other, above or against the other, but with the other, for the other and in the other... We must be an hospitable community where every person, especially the poor and marginalised, may find a warm welcome."

Our worship and adoration of the one true God, the Most Holy Trinity, is the most powerful means to realise our authentic communion with one another. May we become a community where worship and adoration is at our heart.

Our CORPUS CHRISTI PROCESSION next Sunday, following our 10am Mass, will be a concrete sign of this desire - worshipping Our Lord in the Eucharist, united to Him and one another in bearing witness to the love of God made flesh.

Fr David Barnes, PP

PRAYER FOR OUR PRIESTS

written by John Cardinal O'Connor

Lord Jesus, we your people pray to You for our priests.
You have given them to us for our needs.
We pray for them in their needs.

We know that you have made them priests in the likeness of your own priesthood.

You have consecrated them, set them aside, anointed them, filled them with the Holy Spirit, appointed them to teach, to preach, to minister, to console, to forgive, and to feed us with Your Body and Blood.

Yet we know, too, that they are one with us and share our human weaknesses. We know too that they are tempted to sin and discouragement as we are, needing to be ministered to, as do we.

Indeed, we thank you for choosing them from among us, so that they understand us as we understand them, suffer with us and rejoice with us, worry with us and trust with us, share our being, our lives, our faith.

We ask that You give them this day the gift You gave Your chosen ones on the way to Emmaus:

Your presence in their hearts,

Your holiness in their souls,

Your joy in their spirits.

And let them see you face to face in the breaking of the Eucharistic bread.

We pray to You, O Lord, through Mary the mother of all priests, for Your priests and for ours.

Amen.

PENTECOST SUNDAY

15th May 2016

TODAY'S great celebration of the Coming of the Holy Spirit fifty days after the Resurrection is often called THE BIRTHDAY OF THE CHURCH. From being a small group of diffident and timid people, the infant Church was set on fire and empowered to preach the Gospel to the whole world. The Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, given us in baptism and confirmation, is still poured out afresh on us when we truly want. In these days, ponder the seven gifts God has given us, and examine how far we are unlocking these gifts by evidence in our daily life of the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (7)

Wisdom • Understanding • Counsel • Fortitude

Knowledge • Piety • Fear of the Lord

FRUITS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (12)

Charity • Joy • Peace

Patience • Kindness • Goodness

Generosity • Gentleness • Faithfulness
Modesty • Self-control • Chastity

PRAYER TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.

R. And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray:

O God, who taught the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever rejoice in his consolation. Through Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

8th May 2016

“...HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN...” (Creed)

TODAY’s celebration of Our Lords’ Ascension gives us much to ponder and treasure in our heart.

He has completed everything the Father had given Him to do, crowned by the Paschal Mystery, and now He is returning to the Father. His joy is complete, and He invites us to share His joy.

Our true joy is to share His joy!

He goes to prepare a place for us. Heaven is where we truly belong, to be with God for all eternity. Our Lord has prepared a place for us. He is calling us “so that where I am, you may be too”.

Do I live with heaven as my goal and true homeland?

We are never alone: in his Ascension He promises that He will be with us always, “Yes, to the end of time”.

He is always present to us: are we always wanting to make ourselves present to Him?

My Mission and purpose in this world is to share in the Mission Jesus gave the infant Church at His Ascension: “Go out into the whole world and proclaim the Good News...”

Our Lord shares His life fully with us through the Church: do we seek to bring others to share His life through the Church?

“Gladden us with holy joys, almighty God, and make us rejoice with devout thanksgiving, for the Ascension of Christ your Son in our exaltation, and where the Head has gone before in glory, the Body is called to follow in hope” (today’s Collect)

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

1st May 2016

HOLY YEAR and HOLY DOOR

Pope Francis has given us this Jubilee year of Mercy (Dec 2015- Nov-2016), and Cardinal Vincent, has given us a Holy Door of Mercy here in our parish. Consider carefully, how are we embracing these two wonderful gifts?

Pope Francis has commented: The image of the door recurs in the Gospel on various occasions and calls to mind the door of the house, of the home, where we find safety, love and warmth.

