

**+PASTORAL LETTER FOR FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY
AND JOSEPH 2017
31st December 2017**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

I hope that during these last few days you have managed to visit the crib. It's still there, waiting for you to make that visit, especially today, on the Feast of the Holy Family.

Come with me and let's take a look at this new and tiny family, in Bethlehem, a long way from home and in circumstances of real hardship.

See, there is St Joseph, the good and faithful servant, entrusted with Jesus, the Word of God made flesh. He reminds me of my father, whose name was Henry Joseph. He was an unfailing point of stability and wisdom for our family. He gave us a sense of order and purpose. A bit like St Joseph, I think. But I also know, too well, that not every family is so blessed.

Next, look, there is our Blessed Lady, Mary, the mother of Jesus. She gave her body to be the first home of Jesus, who was conceived in her through the direct power of the Holy Spirit.

My mum's name was Mary, too. She gave her entire self to us as a family. I must admit, a little sheepishly, that she did most of the work around the house, especially at Christmas. She made it a time of graciousness, welcome and generosity. That's what mothers do; and not only mothers, of course!

This is the heart of the Holy Family, the heart of family life. In families, loving hands create places of safety and joy, just as God's loving hands hold all creation together, giving every moment its meaning and purpose. The rhythm of everyday family life, of food, rest and play, watched over by a loving parent, no matter its simplicity, is a parable of that deeper love, a reflection of God's own work of creation.

I find it most reassuring, in this time of uncertainty and stress, to see how family life continues to create well-springs of selfless love. So much of the true goodness in our society comes by way of the family, so many marvellous young people, so many generous neighbours! And this is true not only of stable family life, but also of families who face their difficulties with faithfulness and courage, and of families who find forgiveness after a breakdown, or who bear tragedy with dignity and fortitude. Family life is so often our saving grace. As a society we neglect the support of family life at our peril.

Today, let us thank God for the life of our family, whether we are close together or scattered to the four winds; whether we are in harmony with each other, or marked by discord and discontent. Thank God for the grace we have received, the maturity and wisdom into which we are growing in our homes, through joys and trials alike, just as Jesus did in his home in Nazareth (Lk 2:40).

As we approach this New Year and ponder on the resolutions we are going to make, we can do no better than to heed the words of St Paul:

'You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive one another as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do

the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts' (Col. 3:12-15).

Now these are resolutions in plenty!

Recently a member of staff at Heathrow said to me how much he admired Pope Francis. 'What difficult journeys the Pope makes!' he exclaimed. Then he added, 'He teaches us all, he teaches the whole world, so clearly by what he does, by his actions!'

May that be said of us, too. In every home, in every family, may our actions speak more eloquently than our words!

May I wish you all a very happy New Year and may God bless you always.

Yours devotedly,

Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

**+THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)
25th December 2017**

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.

With our prayers and warmest wishes for a much Blessed Christmas and every blessing for the New Year

Fr David Barnes, P.P.
Sr M. Lucina Toone, Parish Sister
Mgr John Conneely

+3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT
17th December 2017

GAUDETE SUNDAY
18th December 2017

"**REJOICE SUNDAY**" (from Latin "Gaudete") is the name given to this Third Sunday of Advent. We rejoice because of the coming celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord, born in the manger in Bethlehem.

We rejoice not only because He is Emmanuel (God with us), but because His coming (or advent) is the proof of God's love for us: he has come to share His life completely with us.

This is reconfirmed every time we receive Holy Communion.

Like Mary His Mother we have the privilege of holding Him and treasuring Him in our heart.

Go to Mary, asking Her how we can hold and treasure Him better, more devotedly, more tenderly.

Pope Francis teaches us that the Church should be a "House of Joy". Our parish and families will be "a House of Joy" in so far as we recognise that the infant in the crib is truly God fully among us. To help us ponder this please ensure that the **CRIB** has a central place in your home. Let us gather around the crib to pray as a family .

After each Mass let us go to the crib, to give thanks for the coming of the Saviour.

Our joy is the fruit of our faith, God's gift for our "Yes" to God.

REJOICE!

Fr David Barnes, Parish Priest

+2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT
10th December 2017

THE ADVENT WREATH

The season of Advent celebrates the comings (or advents) of Jesus to us — in the Incarnation, in the Mass, and the Second Coming when He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

The Advent wreath helps us reflect on how God has come to us. The circle of the wreath is a symbol of both the eternity of God and our being called to eternal life. The evergreen foliage symbolises on-going life, while the holly and the red berries symbolise that the child in the manger is also the one who will suffer and die for us on the Cross.

The five candles too have meanings. The outer candles are purple and one pink — the four weeks of Advent: purple is a sign that Advent is “little Lent”, a time for prayer, fasting, repentance and conversion. The pink candle is for “Gaudete Sunday”, the third Sunday in Advent, reminding us to rejoice in the coming of the Saviour. The white candle symbolises Christ, the Light of the World. The coming of the Light (Christ) into the darkness of the world is a constant theme in Advent, and the gradual lighting of the Advent candles reminds us of this. Various meanings are given to each specific candle - here is one set of meaning:

1st CANDLE- (purple) THE PROPHECY CANDLE or CANDLE OF HOPE - We can have hope because God is faithful and will keep the promises made to us. Our hope comes from God. (Romans 15:12-13)

2nd CANDLE- (purple) THE BETHLEHEM CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF

PREPARATION– God kept his promise of a Saviour who would be born in Bethlehem. Preparation means to “get ready”. Help us to be ready to welcome YOU, O GOD! (Luke 3:4-6)

3rd CANDLE- (pink) THE SHEPHERD CANDLE or THE CADLE OF JOY - The angels sang a message of JOY! (Luke 2:7-15)

4th CANDLE- (purple) THE ANGEL CANDLE or THE CANDLE OF LOVE - The angels announced the good news of a Saviour. God sent his only Son to earth to save us, because he loves us!
(John 3:16-17)

5th CANDLE- (white) “CHRIST CANDLE” - The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! His birth was for his death, his death was for our birth!
(John 1:29)

**+1st SUNDAY OF ADVENT
3rd December 2017**

ADVENT

TODAY, Sunday, the great season of Advent begins. The word comes from the Latin verb "advenire" meaning "to come to:" so Advent calls us to ponder Our Lord's THREE "comings to us".

- The Incarnation when "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us i.e.", Our Lord's Nativity in Bethlehem.
- Our Lord's *daily coming* to us on the altars of the Church.
- The Second Coming, when "He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead".

ADVENT is sometimes called "Little Lent" because it is properly a time of prayer, fasting and good works, a time of repentance. This is why purple is the colour of Advent. Do your best to keep Advent in this way, even though secular society is making merry around us, the celebration of Christmas begins with the Vigil of Christmas, and is celebrated for the 12 days that lead up to the Epiphany on 6th January.

THE ADVENT WREATH, with the build up of lighting the candles, reminds us of the coming of Our Lord into this world in His Nativity. He is "the Light of the 'World" who dispels the darkness of the world.

ADVENT is a time of **HOPE** as we come understand better that God is always faithful to His promises.

OUR LADY "believed that the promises made her by the Lord would be fulfilled:" We pray that we may have faith like hers, and invoke her powerful intercession.

Fr David Barnes, Parish Priest

+OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, King of the Universe
26th November 2017

COMINGS and GOINGS

CARDINAL VINCENT NICHOLS consecrated our high altar last Tuesday during Mass which moved us all. The Cardinal's teaching on the significance of the altar helped us appreciate more all that God is giving us. It was also the vigil of the Feast of St Caecilia, our co-patron, and our Director of Music, Ian Colman, gave us a feast of wonderful music. Sadly for us this Sunday is Ian's last with us as he is taking up a post at Holy Redeemer, Chelsea. Ian has given us so much over his eleven years with us: not only has he developed the long musical tradition to a very high standard, but he has taught especially the children of the Scola Caeciliana the art of singing and given them our appreciation of the Liturgy. We shall miss him greatly, but once again congratulate him on his new appointment and wish him every blessing and assure him of our prayers as he takes up his new work. This coming Friday we hope to appoint a new Director of Music for our parish, so please do pray that we find a worthy successor.

NEXT SUNDAY: Bishop Nicholas Hudson, auxiliary Bishop of our Diocese and responsible under the Cardinal for this area, will spend the weekend with us. He will celebrate all the masses except the 12noon, and will preach at every Mass. He will meet with parishioners who hold office, and if you would like to meet him he will be available in the Rectory on Sunday afternoon between 5:00pm and 5:45pm.

Fr David Barnes, Parish Priest

+33rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
19th November 2017

WORLD DAY OF THE POOR - SUNDAY 19TH NOVEMBER

In his message for the first World Day of the Poor, to be celebrated on 19th November this year, Pope Francis asks all of us, whatever our means or background, to unite in love, in acts of service to one another and in genuine encounter. Pope Francis hopes the day can "become a powerful appeal to our consciences as believers, allowing us to grow in the conviction that sharing with the poor enables us to understand the deepest truth of the Gospel".

At the heart of Pope Francis' invitation to celebrate this new World Day of the Poor is his desire to create genuine moments of 'encounter'. The online resources include testimonies to allow people to encounter real stories of those experiencing poverty:

LOUISE'S STORY

"I have been in and out of the care system since I was very young, I fell in with some dangerous people and got hooked into prostitution as a way to make money. I got more into drugs and alcohol, committing various crimes to help support my habit. I was absolutely destitute, dirty and down. I felt lost and trapped in this life style. In and out of hostels and prisons, and sometimes sleeping on the streets. One day someone told me about a women's centre called women@thewell and how I could get help. I got assigned a named worker there who helped me address problems and helped me to get into accommodation. Now I feel like I have managed to get my act together. I have a studio flat and am starting to build bridges with my family. I want to do some courses so I can maybe get employment." Louise -

supported by women@thewell

See www.csan.otg.uk/worlddayofthepoor for the video testimony and full transcripts.