Jesus tells us that there is a door which gives us access to God's family, to the warmth of God's house, of communion with Him. This door is Jesus himself (cf Jn 10:9). He is the door. He is the entrance to salvation. He leads us to the Father and the door that is Jesus is never closed. This door is never closed it is always open and to all, without distinction, with exclusion, without privileges. Because, you know, Jesus does not exclude anyone. Some of you, perhaps, might say to me: " But Father, I am certainly excluded because I am a great sinner: I have done terrible things, I have done lots of them in my life." No, you are not excluded! Precisely for this reason you are the favourite, because Jesus prefers sinners, always in order to forgive them, to love them. Jesus is waiting for you to embrace you, to pardon you. Do not be afraid: he is waiting for you. Take heart, have courage to enter through his door, to cross the threshold of faith, to enter into his life, so he may transform it, renew it, and give it full and enduring joy.

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER **24th April 2016**

HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN UKRAINE

The armed conflict in eastern Ukraine began in Spring 2014 and, notwithstanding the ceasefire of September 2015, continues still, resulting in casualties caused by a vast number of landmines and constant artillery fire. The number of dead ascertained is approximately 9,000, and many other people are displaced or imprisoned, often illegally. Instability, the continual threat of conflict, and widespread armed gangs which go unchecked are creating grave hardships for local populations, not only in areas directly affected, but in the whole of the country. Conditions are worsened by the general economic situation, gripped by high inflation which has dramatically reduced purchasing power: more than 500,000 people are in urgent need of food. There are over 1.5 million people displaced throughout the country.

In the area most affected by the war, the greatest need is for health care: over 120 health centres have been damaged or destroyed. Pregnant women and those in childbirth are particularly at risk, and the potential for the spread of AIDS and tuberculosis is high. There is a lack of anaesthesia, leading to operations often being performed without it. Where medicines are still available (many pharmacies have been closed), they have become too expensive to purchase.

Presently there are approximately 3 million people living in conditions of extreme hardship in those regions most affected by the conflict. Most of these are elderly residents who were unable to leave the combat zone.

Regarding housing, from 12,000 to 15,000 homes have been damaged, and more than 1,000 completely destroyed. The situation will be particularly dire during autumn and winter due to severe weather.

A great number of children are unable to attend school. 200,000 have found safe haven in regions of Ukraine outside of conflict areas: one out of four, therefore, is displaced. Many are affected by serious psychological traumas caused by the violence they have witnessed and themselves experienced: some have even lost the ability to read and write.

The ongoing conflict is the primary obstacle to a solution to the humanitarian crisis. In particular, limits on importing commercial goods are in force, including the importing of medicines, and it is very difficult for international aid to reach those zones most affected by the conflict.

Faced with such massive problems, communities are demonstrating an extraordinary resilience. The networks of aid groups that are most successful are those of religious organizations. Among these are Catholics who, while only 10% of the Ukrainian population and a small minority of those in conflict areas, have been fully engaged in assisting those who require help, without being able to meet the most pressing needs which are immense.

The Holy See is organizing, therefore, special forms of aid for the benefit of the whole population, regardless of religious affiliation, with a view to addressing this humanitarian crisis, especially in the most critical sectors. To assist in this effort, a mechanism for gathering funds and for selecting projects to finance is being established by means of a special Commission in loco, which will be charged with examining proposed projects. The Pontifical Council Cor Unum will be responsible for approving and evaluating the practical management of these funds, which will be subject to necessary financial accountability.

(To: Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences of Europe
From: Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State, Vatican
Date: 18 April 2016)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

17th April 2016

Good Shepherd Sunday

“The sheep that belong to me listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life; they will never be lost and no one will ever steal them from me.

The Father who gave them to me is greater than anyone, and no one can steal from the Father. The Father and I are one.” John 10:14

This Sunday is also known as Vocations Sunday. A day when men and women pray that the Church may have good and holy guides to spread the Gospel. When we think about our spiritual guides we usually think of priests and religious. What we must remember is that we are all church and each one of us has our own vocation. For most of us, probably, it is what we are doing now such as spouses, parents, teachers, doctors civil servants, business, salesperson the list goes on.

The question we should be asking ourselves today is:- Am I fulfilling my true vocation? How am I giving witness to Gospel values? What am I doing to make the world a better place? Is God calling me to greater service to my Church and my community? Am I using society or the Church to get what I want?

Each one of us is being called by God to work for spreading the Gospel and building Christian community.

Each one of us is unique, made in the image and likeness of God.

Remember, Jesus led His sheep and is now calling us all to follow in his footsteps. Where is God calling me / you to make my own unique contribution based on the gifts and talents I have received from him?

Let us pray we will accomplish what we are being asked to do. We would soon have One

Church one faith one Lord.

Sr. M. Lucina, Parish Sister

THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER

10th April 2016

PRIEST TRAINING FUND

The annual collection to help fund the formation of priests will take place next weekend. I ask you to be generous with this important second collection. The Priest Training Fund benefits the parishes, the diocese, and the Catholic Church in London and Hertfordshire by providing us capable, committed priests striving to emulate Christ the Good Shepherd, in the service of God's people.

The fund helps pay for the recruitment of men into priestly vocations, the training and education of seminarians at our seminary - Allen Hall - and the formation of men we send abroad.

It also pays for the ongoing education of priests who will serve in specialised ministries, and their continuing formation whilst in active ministry.

With 29 seminarians for our diocese, the Diocese spends more than £1.2 million annually on the six-year seminary programme. It costs on average £25,000 per man, per year of formation - that's at least £125,000 to form and educate a new priest, who makes a lifetime commitment to Christ and the Church.

They've answered the call. Now let's support them. Priests are the heart of the Catholic Church. Donation envelopes are available - please take one, read the information and facts, and bring it back next week at Mass with your donation.

On behalf of all the clergy of the Diocese, thank you.

EASTER SUNDAY

27th March 2016

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!

PALM SUNDAY

20th March 2016

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

+++++

5th SUNDAY OF LENT 13th March 2016

MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER

In today's Gospel, a woman caught committing adultery was to be stoned to death. Our Lord is asked His opinion of this. "If there is one of you who has not sinned let him be the first to throw a stone at her", Jesus said. Everyone left, and Jesus says "Woman, where are they? Has no-one condemned you?" "No-one, sir" she replied. "Neither do I condemn you", said Jesus "go away and don't sin any more".

Pope Francis writes:

If anyone wishes to avoid God's judgement, he should not make himself the judge of his brother or sister. Human beings, whenever they judge, look no farther than the surface, whereas the Father looks into the very depths of the soul. How much harm words do when they are motivated by feelings of jealousy and envy! To speak ill of others puts them in a bad light, undermines their reputation and leaves them prey to the whims of gossip. To refrain from judgement and condemnation means, in a positive sense, to know how to accept the good in every person and to spare him any suffering that might be caused by our partial judgment, our presumption to know everything about him. But this is still not sufficient to express mercy. Jesus asks us also to forgive and to give. To be instruments of mercy because it was we who first received mercy from God.

[Extract from *Misericordiae Vultus*, 14]

+++++

4th SUNDAY OF LENT 6th March 2016

"LAETARE" ("REJOICE") SUNDAY

TODAY, the fourth Sunday of Lent (6th March), the Church invites us to REJOICE because

the Paschal Mystery celebrations are fast approaching.

Our Lenten disciplines of PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING can become heavy and difficult to maintain. This can be since we live them simply as a discipline. If however we can practise them as a way of loving, then much more is possible. So, for example, I shall pray out of love for Him, as a way of loving Him: I will put my whole heart into my prayer and conversation with Him. This first came home to me when doing the washing up! Washing for its own sake left me feeling fed up, even resentful. Yet when I decided to do it out of love for Him, putting my whole heart into it because I was doing it for Him. Then it all became a way of loving. and a way of being open to God's love. This I then applied to other tiresome everyday tasks, and these tasks become a source of joy because they had become a source of communion with Him.

Today's Gospel is that of the Prodigal Son, reminding us of the joy of returning to God our Father. The father sees his prodigal son returning and goes out to meet him, full of love and affection. We are all that son when we return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation, where God our Father comes out to welcome us with infinite mercy and love.