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+32nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

12th November 2017

ANNUAL SICK & RETIRED PRIESTS COLLECTION 2017

Today we will take up a second collection in support of the sick and retired priests of the Diocese of Westminster. Our priests baptised us, counselled us in times of sorrow and worry, and celebrated with us in times of joy. We have received so much from their generosity; it is our turn to assist them in their older age.

The Sick & Retired Priests' Fund pays for things like making a flat accessible if the priest is disabled; or paying for a carer post-surgery. It can be as simple as a lift to the doctor's for those without transport or ensuring he has proper nutrition. The Diocese works closely with social service agencies, the NHS, and local councils who provide care for our priests, but the fund will also meet funding gaps and unforeseen expenses. Most of all, it gives peace of mind to these men who continue to live out their vocation. Many priests stand down from active ministry as a parish priest at 75, but may continue in ministry in our parishes, schools, hospitals and chaplaincies. Cardinal Nichols and the Diocese of Westminster are committed to ensuring that no retired or sick priest is out there on his own.

If you took a donation envelope last weekend, be sure to place it in the collection bag today. If you do not have an envelope, there are some available in the pews and at the back of the church. Don't forget to tick off and complete the claim for Gift Aid - adding 25 pence onto every pound you give, at no cost to you. You can even fill out a standing order form if you would like, which enables you to make an ongoing donation to this fund.

Please be generous and please continue to pray for all of our clergy, be they in active ministry, retired or ill. Thank you.

You can also donate online at www.rcdow.org.uk/donations.

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+31st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

5th November 2017

NOVEMBER MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

Pope Francis on praying for the souls in purgatory: "Even now we experience a communion between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven through our union with those who have died. The souls in heaven assist us with their prayers, while we assist the souls in purgatory through our good works, prayer and participation in the Eucharist. As members of the Church then, the distinction is not between who has died and who is living, but rather who is in Christ and who is not ...

There is a deep and indissoluble bond between those who are still pilgrims in this world - us - and those who have crossed the threshold of death and entered eternity. All baptised persons here on earth, the souls in Purgatory and all the blessed who are already in Paradise make one great Family. This communion between earth and heaven is realised especially in intercessory prayer".

See also: www.cathdal.org/home/ten-ways-to-pray-for-the-holy-souls-in-purgatory

ETERNAL REST

Lord, this month we pray especially for the departed loved ones. We ask you to give them the gift of a dwelling place in your eternal home. We pray too for those who have no one to pray for them. Through your infinite mercy may they share in the company of the saints to offer you eternal praise and glory.

Amen

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**+30th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
29th OCTOBER 2017**

STATEMENT ON ABORTION

This statement, published by the Catholic Bishops of England, Wales and Scotland, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the 1967 UK Abortion Act, is addressed not only to Catholics of our countries, but more broadly to all people who seek to uphold the dignity of human life and protect the unborn child. Over the last fifty years, the bishops of our countries, along with many other people, have spoken consistently in favour of the intrinsic value of human life and both the good of the child in the womb and the good of the mother. This anniversary provides an opportunity to lament the loss of life due to abortion and seek a change of minds and hearts about the good of the child in the womb and the care of mothers who are pregnant.

Fifty years ago, few envisaged the possibility that there would be almost 200,000 abortions in Great Britain in 2015. Every abortion is a tragedy and few consider that abortion is the desirable or best solution to a pregnancy, which may be challenging on account of many different factors. The complex set of conditions in which a woman finds herself pregnant and may consider having an abortion may limit the exercise of freedom and diminish moral culpability. When abortion is the choice made by a woman, the unfailing mercy of God and the promise of forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation are always available. There is always away home to a deeper relationship with God and the Church, as recent Popes have emphasised, which can heal and bring peace.

Today the language of 'choice' dominates discourse about marriage, gender, family and abortion. This needs further exploration. Choice has come to mean doing whatever I feel to be right for me - a very subjective view of the good - rather than taking into account a wider set of fundamental values.

This is a very inadequate understanding of free choice, which requires an education in important truths about what is truly good and the possibility of other options. In this case, these must include the good of the unborn child, care and support for pregnant mothers, and the responsibility of the father.

This statement presents a number of different challenges for the future: a new understanding of the intrinsic value and worth of every human life in the womb, a better protection of unborn children diagnosed with a disability, a great need for education in moral responsibility about human sexuality and the meaning of sexual expression within marriage. Many professionals face the challenge that respect for conscientious objection against abortion has been eroded. Personal conscience is inviolable and nobody should be forced to act against his or her properly informed conscience on these matters. 'We encourage greater debate about this right and these challenges in our society.

Finally we thank many people, of religious faith and none, who have sought to protect unborn life and the life of the mother over the last fifty years; mothers who have continued their pregnancies in difficult circumstances, politicians who have sought to reform the legislation to better protect unborn life, those people whose prayers have been offered for greater respect to be shown to the wonder of the life in the womb, for mothers and those whose lives are cut

short by abortion.
Together let us better cherish life.

+29th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
22nd OCTOBER 2017

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY (TODAY)
(Extract from Pope Francis message for World Mission Sunday)

Mission: a spirit of exodus, pilgrimage and exile

The Church's mission is enlivened by a spirit of *constant exodus*. We are challenged 'to go forth from our own comfort zone to reach all the 'peripheries' (margins) in need of the Gospel' (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 20).

The Church's mission urges us to undertake a *constant pilgrimage* across various deserts of life, as we hunger and thirst for truth and justice.

The Church's mission inspires a sense of *constant exile*, as we journey towards our final home in the Kingdom of Heaven. Mission reminds us that we should not be a self-referential, self-obsessed Church. We should be 'a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security' (*ibid.*, 49).

Young people, the hope of mission

Young people are the hope of mission. 'There are many young people who engage in various forms of activism and volunteering. . . How beautiful it is to see that young people are "street preachers", joyfully bringing Jesus to every street, every town square and every corner of the earth' (*ibid.*, 106). The next Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in 2018 is on the theme *Young People, the Faith and Vocational Discernment*.

The Pontifical Mission Societies (Missio)

The Pontifical Mission Societies (Missio) are a precious means of awakening in Christian communities - young people, adults, families, priests, bishops and religious orders - a desire to reach beyond their own confines to proclaim the Gospel to all. World Mission Sunday, promoted by Missio's APF (Association for the Propagation of the Faith), is the ideal way for us all to support the pressing needs of evangelisation through our prayer, our witness and our giving.

Mission with Mary, Mother of Evangelisation

In carrying out our mission, let us draw inspiration from Mary, Mother of Evangelisation. Moved by the Spirit, she welcomed the Word of life. May she help us to say our own 'yes', conscious of the need to make the Good News of Jesus resonate in our time. May she intercede for us so we can discover new ways to bring the gift of salvation to everyone.

+28th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
15th October 2017

WORLD MISSION SUNDAY (next Sunday)
(Extract from Pope Francis message for World Mission Sunday)

Mission at the Heart of the Christian Faith

World Mission Sunday this year gathers us once again around Jesus, 'the first and greatest evangeliser' (Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 7), who sends us out to proclaim the Gospel. We

are asked to reflect on mission at the heart of the Christian faith. As believers in a world marked by disappointment, frustration, and torn apart by war, it is important to ask ourselves: What is the basis of our mission? What is the heart of our mission? What are the essential approaches we need to take in carrying out our mission?

Mission: the Way, the Truth and the Life

The Church's mission is based on the life-changing power of the Gospel. Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. Jn 14:6). He is the Way who invites us to follow him with courage. Doing this, we experience Truth and receive his Life, a life that sets us free from selfishness, encouraging us to love. God wants us to be transformed by being open to the Holy Spirit and following Christ, ensuring the Gospel becomes a vital and effective tool to live by.

A contemporary mission

The Church's mission is not to spread a religious or grandiose ideology. Instead, Jesus Christ continues to evangelise and to act. Through the Gospel, the risen Jesus becomes our contemporary. 'Christ's resurrection is not an Event of the past; it contains a vital power which has permeated the world. Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force.' (Evangellii Gaudium, 276). 'Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a decisive direction' (Benedict XVI, Deus Caritas Est, 1). The Gospel invites us to live our life participating in the Sacraments. Through Baptism, the Gospel becomes a source of new life. Through Confirmation, it becomes a fortifying, anointing, pointing out new ways for witness. Through the

Eucharist, it becomes food for new life (Ignatius of Antioch, Ad Ephesios, 20, 2).

The world vitally needs the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the Church, Christ continues his mission as Good Samaritan, caring for humanity's wounds, and as Good Shepherd, seeking out those who are lost on paths that lead nowhere. There are countless testimonies as to how the transformative power of the Gospel helps to overcome conflict, while promoting reconciliation.

**+27th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
8th October 2017**

PRISONERS' SUNDAY: TODAY we mark Prisoners' Sunday. It is a day to direct our thoughts and prayers to prisoners, their families and their children. Prisoners' Sunday offer an important opportunity to open our hearts to these members of our community who may be in crisis and to be there for those who most need our support.

THE PRISON ADVICE AND CARE TRUST (PACT) is the only Catholic charity solely dedicated to tackling the issues that arise from having a loved one in prison and who actively work to minimise the harm caused by imprisonment on prisoners, families and communities. Pope Francis said "It is necessary to offer concrete signs of hope to those who experience pain and suffering. Social organisations and associations, as well as individuals who strive towards acceptance and sharing, are generators of hope. Therefore, I exhort your Christian communities to be agents of solidarity".

On Prisoners' Sunday this year our focus is "We Press On Together, in Hope". As a community we reinforce the message of hope, for those who press on in the face of adversity, no matter how seemingly great or small. Hope after all is both a core Christian precept and a fundamental human value, and the seed from which positive change can grow.