Let nothing deter us from this joyful encounter, knowing that nothing we have done or failed to do changes God's love for us. This is our healing and peace, which we shall recognise in our capacity to REJOICE.

Fr David Barnes, PP

+++++

**3rd SUNDAY OF LENT
28th February 2016**

LENTEN ALMSGIVING

Our 2016 Lenten Alms appeal will be in support of Caritas Westminster, the official social outreach arm of the Diocese of Westminster. Lent is the perfect time for us to think of those suffering – the poor, the marginalised, and the least among us – and to make a sacrifice through prayer, fasting and almsgiving:

Prayer draws us closer to the Lord.

Fasting helps us to remember those who are forced to fast because of their poverty.

Our almsgiving is both a sign of our care for those in need, and an expression of our gratitude to God for his gifts to us.

Caritas Westminster works across our Diocese, throughout London and Hertfordshire, enabling and co-ordinating parish communities to find practical solutions that address a variety of local social needs. For example, rough sleeping, food poverty, human trafficking, youth employability and loneliness.

What better way to tie in the meaning of Lent than to put oneself in the shoes of the poor and to give alms to help them?

As God's people we are inspired by Christ's message of love and equality for all. Every person deserves to live a life of dignity and worth. In this spirit of love for others, Caritas Westminster supports a variety of projects that help those most in need in our society. Not only do these projects address people's immediate needs, they also encourage long term human development, assisting people to break free from the cycle of poverty and hardship. At present, Caritas Westminster is focusing on three projects where a big difference can be

made to help those most in need, the marginalised, and those living on the fringes of our society:

Foodbanks – one in five people in the UK live below the poverty line. Caritas Westminster helps parishes to set up Foodbanks where there is an urgent need. Not only are recipients provided with emergency food packs to help them get by, they also have access to money management advice and debt counselling. In some parishes, half-term family lunches are provided to tackle the problem of holiday hunger.

Rough sleeping on the Street – Caritas Westminster provides homeless men and women with an evening meal, a bed for the night, and a cooked breakfast via a network of night shelter circuits for rough sleepers, operating in churches across the Diocese. These homeless people are also able to access showers, laundry, lunch, medical services, as well as housing advice on how to get off the streets.

Tackling the scourge of human trafficking and modern day slavery -Caritas Westminster opened Bakhita House in June 2015 to provide a safe place for rescued female victims of human trafficking, especially victims who have no access to public funds. In this safe environment, these women can begin the process of recovery and rehabilitation, into a life of independence.

Over the next couple of weeks our parish will take up a second collection in support of Caritas Westminster. Your generosity will ensure Caritas projects throughout the Diocese continue to support the immediate needs, and long term development, of people living in our society who are in need.

At the back of the Church today you will see Caritas Westminster posters, and as you leave mass today there will be volunteers handing out Caritas Donation Leaflets – these leaflets also contain a Gift Aid Envelope for your use.

There shall be second collections for your Lenten Alms over the following two weekends at Mass. You can also visit the Caritas Westminster website to find out more about their work, and to donate online: www.rcdow.org.uk/caritas

NEXT SUNDAY there is a retiring collection for CARITAS WESTMINSTER.

+++++

2nd SUNDAY OF LENT
21st February 2016

WHY PRAY THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS?

The Stations of the Cross are an ancient tradition in the Catholic Church going back to the fourth century when Christians went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Like many of our Catholic traditions, the Stations of the Cross can be rich, deep, and meaningful, but at the same time we can lose sight of their significance and how to relate them to our everyday lives.

Continuing the idea of Pope Francis as our spiritual director this Lent, here are 8 reasons from our Holy Father on why we should pray the Stations of the Cross.

1. They Allow Us to Place Our Trust in Him

“The Cross of Christ contains all the love of God; there we find his immeasurable mercy. This is a love in which we can place all our trust, in which we can believe.... let us entrust ourselves to Jesus, let us give ourselves over to him, because he never disappoints anyone! Only in Christ crucified and risen can we find salvation and redemption.”

— Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

2. They Put Us into the Story

“And you, who do you want to be? Like Pilate? Like Simon? Like Mary? Jesus is looking at you now and is asking you: do you want to help me carry the Cross? Brothers and sisters, with all the strength of your youth, how will you respond to him?”

— Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

3. They Remind Us That Jesus Suffers with Us

“The Cross of Christ bears the suffering and the sin of mankind, including our own. Jesus accepts all this with open arms, bearing on his shoulders our crosses and saying to us: ‘Have courage! You do not carry your cross alone! I carry it with you. I have overcome death and I have come to give you hope, to give you life’ (cf. Jn 3:16).”

— Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

4. They Compel Us to Action

“But the Cross of Christ invites us also to allow ourselves to be smitten by his love, teaching us always to look upon others with mercy and tenderness, especially those who suffer, who are in need of help, who need a word or a concrete action.”

— Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

5. They Help Us Make a Decision for or Against Christ

“[The Cross] reveals a judgment, namely that God, in judging us, loves us. Let us remember this: God judges us by loving us. If I embrace his love then I am saved, if I refuse it, then I am condemned, not by him, but by my own self, because God never condemns, he only loves and saves.”

— Address, Good Friday, March 29, 2013

6. They Reveal God’s Response to Evil in the World

“The Cross is the word through which God has responded to evil in the world. Sometimes it may seem as though God does not react to evil, as if he is silent. And yet, God has spoken, he has replied, and his answer is the Cross of Christ: a word which is love, mercy, forgiveness.”

— Address, Good Friday, March 29, 2013

7. They Give Us the Certainty of God’s Love for Us

“What has the Cross given to those who have gazed upon it and to those who have touched it? What has the Cross left in each one of us? You see, it gives us a treasure that no one else can give: the certainty of the faithful love which God has for us.”

— Address, World Youth Day, Way of the Cross, July 26, 2013

8. They Guide Us from the Cross to the Resurrection

“O, Our Jesus, guide us from the Cross to the resurrection and teach us that evil shall not have the last word, but love, mercy and forgiveness. O Christ, help us to exclaim again: ‘Yesterday I was crucified with Christ; today I am glorified with Him. Yesterday I died with Him, today I live with Him. Yesterday I was buried with Him, today I am raised with Him’.”

— Address, Good Friday, April 18, 2014

[Source: www.focus.org]

STATIONS OF THE CROSS AT ST ANSELM AND ST CÆCILIA'S
Every Friday in Lent directly after the 6.00pm Mass.

+++++

1st SUNDAY OF LENT
14th February 2016

POPE FRANCIS' LENT MESSAGE (continued)

God's mercy transforms human hearts; it enables us, through the experience of a faithful love, to become merciful in turn. In an ever new miracle, divine mercy shines forth in our lives, inspiring each of us to love our neighbour and to devote ourselves to what the Church's tradition calls the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. These works remind us that faith finds expression in concrete everyday actions meant to help our neighbours in body and spirit: by feeding, visiting, comforting and instructing them. On such things will we be judged.

In the light of this love, which is strong as death (cf.Song8:6), the real poor are revealed as those who refuse to see themselves as such. They consider themselves rich, but they are actually the poorest of the poor. This is because they are slaves to sin, which leads them to use wealth and power not for the service of God and others, but to stifle within their hearts the profound sense that they too are only poor beggars. The greater their power and wealth, the more this blindness and deception can grow.

It can even reach the point of being blind to Lazarus begging at their doorstep (cf.Lk16:20-21). Lazarus, the poor man, is a figure of Christ, who through the poor pleads for our conversion. As such, he represents the possibility of conversion which God offers us and which we may well fail to see. Such blindness is often accompanied by the proud illusion of our own omnipotence, which reflects in a sinister way the diabolical "you will be like God" (Gen3:5) which is the root of all sin.

This illusion can likewise take social and political forms, as shown by the totalitarian systems of the twentieth century, and, in our own day, by the ideologies of monopolizing thought and technoscience, which would make God irrelevant and reduce man to raw material to be exploited.

This illusion can also be seen in the sinful structures linked to a model of false development based on the idolatry of money, which leads to lack of concern for the fate of the poor on the part of wealthier individuals and societies; they close their doors, refusing even to see the poor.