Further information can be found on www.prisonadvice.org.uk

You are invited to become a volunteer with Pact. Contact Naomi Farrell on 0207 735 9535 or

Parish.Action@prisonadvice.org.uk

26th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
1st October 2017

POPE FRANCIS: 'THE ROSARY IS THE PRAYER OF MY HEART'.

Pope Francis says: "the Rosary is the prayer that always accompanies my life: it is also the prayer of simple people and saints...it is the prayer of my heart".

At the conclusion of the weekly General Audience, this time last year, he explained that the Rosary is "a synthesis of Divine Mercy":

"With Mary, in the mysteries of the Rosary" we contemplate the life of Jesus which radiates the mercy of the Father. Let us rejoice in His love and forgiveness, let us recognise it in foreigners and in those who are needy, let us live His Gospel every day".

And greeting the young, the sick and the newly wedded, Pope Francis said: "May this simple Marian prayer show you, young people, the way to give life to God's will in our lives; dear sick people, love this prayer because it brings consolation for the mind and the heart; and the newly wedded spouses, may it represents a privileged moment of spiritual intimacy within your new family".

Pope Francis gives all people he meets a Rosary. "Our Lady - is always close to Her children and ready to help when we pray to her, when we ask for her protection... let us remember she is always ready to serve and never keeps anyone waiting".

At Fatima, Our Lady asked us all to pray the Rosary every day. If we do not, let's begin again now, in this centenary Year of the Apparitions.

Parish Pilgrimage Statue of Our Lady of Fatima: during this month of the Holy Rosary Fr David invites you to host the Pilgrim Statue for one or two days in your home: pray the rosary with your family, and invite your friends and neighbours to come. To host the Pilgrim Statue please phone Fr David on 0207 405 0376.

25th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
24th September 2017

WALSINGHAM

TODAY (Sunday) would normally be the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham (24th September) but as it is a Sunday we keep the Sunday Liturgy. Tomorrow (Monday 25th) we shall say both Masses in honour of Our Lady of Walsingham

The Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham was established in 1061 when, according to the text of the Pynson Ballad (c 1485), Richeldis de Faverches prayed that she might undertake some special work in honour of Our Lady. In answer to her prayer, the Virgin Mary led her in spirit to Nazareth, showed her the house where the Annunciation occurred, and asked her to build a replica in Walsingham to serve as a perpetual memorial of the Annunciation.

This Holy House was built and a religious community took charge of the foundation.

Although we have very little historical material from this period, we know that with papal

approval the Augustinian Canons built a Priory (c 1150). Walsingham became one of the greatest Shrines in Medieval Christendom.

In 1538, the Reformation caused the Priory property to be handed over to the King's Commissioners and the famous statue of Our Lady of Walsingham was taken to London and burnt. Nothing remains today of the original shrine, but its site is marked on the lawn in "The Abbey Grounds" in the village.

After the destruction of the Shrine, Walsingham ceased to be a place of pilgrimage. Devotion was necessarily in secret until after Catholic Emancipation (1829) when public expressions of faith were allowed.

In 1896 Charlotte Pearson Boyd purchased the 14th century Slipper Chapel, the last of the wayside chapels en-route to 'Walsingham, and restored it for Catholic use.

In 1897 by rescript of Pope Leo XIII, the sanctuary of Our Lady of Walsingham was restored with the building of a Holy House as the Lady Chapel of the Catholic Church of the Annunciation, King's Lynn.

The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom brought the first public pilgrimage to Walsingham on 20th August 1897. Visits to the Slipper Chapel became more frequent, and as the years passed devotion and the number of pilgrimages increased.

SLIPPER CHAPEL

In the Middle Ages Walsingham was one of the four great shrines of Christendom with pilgrims coming from all parts of the known world.

There were wayside chapels along the pilgrim route and the Slipper Chapel was the last and most important of these. Pilgrims stopped here to go to Mass and to confess their sins before walking the last mile to the Holy House in Walsingham. The name of the chapel may come from the fact that pilgrims removed their shoes to walk the last mile or it may come from the word "slype" meaning away through or "something in between", the slype or slip chapel standing as it did between the Holy land of Walsingham and the test of England.

In 1538 the Shrine and Priory were destroyed and the Slipper Chapel, although not damaged, passed into disuse. It was used successively as a poor house, a forge a barn and even a cow byre. Stories of older residents suggest that even during this time of neglect occasional pilgrims would still come and pray there. In 1896 it was brought by Charlotte Boyd and restoration started the following year. For thirty years the Slipper Chapel remained restored but little used, as devotion to Our Lady of Walsingham was centred on Kings Lynn. On August 19th 1934, Bishop Youens of Northampton celebrated the first public Mass in the Slipper Chapel for four hundred years, and two days later Cardinal Bourne led a national pilgrimage of more than 10,000 people to the Shrine. At this pilgrimage, the Slipper Chapel was declared to be the National Shrine of Our Lady for Roman Catholics in England.

PARISH PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM, Saturday, 14th October.

Depart Lincoln's Inn Fields at 7.30am. Depart Walsingham 5pm. Price £16. For further details contact Martina Cullen, 0780 2728110 or e-mailmcullen32@hotmail.co.uk.

24th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
17th September 2017

Archbishop George Stack delivered this homily at the funeral of Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor

On 10 November 2016, Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor gave a poignant reflection during a 'Pause for Thought' on BBC Radio 2. It was an unusual reflection, not just because it was Radio 2, but that the topic was "a good death". As he spoke, he knew he was suffering from a serious illness. He was speaking, as always, from the heart.

"I want to say two things to you" he said. "Firstly, I believe in the value and dignity of every human person – that means you. And secondly, I believe that everyone is loveable in the eyes of God. In spite of all our weaknesses and failures, God loves us. So death must be of one piece with life. With the help of God, I hope I will be able to face it, not with fear but with hope and confidence as being in the hands of God".

Those family and friends who were with him at the moment of his death, and the many visitors who saw him in hospital during these last weeks, know how well he lived up to those words. Full of faith, full of *Gaudium et Spes*, full of a quiet resignation as he prayed often the words of Psalm "Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit". The same smile of welcome. The twinkle in the eye spoke of all these things. But he was also full of gratitude – gratitude to the medical staff, those who cared for him so professionally and sensitively. He could not let go of one of his great characteristics, however. He, who would rush for trains and taxis, moving quickly from one engagement to another, was impatient to be gone. As one bishop said "...he was probably texting the angels to get a move on". His life's work was done. "I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. The time has come for me to be gone..." as we read at the 60th anniversary of his priesthood.

What a life and what a work. Cormac was a priest to his fingertips. He was comfortable in his own skin. He was aware of his failings, yet supremely confident in his calling. He was a gifted man who would have made a success of whatever career he chose. Medicine or music – maybe even golf or perhaps rugby like his brother! Yet from an early age he was convinced he should be a priest, like his two other brothers. The Cardinal chose today's reading from St. John's gospel because of his belief that we do not choose God, but God chooses us, earthenware vessels that we are, to be signs, and servants and instruments of his presence in the midst of his people. "You did not choose me, but I chose you that you should go and bear much fruit".

His gift for friendship and his capacity for putting people at their ease, together with his insightful mind and depth of faith, were a wonderful combination of gifts. He generously put them at the service of God and the Church and society at large. They enabled him to reach out in meaningful and constructive ways to other churches. His membership and scholarly contribution to the conclusions of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission. Much to his delight the fruits of his work were captured this year in the publication of all five ARCIC documents in one volume. His conviction that unity of mind and heart amongst the followers of Christ were not optional extras but sorely needed in a fragmented world. His gift of hospitality. He took the words of Jesus seriously "Love one another as I have loved you". These gifts, and the generous way he used them, were expressive of the fact that he liked people and liked being with them. He drew the best from others and gave them nothing but the best of himself in return.

But his was not superficial friendliness. He was convinced that people could and should share their faith and learn from the life experiences of others. He was not afraid to explore those paths either personally or in the Diocese at large. 'At Your Word Lord' was a risky venture not just for Peter the fisherman but for priests and people in each of the Dioceses he served. No matter what the challenges, Cormac was clear on the need for formation of the laity. This

is why he chose the words of St. Paul in our first reading “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named”.

He loved his family and drew strength and joy from their accomplishments. But he wanted the wider family of the parish and the Church to contribute to the building up of society, to the development of the civilisation of love “...that you be strengthened with might through his Spirit in the inner man... that you, being rooted and grounded in love... may be filled with all the fullness of God”. Faith and religion were not for him privatised activities but necessary contributions to a complex world. The Cathedral lectures and his book ‘At the heart of the World’ were just two expressions of this conviction.

The Cardinal is to be buried beneath the tenth Station of the Cross. Like every sign and symbol in the Cathedral, this Station has a special lesson to teach us. Jesus is stripped of his garments. Our faith and devotion teach us that the seamless robe of his revelation of divine love, the integrity and compassion of Jesus, is torn away. The Jesus who stands before us naked and unashamed calls us to pay more attention to who we are rather than what we have so cunningly conspired to be. Cormac knew well what it was like to have judgments questioned, decisions criticised, mistakes analysed. That ‘stripping away’ could easily have made him angry and cynical, causing him to retreat from the public arena. Yet he acknowledged his mistakes. He made no excuses. He said the most difficult words of all. “I’m sorry”. He learned a huge lesson and proceeded to establish the most robust safeguarding mechanism possible, a model for other institutions. Humility and action were part of the robe that he wore.

Perhaps more than anything else, our final illness strips away all pretence and brings us face to face with the reality of who we are. To know and love ourselves as we are known and loved by God must surely be the greatest mystery of all. The measure of God’s love for us is the measure of our need for forgiveness – and our willingness to receive it and be healed by it. That innocent nakedness in the presence of God was personified in the life of the one whom we bury today.

Shortly before he died, the Nobel Prize winning poet Seamus Heaney sent a final text message to his wife. It contained just two words. ‘Noli Timere’. Do not be afraid. The same words were on the lips and in the heart of Cardinal Cormac when he wrote his final letter to the clergy and laity of the Diocese, “Please tell them that I am at peace, and have no fear of what is to come”.

May his soul, and the souls of all the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen. +

23rd SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
10th September 2017

FUNERAL RITES FOR CORMAC CARDINAL MURPHY-O’CONNOR RIP

Cardinal Cormac, who served as our Archbishop from February 2000 until his retirement in 2009, died peacefully on Friday 1st September. May he rest in peace. Cardinal Cormac’s body will be received into Westminster Cathedral on Tuesday 12th September at 10am. There will be a short service. The Cardinal’s body will lie in Westminster Cathedral throughout Tuesday, and all are welcome to pay their respects, pray and sign the book of condolence. At 5pm on Tuesday 12th there will be Solemn Vespers of the Dead at which Cardinal Vincent will preside and Archbishop Bernard Longley will preach. There will be

some reserved seating, as well as an unreserved area for those of the faithful who wish to attend. The Cathedral will remain open until 8pm. To provide further opportunity for quiet prayer.

The Funeral Mass for Cardinal Cormac will be at 12 noon on Wednesday 13th September. Cardinal Vincent will preside and Archbishop George Stack will preach. At the end of the Mass, the body of Cardinal Cormac will be laid to rest in the nave of the Cathedral, by the Tenth Station of the Cross.

Admission for the congregation at the funeral Mass is by ticket only. There are only two tickets available for each parish.

There will be a Memorial Mass in the Cathedral on Wednesday 4th October at 5:30pm. At this Mass there will be an area of unreserved seating, and it is particularly hoped that anyone who might have wished to attend the Funeral Mass but was unable to do so could attend on this later date.

A biography of Cardinal Cormac is available on the noticeboard, and on the parish website. Eternal rest grant unto to him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor: Biography

Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, who became the tenth Archbishop of Westminster (2000-09), was born in Reading on 24 February 1932, the fifth son of Dr George Murphy-O'Connor and his wife Ellen. His parents originally came from County Cork. He was educated at the Presentation College, Reading, and Prior Park College in Bath. During the Holy Year of 1950 he began to train as a priest for the diocese of Portsmouth at the Venerable English College, Rome, where he joined his two brothers, Brian and Patrick. He later joked that the Rector, Mgr John Macmillan, needed some persuading since it was thought that two Murphy-O'Connors in a seminary was quite enough. While in Rome he gained licentiates in philosophy and theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University and was ordained by Archbishop Luigi Traglia on 28 October 1956.

On returning to his home diocese, he served as curate at Corpus Christi, Portsmouth (1956-63) and Sacred Heart, Fareham (1963-66). Then in 1966 he became Private Secretary to the Bishop of Portsmouth, Derek Worlock. Murphy-O'Connor also served as Director of Vocations and helped establish the country's first Diocesan Pastoral Centre at Park Place, Wickham. In September 1970 he went to Immaculate Conception, Portswood as Parish Priest, but at the end of 1971 returned to Rome as Rector of the Venerable English College, his alma mater. The years following the Second Vatican Council were challenging ones to be a seminary rector, with much uncertainty about the future and the constant need, as he later put it, to 'broker a peace between the people who want to change everything and the people who want to change nothing'. Murphy-O'Connor proved to be a steady pair of hands and did much to boost student numbers and the College's finances. As Rector he also hosted Archbishop Coggan of Canterbury during his historic visit to Paul VI (1977).

In 1977 Murphy-O'Connor was appointed third Bishop of Arundel and Brighton, a diocese covering Sussex and Surrey. He was consecrated on 21 December by his predecessor, Michael Bowen, who had become Archbishop of Southwark. The new bishop quickly became engaged in a round of parish and school visitations, opening up his large house at Storrington for special events and adopting the American 'RENEW' programme. This was inspired by his belief that the Church should be 'experienced not as a faceless institution but as a community, a family, to whose life all its members contribute' and involved the creation of 'small communities' in parishes. He later admitted: 'Renew had mixed results, but I think

we went some way to recapturing the basic concept of Christian community.’

From 1982 until 2000 Murphy-O’Connor was Co-Chairman of the Anglican and Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC), and ecumenism remained a cause close to his heart. Indeed, in 2000

On 15 February 2000 Murphy-O’Connor was appointed tenth Archbishop of Westminster, in succession to Cardinal Basil Hume. The following year, on 21 he was awarded a Doctorate in Divinity by the Archbishop of Canterbury in recognition of his work for Christian unity.

February 2001, he was created a Cardinal Priest. Among the other new cardinals created that day was the prestigious titular church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva, which not only contains the remains of St Catherine of Siena but also the tomb of Cardinal Philip Howard, great-grandson of the martyr St Philip Howard, whose shrine is at Arundel Cathedral. As a cardinal, Murphy-O’Connor was

In April 2005 he participated in the Conclave that elected Benedict XVI. As archbishop of a densely-populated and diverse diocese, Murphy-O’Connor took on various initiatives. In 2001 he began replacing Hume’s system of episcopal areas with four key areas of responsibility (Education, Clergy and Consecrated Life, Pastoral Affairs and Ecumenism and Interfaith relations), each one under the supervision of a different auxiliary bishop. He hoped this would serve to further unify the diocese.

In September 2003 he launched At Your Word, Lord with a special Mass held at Wembley Arena. The previous November he had invited the diocesan clergy to discuss the programme at Butlins holiday camp in Bognor Regis, a location chosen because of its accommodation space. Based on the ‘RENEW’ programme he had followed in Arundel and Brighton, the three year process brought together thousands in small prayer groups and promoted a vision of the Church as ‘a communion of communities.’ It was followed by the publication in February 2006 of a ‘White Paper,’ Communion and Mission, which identified the priorities for the local Church in the twenty-first century: the call to holiness, the formation of adults and young people, small communities, priesthood and vocations and increased participation, collaboration and accountability.

Aware of the scourge of child abuse and having had personal experience of cases as bishop of Arundel and Brighton, he commissioned Lord Nolan to chair an independent review on child protection in the Catholic Church in England and Wales. This was a landmark document and led to the establishment of an independent office (COPCA) to oversee the protection of children and vulnerable adults. In order to consolidate this work, he also commissioned a review, conducted by Baroness Cumberledge, which led to the establishment of the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service and the National Catholic Safeguarding Commission.

As a cardinal and President of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, Murphy-O’Connor had to tackle many sensitive issues in the ‘public square’, providing a Catholic voice on issues as diverse as the war in Iraq, medical ethics and Jorge Mario Bergoglio, the future Pope Francis, with whom he would enjoy a friendly relationship. The new English cardinal was given appointed to the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See, the Pontifical Council for the Study of Organisational and Economic Problems of the Holy See and the Pontifical Council for the Family. He also served on the Pontifical Councils for Culture and for Laity, and acted as secretary of Vox Clara.

the 2006 Equality Act. He enjoyed good relations with the royal family and in 2002 not only read a prayer at the funeral of the Queen Mother but also preached before Her Majesty the Queen and Prince Philip at the Sunday service in Sandringham. He was privileged, too, to host the Queen and Prince Philip for lunch at Archbishop's House, an historical highlight with regard to the place of the Catholic Church in British society.

On reaching the age of seventy-five, Murphy-O'Connor submitted his resignation to the Holy See. He continued until his successor, Archbishop Vincent Nichols, was appointed on 3 April 2009. Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor became the first Archbishop of Westminster to retire, all his predecessors having died in office. He moved to a house on Duke's Avenue, Chiswick and continued his work in Rome, taking up new posts on the Congregation for Bishops and the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. On a number of occasions he acted as papal representative to such places as Stockholm, India, Bangladesh and Trondheim in Norway. In June 2010 he was named as the Visitor to the Province of Armagh in the aftermath of the Ryan and Murphy Reports on child abuse. After reaching his eightieth birthday in 2012, many of his Roman commitments ceased and he participated in the conclave of 2013 as a non-voter.

Throughout his life, 'Cardinal Cormac' kept up a keen interest in sport (especially rugby and golf) and music; he was a talented pianist and occasionally performed at charity events and celebrations. His publications include *The Family of the Church* (1984), *At the Heart of the World* (2004) and a volume of memoirs, *An English Spring* (2015). He will long be remembered for his personal warmth, humour and persuasive leadership.

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17th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
30th July 2017

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
23rd July 2017

SOWING AND GROWING

The Parable of the Sower and the Seed needs to be viewed from two different perspectives in order to unlock its meaning - from that of the sower and that of the seed. Whether sowing or growing - the point is a plentiful harvest and much fruit. Reflection on the Mass readings for the Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) - Isaiah 55:10-11; Psalms 65:10, 11, 12-13, 14; Romans 8:18-23; Matthew 13:1-23 or 13:1-9.

I've always loved gardening. The seeds I've planted include carrot, cucumber and, of course, zucchini. In each case, I've planted seeds in neat rows, expecting nearly all of them to sprout and yield fruit.

But the farmer in Jesus' parable (Matt 13:1-23) uses the broadcast method. Lots of seed cast everywhere. And predictably, many of these seeds do not produce. Some get eaten by birds. Some sprout but then wither. Some seedlings get choked out by weeds. Finally a few yield varying amounts of grain.

At the end of the story, Jesus says "they who have ears, let them hear." In other words, he wants us to learn something and take some action steps.

We Are The Seed - To respond to this parable adequately, we must view it from two different angles. The first is to look at the story as if we are the seed.

Many who hear the gospel never seem to "get it." The message is stolen before it ever takes root.

Then there are the 50% of Catholic kids who receive the sacraments but disappear somewhere between age 18 and 25. Shallow roots fail to equip them to take the heat of our pagan culture.