[Extract from Pope Francis' Lent Message, the Vatican, 4 October 2015]

+++++

5th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
7th February 2016

POPE FRANCIS' LENT MESSAGE

For all of us, then, the season of Lent in this Jubilee Year is a favourable time to overcome our existential alienation by listening to God's word and by practising the works of mercy. In the corporal works of mercy we touch the flesh of Christ in our brothers and sisters who need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, visited; in the spiritual works of mercy – counsel, instruction, forgiveness, admonishment and prayer – we touch more directly our own sinfulness. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy must never be separated. By touching the flesh of the crucified Jesus in the suffering, sinners can receive the gift of realizing that they too are poor and in need. By taking this path, the “proud”, the “powerful” and the “wealthy” spoken of in the Magnificat can also be embraced and undeservedly loved by the crucified Lord who died and rose for them. This love alone is the answer to that yearning for infinite happiness and love that we think we can satisfy with the idols of knowledge, power and riches. Yet the danger always remains that by a constant refusal to open the doors of their hearts to Christ who knocks on them in the poor, the proud, rich and powerful will end up condemning themselves and plunging into the eternal abyss of solitude which is Hell. The pointed words of Abraham apply to them and to all of us: “They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them” (Lk 16:29). Such attentive listening will best prepare us to celebrate the final victory over sin and death of the Bridegroom, now risen, who desires to purify his Betrothed in expectation of his coming.

Let us not waste this season of Lent, so favourable a time for conversion! We ask this through the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary, who, encountering the greatness of God's mercy freely bestowed upon her, was the first to acknowledge her lowliness (cf. Lk 1:48) and to call herself the Lord's humble servant (cf. Lk 1:38).

[Extract from Pope Francis' Lent Message, the Vatican, 4 October 2015]

+++++

4th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

31st January 2016

LENT COUNTDOWN

Ten days to ASH WEDNESDAY! What will we do?

Pope Francis sees Lent as a favourable time for conversion.

Here in the parish we have a Life in the Spirit course. It is called “The Gift”, and has Pope Francis' personal blessing! It is “an inspiring and practical series aimed at people of all ages to help encounter the Holy Spirit and empower them to share their faith.”

Presented by well-known international speakers; David Payne, Michelle Moran, Charles Whitehead and Jenny Baker. Six Sessions:

1. The Fathers Loving Plan 15th February
2. The Joy Of The Gospel 22nd February
3. The Gift Of The Spirit 29th February
4. Unwrapping God's Gift 7th March
5. Encountering's 14th March
6. Living In The Spirit 21st March

The teachings are relaxed, personal and informative, rooted in the Bible, the Catechism, *Evangelii Gaudium*, and reflections on the Holy Spirit from Pope Francis. Sessions last 30 minutes and include testimonies from laity and clergy.

The meetings will be each Monday in Lent at 6.45pm in the Parish Room, finishing at

8.00pm.

Further information: www.faithcafe.org

+++++

**3rd SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
24th January 2016**

POPE FRANCIS EXPLAINS THE WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 18th - 25th January

The Pope proposed that "beginning from the baptism we all share in common," Christians should move beyond divisions toward finding a way to work together to bring the mercy of God to the Earth.

SUMMARY OF THE POPE'S CATECHESIS IN ENGLISH:

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In these days we celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. This year's theme is drawn from the First Letter of Peter, and was chosen by an ecumenical group from Latvia. In his Letter, Saint Peter encourages the first Christians to acknowledge the great gift received in Baptism and to live in a way worthy of it. He tells them: "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people".

This Week of Prayer invites us to reflect on, and bear witness to, our unity in Christ as God's People. All the baptized, reborn to new life in Christ, are brothers and sisters, despite our divisions. Through Baptism we have been charged, as Saint Peter tells us, "to proclaim the mighty works of the one who has called us out of darkness into his marvellous light".

During this Week of Prayer, let us ask the Lord to help all Christians to grow in that unity which is greater than what divides us. , may we respond to his call to share with others, especially with the poor and forgotten of our world, the gift of divine mercy which we ourselves have received.