Then there are the 89% of lifelong, regular churchgoers who, according to George Gallup, have values and lifestyles identical to those of their pagan neighbours. Their faith has been neutralised by bad theology and worldliness; although they look like wheat plants, their religion is fruitless.

Harvest-Mediocre or Abundant - Then there are those who stay out of serious sin, manage to do some good for some people, but all in all produce a mediocre harvest.

Finally, there are the few who are not satisfied with just getting by. They sink their roots deep into Scripture, Tradition, prayer and the sacraments, and produce a bumper crop.

We call these people saints - In speaking to us as seed, Jesus is saying, "Be careful. If you don't make the effort to get thoroughly rooted in your Catholic faith, you just might not make it. If you do manage to survive, you might produce absolutely nothing. But you are called to bear much fruit (John 15), to yield 100 fold, to be a saint, to leave a mark on the lives of many that will last forever. Don't settle for anything less!"

Sowers Must Sow - On the other hand, we can look at the parable as if we were the farmer. Vatican II and all the Popes since have stated repeatedly and unequivocally that each of us is

called to be an evangelizer, to tell others that Jesus Christ changes lives eternally and that the place to encounter him most fully is within the Catholic Church. "But," you may protest, "I tried it a few times and got nowhere. I just don't have the personality, don't have the gift." Jesus, the Son of God, indisputably had both the personality and the gift. Yet when he sowed seed, much of it still ended up as bird food.

Consider the thousands he fed with loaves and fishes, the multitude that heard his sermon on the mount, the throngs that welcomed him on Palm Sunday. Yet on the day of Pentecost, there were only 120 left in the cenacle, awaiting the Holy Spirit. Notice, though, that the fruit borne by these 120 plants eventually filled the whole world!

Growing and Sowing - To get the few that bear fruit, lots of seed must be sown by lots of people. So regardless of whether or not we think we have green thumbs, we are being commanded through this parable to get the seed out there, sowing it everywhere we go, undeterred by the birds, the weeds, and the scorching sun.

The parable of the sower has a twofold message: as seed, our job is to get busy growing. As farmers, our job is to get busy sowing.

By Dr. Marcellino D'Ambrosio
www.integratedcatholiclife.org

15th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
16th July 2017

A PRIEST'S WARNING AGAINST THE DEVIL'S 10 DEADLIEST TRICKS - by Fr. Dwight Longenecker - January 13th 2016

Satan is a snake. Remember that. He is a liar and the Father of Lies. He is at work in your life trying to tempt you into sin and to draw you away from God, but he is also at work in the world, trying to deceive you, confuse you. He wants you to lose your faith and turn away from God.

Here are ten of his tricks. Watch them and be aware of what he is up to:

1.) Relativism - Relativism is the idea that there is no such thing as truth. The devil doesn't want you to believe in truth because if there is not truth, then there is also no right and wrong, and if there is no right and wrong, then anything goes. He can tempt you into sin much more easily if he can first get you to believe there is no such thing as sin.

Relativism is everywhere in our society. It takes many different forms. The other tricks of the devil in this post explain some of the different forms of relativism that are traps you can fall into.

2) Indifferentism - This is the idea that all religions are pretty much the same and it doesn't matter which one you follow. Indifferentism is common within Protestantism. How often have you heard someone say, "It doesn't matter what church you go to as long as you love Jesus"? This indifferentism extends to multi-culturalism as well. People say it doesn't matter if you are Hindu, Muslim, Jew, Sikh, Buddhist, Catholic - whatever. "We're all climbing the same mountain but by different paths." Well maybe so in a way, but some paths are better than others because they're more true and to be honest, some of the paths are going down the mountain not up. Be clear. Jesus Christ is the fullest and most complete and final revelation

of God to the human race and Catholicism is the fullest, most ancient and most complete union with that unique revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

3) Eclecticism - This is a close cousin of Indifferentism. Eclecticism is the idea that you can mix and match different religions and spiritualities all together - kind of like those places where you make your own ice cream sundae. People think this is possible because they have already subscribed to indifferentism. Think it through. You can't mix up Islam with Christianity or Buddhist spirituality with Catholic prayer. It's not like making your own sundae. It's more like putting ketchup on ice cream or using white paint as coffee creamer. Don't bother.

4) Sentimentalism - This is basing moral choices and belief choices based on emotion rather than eternal truths. It can be good emotion or bad emotion. You get mad at someone or some choice someone has made so you base your moral or faith decision on your anger. Or you might feel syrupy and nice about something so you base your emotional choice on that. Here's an example: Two guys want to get "married" and you say, "Aww, Ronnie and Donnie are such nice guys! Why shouldn't they get married just like everyone else?" You're basing your decision on your emotions about Ronnie and Donnie, your desire to be a "nice" person and sentimental ideas about weddings and celebrations and big days. Don't make important decisions only on your emotions. That way chaos and darkness lies.

5) Utilitarianism - This is basing moral choices and belief choices only on what seems to be effective, efficient and economical. Mom's in a rest home. She has dementia. It's expensive to keep her there. The doctors offer to give her an injection so "Her problems will be over." Don't do it. Utilitarianism is why we kill millions of babies through abortion. It seems like the easy thing to do. Observe how Utilitarianism is usually linked with sentimentalism: 'You wouldn't want your mother to suffer any further would you? Why you wouldn't even treat your dog this way!' You see where this goes.

6) Incrementalism - This is just a long word for "drip, drip, drip." In other words, the devil doesn't put his plan in place all at once. He takes over brick by brick. It is one little lie, then one little half truth, then one more little lie, then one more little half truth. Be clear what he is doing from the start and don't give in. He will get you to give in to his ways through sentimentalism here, utilitarian arguments there, here a bit of indifferentism, there a bit of relativism. He's working all the time, nibbling away, never sleeping, never at rest.

7) Materialism - I'm not talking about going to the mall to shop until you drop. That's a minor form of materialism. The deeper problem is the growing conviction that there is no supernatural realm. God, the angels, demons, heaven and hell? They're all just a myth. There's no invisible world. The sacraments are just symbols. The church is just a human institution. The priests are no more than social workers dressed in black. Marriage is just a piece of paper, confession is no more than therapy and self help and baptism and confirmation are just nice rites of Passage for our kids. That's materialism. Do you recognize it? Repudiate it with all your heart. It's a lie.

8) Scientism - This is the idea that the only kind of truth you can know is scientific truth. Nobody states this as such. It's a powerful lie of Satan because it is one of those things which is simply assumed in society. "We all know that science has disproved the Bible right?" Wrong. All truth is God's truth and true science is always the sister of true theology. Scientism is an offshoot of assumed atheism. "There isn't a God. There is just the laws of

science. That's all." Spot it and name it.

9) Situational Ethics -This is another name for moral relativism. The idea is that nothing is right or wrong except for the intentions and circumstances of the moral choice" If you mean well and the circumstances justify it, then what you've chosen to do is okay. Huge numbers of Catholics have accepted first artificial contraception and then abortion because of situational ethics.

It's easy to see that this form of relativism is usually linked with sentimentalism and utilitarianism to bring people to the point of choosing mortal sin, but never admitting it and justifying their choice. It's not Catholic. Don't fall for it. If you are faced with a difficult moral decision talk to your priest or a good spiritual advisor.

10) Universalism - This poison straight from hell is the idea that God is so loving, kind and merciful that he won't send anyone to hell. In other words, everybody will be saved. This not only directly contradicts Sacred Scripture, but it contradicts all the teaching of the Church for the last two thousand years. It has lulled thousands into the false security that in the end it doesn't matter what they do and. What they choose because they will all make it to heaven at last. Satan loves universalism because he gets to dress up his lie in the clothes of the Father's greatest attribute: the Divine Mercy. The best way to repudiate this lie is to fear hell.

<https://churchpop.com/2016/01/13/10-tricks-devil/>

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14th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
9th July 2017

APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA: SEA SUNDAY

There are times when many of us feel overburdened in our daily life. There can seem so many demands, so much to do. 'I need to relax,' we say. Seafarers have one of the hardest and most dangerous jobs in the world. They can spend months at sea, working long hours, living in cramped conditions, and battling storms and gales. They see little of their families and when they arrive in a port they know no one. This is where Apostleship of the Sea port chaplains and ship visitors come in. When they go on board a ship they have one question for the crew. How can I help? They offer the hand of friendship, listen to the concerns of the seafarers they meet, and try through small gestures to attend to some of their needs. This can be anything from arranging internet or phone access, so a seafarer can contact their family back home, providing transport to local shops, or helping to resolve problems over pay or conditions. Port chaplains and ship visitors will also take seafarers to Mass in a local parish or sometimes try arrange for a priest to come on board.

Apostleship of the Sea is the Catholic Church's official outreach to seafarers and fishermen, through port chaplains, ship visitors and cruise chaplains. They rely almost entirely on the support of Catholic parishes and the generosity of people like yourselves, to continue this vital work. Today's collection is your opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of seafarers like Carlo, who I mentioned at the beginning. Please also keep Apostleship of the Sea in your prayers, and consider leaving them a gift your Will.

13th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

2nd July 2017

Modern Catholics are too prone to thinking that Our Lord's passion and the Divine Gift of His Precious Blood is something locked in the past. As Catholics, we are depriving ourselves and our loved ones by not venerating the Precious Blood with more fervour and sincere reverence. Now that we are in July, the month dedicated to the Most Precious Blood, we must immerse ourselves in the awesome truth that offering the precious Blood is a powerful means of interceding for the souls of loved ones, and for the souls of people who have wronged us.

On the Cross, Our Lord shed His Blood to atone for our sins. We owe our redemption to Our Lord's bloody sacrifice, 'For this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for the many, for the remission of sins' (Matthew 26:28). If Our Lord established a New Covenant by His Sacrifice on the Cross, the highest sacrifice of the Old Law was the offering of the paschal Lamb. Moses took the blood of sacrificial animals, sprinkled it upon the people and said: 'This is the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you' (Exodus 24:8). In the new covenant, Our Lord, as Son of the Father, is the Lamb of God who offered himself on the altar of the Cross to redeem mankind from their sin and wipe clean the sins of the world with His Blood.

Modern Catholics are too prone to thinking that Our Lord's passion and the Divine Gift of His Precious Blood is something locked in the past, done and dusted, and we fail to see that it is a powerful means of helping souls get to Heaven in our times. When, in fact, us poor urchins may actually offer the Precious Blood to God the Father. It seems a contradiction that us sinners can take part in something so glorious.

Fr Frederick William Faber's book, *The Precious Blood* describes the experiences of saints who were given special visions to see the way a sinner can benefit from offering the Precious Blood. The Carmelite saint, St Mary Magdalen de Pazzi, when in a rapture, saw that, 'every time a human being offers up the Blood by which he was redeemed, he offers a gift of infinite worth, which can be equalled by no other' Inspired by her vision, St Mary Magdalen de Pazzi offered the Precious Blood fifty times for the souls of the living and the dead, and then God rewarded her with visions of the multitudes of souls that had been saved from perdition or delivered from Purgatory. The prayer we may use is from *The Raccolta*: 'Eternal Father, I offer Thee the Most Precious Blood of Jesus Christ, in satisfaction of my sins, in supplication for the holy souls in Purgatory and for the needs of Holy Church (name a soul).'

The Cure of Ars, St John Vianney drew on the most perfect way of offering the most Precious Blood: he asked Our Lady to offer it for him, and said that it never failed to obtain for him the grace or favour he sought. Here is the Marian offering of the Precious Blood: 'Immaculate Heart of Mary, do thou offer to the Eternal Father the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ, for the conversion of sinners, especially, (name the soul). St Dominic actually had a vision of Our Lady sprinkling devout people in his congregation with the Precious Blood.

At Holy Mass, during the Consecration may ask Our Lady to offer the Precious Blood for the conversion of people living bad lives and doing harm to themselves and others, for the souls in Purgatory and for renewal in the Church.

The last point is perhaps the most neglected, if we want Mother Church to know rejuvenation by virtue of having leaders and a laity that are cleaned of their sinful ways, we must offer the Precious Blood for them. Here in Britain, we have a constant reminder to offer the Precious

Blood for the sanctity of both leaders and laity, because Westminster Cathedral the mother church of England and Wales was dedicated to the most Precious Blood in 1895'

By Mary O'Regan posted on the Catholic Herald website 9th July 2015.

<http://catholicherald.co.uk/commentandblogs/2015/07/09/why-are-we-forgetting-to-venerate-the-precious-blood/>

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Ss PETER AND PAUL, APOSTLES **25th June 2017**

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 AD66 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 great 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 (St Paul-outside-the-walls).

THIS THURSDAY 29th JUNE is the Solemnity of **Ss Peter and Paul, Apostles**. It is a Holyday of Obligation. Mass: Wednesday 6.00pm (vigil), Thursday 12.30pm and 6.00pm.

+THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST **18th June 2017**

GRENFELL TOWER FIRE

Cardinal Vincent writes:

'We pray for all the residents of Grenfell Tower. I pray particularly for those who have suffered, those who have died, and all the residents who are left without a home, and the entire community that has been affected. Once again in our city we witness the heroic efforts of our emergency services who responded so quickly. I thank them for all they are doing to help the victims of this devastating fire.'

Many people have been asking how they might contribute practically to the support of those who have lost their homes and possessions. Caritas Westminster and the Catholic Children's Society, are both present in the communities, providing assistance to individuals and families, as well as the local school communities, particularly our St Francis of Assisi School. Should you wish to make individual donations to this emergency relief fund, a special page is being

set up on the diocesan website (rcdow.org.uk) with a direct link from the home page. Alternatively you can put your donation in a marked envelope in the offertory bag, or hand it in to the Presbytery.

There will be additional information on the diocesan and Caritas (caritaswestminster.org.uk) websites about other forms of practical support, such as donations in kind and volunteering. There will be regular updates on these pages as well as through the diocesan Twitter and Facebook pages about the types of donation items and volunteer services that would be most useful. These updates will be posted at least daily.

The Cardinal would like to offer a word of particular gratitude to all those who have offered spiritual or practical assistance in this terrible incident: the emergency services, NHS staff, local parishioners, hospital chaplains, parish clergy, teachers, school staff and all others, especially the priests of the immediate locality who have worked with such dedication. They, along with the victims and their families, are foremost in his prayers.

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+THE MOST HOLY TRINITY
11th June 2017

TODAY we celebrate GOD made known to us. Philosophy can help us see that it is reasonable to believe that God exists, but it is only through a theology of revelation that we can come to know God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Our Lord Jesus reveals God as the Most Holy Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit - three Persons, one God (hence Trinity: tri meaning "three", and unity meaning "one"). So God is made known to us through REVELATION.

We speak of the "MYSTERY" of the Most Holy Trinity, meaning we can never fully understand God: God is infinite and we are finite, hence unable to grasp fully the infinite nature of God. Many images help us to understand the Trinity: two examples are

1. Water which can be experienced as water, ice and steam. All these are different forms of the one reality.
2. The sun: we experience the sun as light, heat and radiation: three distinct aspects but only one sun.

Last Sunday we celebrated Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit. Our Lord teaches us that the Holy Spirit will remind us of all He taught us, and lead us into all truth, through our living in His Body, the Church. May we always want to be led into the truth, and to worship and adore the Most Holy Trinity.
Fr. David Barnes PP

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+PENTECOST SUNDAY
4th June 2017

"COME HOLY SPIRIT...."

THE HOLY SPIRIT transformed the apostles from being inward looking, timid and afraid, to being outward looking and bold in proclaiming the Risen and Ascended Lord. The Spirit set them on fire: for this reason we sometimes call the Feast of Pentecost the

BIRTHDAY of the Church.

The Holy Spirit can do the same for us if we are open and really want to be transformed. Last Wednesday Pope Francis said "The Spirit is the wind pushing us forward, keeping us going, that makes us feel like pilgrims and foreigners and doesn't allow us to get comfortable and become sedentary HOPE collects the wind of the Spirit and transforms it into energy".

This Pentecost, pray that we shall all be filled with the Holy Spirit and be full of hope. How well do we know the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit?

The **Seven Gifts** of the Holy Spirit are: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, Fear of the Lord.

The **Twelve Fruits** of the Holy Spirit: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Generosity, Gentleness, Faithfulness, Modesty, Self-Control, Chastity.

COME, HOLY SPIRIT fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love.

Fr David Barnes PP

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+SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

28th May 2017

MANCHESTER last Monday evening, where so many innocent lives were taken or grievously wounded, reminds us again of the spirit of cruelty and destructiveness that can drive a person. Our immediate response is one of prayer and practical support for all those involved. We need to ensure that this evil does not divide us as a society, but that we can be even more determined to work together for the common good. But we need more: we need the Holy Spirit. Next Sunday is the celebration of Pentecost may we prepare well by opening our mind and heart to the Holy Spirit, and recognising how much we need the Holy Spirit. The more we do, the less we will be moved by the bad spirit, the Evil One.

The General Election gives us the opportunity to vote for those whose values and policies we think will best help to build the Kingdom of God. We vote always according to our conscience. Our Bishops have prepared some points to consider: copies are available at the back of the church. They have suggested this prayer.

"Lord grant us wisdom to act always with integrity, seeking the protection and flourishing of all, and building a society of justice and peace."

Fr David Barnes P.P.

+SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

21st May 2017

CARDINAL VINCENT SPEAKS

YOU are invited to come and hear Cardinal Vincent speak on a number of issues. Fr David and Rev. John Valentine (Anglican Vicar of St. George the Martyr, Queen Square Holborn) have invited the Cardinal to speak on the life of faith, about his life as Archbishop of Westminster, to hear his thinking on ecumenism and how we are to evangelise our country. It

is being hosted by our local Anglican church to emphasise our friendship and collaboration with our neighbours.

As Catholics, please let us go to support our Cardinal, to learn from him and to express our solidarity- with our local Anglican brothers and sisters.

WHEN? This Wednesday, 24th May, at 7.30pm

WHERE? In the Anglican church of St George the Martyr, Queen Square, Holborn (near Great Ormond Street Hospital).

This gathering with Cardinal Vincent is on the eve of the launch of "THY KINGDOM COME". This is a global prayer move movement, which invites Christians around the world to pray between the Ascension and Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus Christ. What started as an Anglican initiative in 2016 has grown into an international and ecumenical call to prayer.

CARDINAL VINCENT WRITES:

"To have a week of prayer for Christian mission is just a wonderful thing. Please join in before Pentecost, this drive to pray together for the gift of God's Spirit for our mission. We know how rich Pentecost is in the life of the Church from its very beginning. That richness can be ours too - if we ask God for it".

+FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

14th May 2017

On Wednesday 24th May Cardinal Vincent is coming to St George's Anglican church in Queen Square. Fr. David and the vicar of St George's, Rev. John Valentine, have jointly invited the Cardinal to come and speak about the life of faith and his work as Archbishop, and how he sees ecumenism and our common endeavour of evangelisation.

Fr David encourages you all to come - both to welcome the Cardinal (St. George's is within the boundary of our parish) and learn from him, and also to show our commitment to ecumenism and our solidarity with our neighbouring Anglican brothers and sisters.

When? Wednesday 24th May at 7.30pm.

Where? St. George's Holborn, Queen Square WC2N 3AH

020 7404 4407 office@stgholborn.org

This gathering is on the eve of the launch of "THY KINGDOM COME". Cardinal Vincent is supporting the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, in his call to Christians to join a wave of prayer across the UK and around the world - praying that people you know might know Jesus. It is happening between Ascension and Pentecost. 25th May - 4th June.

+FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

7th May 2017

Living in Central London we are far removed from the life of a shepherd tending sheep in the fields. St. John in today's Gospel (chapter 10) reminds us that we all need shepherding in those encouraging words of Jesus, "I am the Good Shepherd, I know my own sheep and my own know me." Jesus knows each one of us by the name given to us at our baptism. To Jesus we are individuals, not a crowd or congregation. The life, death and resurrection of Our Lord happened for everyone, such was the extent of his love for us. How do we return such

exquisite love?

Through our baptism we are called to follow Jesus, he said "Follow Me". We too can follow Jesus by doing our utmost to be Good Shepherds in our present circumstances whether it be priests, parents, teachers, doctors, shop assistants, office workers, etc. remembering we are all made in the image and likeness of our Heavenly Father.

This Sunday also has a second theme, called "Vocations Sunday". We are asked to pray for our priests in particular in their calling as shepherds. Each one of us has a vocation to follow Christ in whatever setting we happen to be and to support our priests in whatever way we can. God is calling each one of us to be Gospel People making our own contribution towards building His church. Where do I fit into this? What contribution am I making ?

Sr. M. Lucina, Parish Sister

+THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER
30th April 2017

Next weekend is Good Shepherd Sunday, the day we pray for priests and for vocations to the priesthood. 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 and the Diocese of Westminster by providing us with new priests striving to follow Christ the Good Shepherd, in the service of God's people. The Priest Training Fund helps us 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. There are currently 39 seminarians in formation. It costs on average £25,000 per man, per year of formation - that is about £150,000 to form and educate a new priest, who makes a lifetime commitment to Christ and the Church.

Priests are the heart of the Catholic Church. Please be generous in your prayer and support. Donation leaflets are available today - please take one, read the information, and bring it back next week at Mass with your donation. On behalf of all the clergy of the Diocese, thank you. We ask that you pray a special prayer for vocations on a dally basis, perhaps with your family. Please take home a prayer card for vocations, which can be found in the pews or at the back of the Church. Thank you for both your prayers and generosity in support of the priests, and the Catholic Church, of tomorrow.

WELCOME to the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of Fatima present in our parish this weekend. May her presence and prayers bring us all many blessings.

+SECOND SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION
23rd April 2017

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY

The message of The Divine Mercy is simple. It is that God loves us - all of us. And, he wants

us to recognise that His mercy is greater than our sins, so that we will call upon Him with trust, receive His mercy, and let it flow through us to others. Thus, all will come to share His joy.

The Divine Mercy, message is one we can call to mind simply by remembering ABC:

A - Ask for His Mercy. God wants us to approach Him in prayer constantly, repenting of our sins and asking Him to pour His mercy out upon us and upon the whole world.

B - Be merciful. God wants us to receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others. He wants us to extend love and forgiveness to others just as He does to us.

C - Completely trust in Jesus. God wants us to know that the graces of His mercy are dependent upon our trust. The more we trust in Jesus, the more we will receive.

This message and devotion to Jesus as The Divine Mercy is based on the writings of Saint Faustina Kowalska, an uneducated Polish nun who, in obedience to her spiritual director, wrote a diary of about 600 pages recording the revelations she received about God's mercy. Even before her death in 1938, the devotion to The Divine Mercy had begun to spread. The message and devotional practices proposed in the Diary of Saint Faustina and set forth in this web site and other publications of the Marians of the Immaculate Conception are completely in accordance with the teachings of Church and are firmly rooted in the Gospel message of our Merciful Saviour. Properly understood and implemented, they will help us grow as genuine followers of Christ.

Spend time to learn more about the mercy of God, learn to trust in Jesus, and live your life as merciful to others, as Christ is merciful to you.

<http://www.thedivinemercy.org/message/>

+EASTER SUNDAY **16th April 2017**

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 **9th April 2017**

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 6pm
 - + The celebration of the Passion of the Lord – Friday 3pm
 - + The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night – Saturday 8pm
- 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 **2nd April 2017**

PASSIONTIDE

Today, the fifth Sunday of Lent, the focus of the liturgy is on Our Lord's Passion. It is a time to enter into His suffering more deeply, sharing in His life more fully. It is a time to foster greater sorrow for our sins: the more contrite we are, the less we are likely to sin in the future. It is a time to grow in wonder that Our Lord endured His Passion and Death out of love for us. The veiling of the crucifixes and the statues emphasise the more sombre nature of these days, and help us focus on His Passion.

Today's Gospel, the raising of Lazarus, gives us a foretaste of how He wills to raise us up, unbind us and let us be free from sin and death. We are designed for eternal life with Him forever, to come to see God face-to-face. It is in light of this that we enter Passiontide joyfully and with great confidence, wanting to share His wondrous love. Our Lady accompanies us just as she accompanied Her Son and shared His Passion.

"O God, who in this season give your Church the grace to imitate devoutly the Blessed Virgin Mary contemplating the Passion of Christ, grant, we pray, through her intercession, that we cling more firmly each day to Your only begotten Son and come at last to the fullness of grace. Through Christ Our Lord."

Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us.

Fr David Barnes PP

+4th SUNDAY OF LENT **26th March 2017**

WESTMINSTER ATROCITIES - 22 March 2017

Message from the Cardinal.

Dear Fathers, Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Yesterday's attacks in Westminster have shocked us all. The kind of violence we have seen all too often in other places has again brought horror and killing to this city.

I know you will lead people in prayer, especially for those who have lost their lives and those who have lost one they love. Pray for Aysha Frade, killed by the car on Westminster Bridge. Her two children attend St Mary and the Angels Primary School. Pray for them and their father and please remember the young French students who have been injured.

We remember too all who have been injured, and those who care for them.
We pray in particular as well for Keith Palmer, the police officer who died, and for his family, thanking God that so many show such brave dedication to keeping our society safe. Let our voice be one of prayer, of compassion solidarity and calm. All who believe in God, Creator and Father of every person, will echo this voice, for faith in God is not a problem to be solved, but a strength and a foundation on which we depend.

With best wishes,

Cardinal Vincent Nichols

+3rd SUNDAY OF LENT

19th March 2017

HOW TO BECOME MORE HUMAN

Sin dehumanises us by making us less than fully human. Yet we go on sinning - so what is the remedy? The Collect at today's Mass asserts that the remedy is PRAYER, FASTING and ALMSGIVING.

PRAYER raises our minds and hearts to God, reasserting the supernatural perspective in our life by fostering our conversation with God, opening us to see life from God's perspective and to the help of God.

FASTING brings under greater control our bodily appetites so that we are not driven by them. As we feel real hunger it also enables us to identify better with those who are suffering through lack of food, and moves us to reach out to them.

ALMSGIVING enables us to share our goods with those less well off than ourselves. God's prescription for us to become fully human as God intends us to be, is very clear:

PRAYER FASTING ALMSGIVING

How well am I accepting joyfully this prescription?

Are there adjustments in my way of thinking or living that I need to make?

We all have bad days, when our Lenten resolutions can unravel, but each new day we can begin again with the help of God - that is the secret of perseverance.

Fr David Barnes PP

+2nd SUNDAY OF LENT

12th March 2017

LENTEN ALMS

The Apostles spent three years accompanying Jesus in his public ministry while he was teaching and forming them. In the Transfiguration, Peter, James and John come to see more clearly who He really is - they literally see Him "in a new light". They come To see that Jesus really is the fulfilment of the Law (represented by Moses) and the prophets (represented by Elijah). They also hear the voice of God the Father say "This is my Son, the beloved.... listen to Him". His true identity is revealed to them.

And what about us? As part of our Lenten preparation, the account of the Transfiguration helps us to see that Our Lord Jesus is the Yes to all God's promises, and that He is everything God has to say to us. As we digest this, the more we shall see the beauty of God's love revealed through the Cross: it is a love discovered only through treasuring it in our heart. Are we listening to Him?

Are we spending time with Him in prayer?
Fr David Barnes PP

+1st SUNDAY OF LENT
5th March 2017

LENTEN ALMS

Lent is a time for prayer, fasting and almsgiving so that we might expand our hearts to love God and our neighbour more fervently. It is a tradition to offer Lenten Alms as a sacrifice - a thoughtful way of denying something for ourselves and giving for the benefit of others - as part of our journey over the five weeks of Lent. This year the Cardinal has asked that the Lenten Alms be directed to the Cardinal's Appeal Fund. This important annual Programme asks all households to give a gift to support new projects which are focused on three fundamental areas of the Church's mission;

- Evangelisation, especially of young people, who represent the future of society and the Church;
- Strengthening and promoting marriage and Family Life as God's essential plan for creation and the essential building block of society and the Church;
- Adding our Catholic perspective and values to works of service in society, especially among those on the margins. More than ever today, we are called to build a just society and show love to our neighbour.

Money raised through the **Cardinal's Appeal** will be awarded in grants to Catholic bodies within the Diocese - parishes, schools, Catholic Organisations and groups - which can apply for funding if they have a new or interesting project that fits within the areas of evangelisation of youth, marriage and family life, or charitable works that help society and those living on the margins. The Cardinal's Appeal is focused within our Diocese. We are building from the foundations in local initiatives.

As we are in the early days of Lent, I ask you to find out about the Cardinal's Appeal, take a leaflet home, pray and reflect on your ability to make a Lenten sacrifice, and consider choosing the Cardinal's Appeal as part of your almsgiving. The second collection on the weekend of 18th/19th March will be for the Lenten alms. Envelopes are available. On behalf of Cardinal Nichols, thank you for your generosity throughout the year, in many different ways.

Fr David Barnes PP

+8TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
26th February 2017

Sr. M. Lucina writes: My Dear Friends, this week I would like to share with you a letter I received from Sr. M. Antonietta, the Mother General of the Rosminian Congregation to which I belong. She begins by mentioning "The Feast of the Cell". This is the 20th February 1828, when Antonio Rosmini, our Founder went to Calvario, Domodossola, to write the Rule and Constitutions for the Institute of Charity.