**2nd SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
17th January 2016**

YEAR OF MERCY

Pope Francis has given us the Year of Mercy, and tells us of his wish that we all act on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy:

"It is my burning desire that, during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the and spiritual works of mercy. will be a way to reawaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. And let us enter more deeply into the heart of the Gospel where the poor have a special experience of God's mercy. Jesus introduces us to these works of mercy in his preaching so that we can know whether or not we are living as his disciples. Let us rediscover these works of mercy: to feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, welcome the stranger, heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, and bury the dead. And let us not forget

the works of mercy: counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently those who do us ill, and pray for the living and the dead.

We cannot escape the Lord's words to us, and they will serve as the criteria upon which we will be judged: whether we have fed the hungry and given drink to the thirsty, welcomed the stranger and clothed the naked, or spent time with the sick and those in prison (cf.:31-45). Moreover, we will be asked if we have helped others to escape the doubt that causes them to fall into despair and which is often a source of loneliness; if we have helped to overcome the ignorance in which millions of people live, especially children deprived of the necessary means to free them from the bonds of poverty; if we have been close to the lonely and afflicted; if we have forgiven those who have offended us and have rejected all forms of anger and hate that lead to violence; if we have had the kind of patience God shows, who is so patient with us; and if we have commended our brothers and sisters to the Lord in prayer. In each of these "little ones," Christ himself is present. His flesh becomes visible in the flesh of the tortured, the crushed, the scourged, the malnourished, and the exiled... to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us. Let us not forget the words of Saint John of the Cross: "as we prepare to leave this life, we will be judged on the basis of love".

MISERICORDAE VULTUS (15)

WORKS OF MERCY

Corporal works of mercy:

Feed the hungry
Shelter the homeless
Clothe the naked
Visit the sick
Visit the imprisoned
Give to the poor
Bury the dead

Spiritual works of mercy:

Instruct the ignorant
Counsel the confused
Admonish the erring
Console the disconsolate
Comfort the sorrowing
Forgive offenders
Bear wrongs patiently

+.+.+.+.+.+.+.+.+.+.+.+.+.+.+.+

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

10th January 2016

In the Baptism of Jesus we see a new beginning. Jesus now leaves the shelter of his family home in order to begin his public ministry, which will lead to his crucifixion and death on the cross. Jesus making a new beginning doesn't seem right somehow and the fact that the Holy Spirit came to his aid in the words "this is my Son, the beloved, listen to him".

We don't normally think of Jesus needing help.

How many of us remember our own baptism? We were brought to the Church, many of us carried in the arms of our parents. Promises were made on our behalf and the commitment to

follow Jesus for the rest of our earthly life.

How I thank God for this great gift, freely and lovingly given.

From today's readings we can see Jesus was not afraid to make a new beginning, he knew that the Holy Spirit would never leave him.

Through our own baptism we too should have the courage and be prepared to start again.

Jesus has assured us that the Holy Spirit will be with us always, as it was with Jesus at his baptism and throughout his earthly life.

If our new beginnings were a bit weak or half-hearted, let us take courage from the Gospel message, "Trust in God now and trust in me" (St John 14: 1-2).

Sr. M. Lucina Parish Sister

++_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_+_

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

3rd January 2016

TODAY (Sunday) we celebrate the Epiphany, the manifestation that Our Lord is the Light to enlighten all peoples. The visit of the Kings or Wise Men (two different traditions) speak of how

true greatness is to come to Him who is King of Kings and the Wisdom of God incarnate.

To bend low and kneel in adoration and worship does not diminish our humanity but rather brings it to fulfilment. In other words, without our being in a proper relationship with God, we cannot discover who we really are.

The fruit of the good celebration of the Epiphany is the state of worship and adoration. The Christmas refrain "Oh come let us adore him, Christ the Lord" should ring in our ears, and find practical expression in worship and adoration of the Eucharist. Can each of us must make a resolution to do so.

The Epiphany is also the 40th Anniversary of my Ordination to the priesthood. Please join with me in thanking God for this gift of Priesthood and pray that all priests will be faithful to what God is asking of us. On the morning of 6th January I shall be saying Mass in the Slipper Chapel, the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham. I shall hold you all in my heart at that Mass. The three Kings or Magi followed the star which led them to our Lord Jesus. We have Mary, Morning Star and Star of the Sea, who leads us to him.

Fr David Barnes. PP