"Office again, we recall the "Feast of the Cell", when in February 1828, Antonio Rosmini made his way to Calvario, where he spent Lent in prayer, discerning what God wanted for

him. Even though he was weak in body, he followed what he believed God's call, listening for his word, confident that he would show him a new beginning. "Now is the time; the moments are in the hands of God, and they come when he wills".

During these days he began to draw up guidelines for the Institute, in the form of Constitutions - an idea came to him in December 1825, where in a moment, he glimpsed the whole plan of his work; he now committed this initiative to God, placing himself wholly in his hands, completely open to his will. From Monte Calvario he wrote to a dear friend: " I want only to abandon myself to Divine Providence ... My own conviction is as far as in me, should refuse nothing...rather that I should make a total offering of myself to him".

How happy would I be if I could totally identify myself with his will.

What does the "Feast of the Cell" mean to me? Can we, following in the footsteps of Blessed Antonio Rosmini "learn to receive **whatever comes to us from the hands of God with a tranquil mind and with great gratitude**"?

I wish each one of you a good journey of Lent 2017

(Sister continues): As we follow the message of Pope Francis; "Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to Easter, Christ's victory over death ... this season urgency calls us to conversion . . . to refuse to settle for mediocrityLent is the favourable season for renewing our encounter with Christ. . .the Lord who overcame the deceptions of the tempter during the forty days in the desert shows us the Path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the Word is a gift, other persons are a gift".

With gratitude for each one of you, wherever you are, I ask God to bless you in a special way this Lent.

Sr. M. Antonietta cm

+7th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
19th February 2017

HELPING CATHOLICS GET MORE OUT OF THEIR FAITH

Do you wish you understood the Catholic Faith and the Catholic Church better? If YES'; these 8 DVD talks are for you They are given by Dr D'Ambrosio, a Catholic theologian from the USA, and are a stimulating look at the basics of the Catholic Faith.

Each session lasts between 35 and 45 minutes, with pauses for reflection and discussion.

The talk titles are:

- **Who needs the Catholic Church?** Monday 20 February
- **Baptism-Gateway to Life.** Monday 27 February
- **Confirmation - Empowered to Serve.** Monday 6 March
- **Personal Prayer - Pathway to Joy.** Monday 13 March
- **What is the Mass?** Monday 20 March
- **Getting More out of the Mass.** Monday 27 March
- **Keeping a Pure Heart.** Monday 3 April
- **Mary and the Saints.** Monday 10 April

Each session is at 6.45pm in the Parish Room. Dr. D'Ambrosia is married, has five children and was a Professor of Theology at the Catholic University of Dallas. He communicates in a

humorous and challenging way giving lay people practical insights into getting more out of their Catholic Faith. The talks were filmed in England.

+6th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME **12th February 2017**

CHOOSING LIFE

Made by Love, made for love: this is our essential nature. How are we to understand the implications of this? Jesus is the Wisdom of God: through Him we learn who we truly are. (see Reading 2 at this Sunday's Mass).

Our Lord's teaching confronts us with deciding either to follow God's way, made known to us by Jesus, or our own way or some other. The first reading at this Sunday's Mass tells us that our decisions made on the basis of God's teaching in the commandments are life-giving for us, whereas decisions made contrary to God's teaching are deadly to our true nature - and God leaves us free to choose.

In today's Gospel Our Lord teaches us some refinements about keeping the Commandments. "You shall not kill" implies also that we are never to be motivated simply by raw anger or denigrate our neighbour even verbally - and if we do, we must seek reconciliation before we bring our gifts to the altar: those of us coming to Mass must ensure we live this life-giving teaching.

"You must not commit adultery" implies also that we must not be motivated by lust, even in our imagination. We must be very radical rooting out the influence of lust, and this choice is life-giving.

Choose God's teaching: choose life!

Fr David Barnes PP

+5th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME **5th February 2017**

SALT AND LIGHT

SALT in food helps bring out the flavours, and, traditionally, has been used to conserve food from corruption. "You are the salt of the earth," proclaims Our Lord: we are to recognise and help to bring out all the goodness in others, and also to help preserve fragile humanity from the corruption of sin.

To be salt we must believe in the basic goodness of the other: however damaged by sin, we must not be put off wanting to bring out the true person in their basic goodness. Difficult, yes, but made possible the more we "see" this is how Jesus sees us: He sees through the façade of our sins to see and love our inner love and goodness, which is why He finds us absolutely lovable. We should believe ourselves to be absolutely lovable because this is how Our Lord sees us. Then we can be salt to others.

"You are the light of the world", He proclaims. Our first reading at Mass today expresses closely how we can become that light "Share your bread with the hungry, and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked and turn not from your own kin.. Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over."

Deeds speak louder than words!

Fr David Barnes PP

+4th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
29th January 2017

HOW TO BE HAPPY

GOD made us with a deep longing for happiness. We experience this longing and spend much time finding ways to be happy - often becoming frustrated in our search! Today's Gospel is the BEATITUDES, which is Our Lord's teaching on the way to find true happiness. Given the Beatitudes are Our Lord's own teaching as the way to find true happiness, should we not know them by heart so we can treasure them and put them into practice? This week, let us use them each day in our daily prayer, and, like Our Lady, ponder and treasure this teaching in our heart. Remember, Pope Francis says we should all carry a copy of the Gospel in our pocket or bag - the Beatitudes are found in Matthew 5:1-12. The Beatitudes are essentially Our Lord's way of life, and they are our way to true happiness. We can live them with the help of His grace.

Pope Francis also wants us to be very concrete, and so suggests we examine ourselves often in light of questions we shall be asked on Judgement Day. We read them in Matthew 26: 31-46.

We may find our own responses uncomfortable - but do not lose heart...we can begin again, today and every day.

Fr David Barnes P.P.

LAST NOVEMBER, on a visit to Sweden, Pope Francis said that the best description of the saints, their "identity card", is found in the Beatitudes from Jesus's Sermon on the Mount.

He has proposed to us six Beatitudes for our present day:

Blessed are those who remain faithful while enduring evils inflicted on them by others and forgive them from their heart.

Blessed are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalised and show them their closeness.

Blessed are those who see God in every person and strive to make others also discover him.

Blessed are those who protect and care for our common home.

Blessed are those who renounce their own comfort in order to help others.

Blessed are those who pray and work for full communion between Christians.

+3rd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
22nd January 2017

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

18-25 January 2017

Our Lord prayed for unity among those who believed in Him (John 17:21), and in the early Church we are told (Acts 4:32) that the disciples were of one heart and one mind. Over the centuries that one communion has been fractured in many ways.

This WEEK OF PRAYER is aimed at the reunion of all Christians, living in full communion with one another and the successor of Peter, and sharing the one Eucharist. Some may say this is impossible: I disagree!

- First, "everything is possible to God", (Matt. 9:26). We must deeply desire and long

for reunion because UNITY is our Lord's will and what He prays for. If we do not desire and long for it then it will not even begin to happen.

- Second, we must renew our hope and confidence in the grace of God. When we long for reunion, relying on the power of God, grace can bring it to effect.
- Third we must set our heart to know ever better our dear Lord - the more we are converted to Him, the more we are converted to one another! This presupposes, our repentance for sometimes having closed minds and closed hearts both to Our Lord and to one another. God wants us to have big, open minds and big, open hearts - do we?

Fr David Barnes P.P.

+2nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME **15th January 2017**

PEACE SUNDAY

"Nothing is impossible if we turn to God in prayer. Everyone can be an artisan of peace," writes Pope Francis in his World Peace Message for this year. The theme for 2017 is "Non-violence: a style of politics for peace:" food for meditation here is that non-violence is not so much a tactic but a way of life.

PAX CHRISTI, an international Catholic movement for peace, is inviting us to ponder carefully how non-violence is a better way of responding to injustice and violence. Archbishop Malcolm McMahon of Liverpool, the President of Pax Christi, writes :- "The message of Pope Francis offers a timely opportunity for our parishes to explore the Catholic tradition of non-violence which goes back to Jesus, and to develop ways to make Gospel of non-violence better known".

THE WEEK OF PRAYER for the REUNION OF ALL CHRISTIANS begins this week: 18-25 January. The theme is "RECONCILIATION - the love of Christ compels us" (2 Corinthians 5: 14-20). St Paul proclaims how God has, in Christ, reconciled the world to Himself. The love of Christ compels us to be ambassadors of this reconciliation. Nothing is impossible to God -- even the reunion of all Christians! At each Mass we shall pray for a deeper unity among all Christians.

We can examine ourselves by asking: am I an ambassador for reconciliation, justice and peace?

Fr David Barnes P.P.

PRAYER FOR PEACE and UNITY (from the Mass)

Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you:
look not on our sins,
but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
Who live and reign for ever and ever .
Amen.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA told us in (1917) about the effectiveness of praying the rosary for peace. Let us act on her teaching.

THE EPIPHANY

8th January 2017

JESUS CHRIST alone is the perfect revelation of God. Today's celebration of the Epiphany (a Greek word meaning manifestation/revelation) is how the Three Kings (or Wise Men) find everything they are looking for in the infant in the crib, and how they fall on their knees and worship Him.

Whether Kings or Wise Men, the import is that true power (represented by the Kings) and real wisdom (represented by the Wise Men) are to be found fully in recognising and embracing that Jesus alone is the power and wisdom of God made manifest. The gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh represent Our Lord's Kingship (gold), the frankincense His divinity, and the myrrh pointing to His death on Calvary.

What gifts do we bring Him?
The carol "In the bleak midwinter" helps us.
"What can I give Him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb.
If I were a wise man, I would do my part.
Yet what can I give Him, give my heart."

Fr David Barnes P.P.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

1st January 2017

Pastoral Letter for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

My mother taught me many things. One was this: that a mother can never forget her child, even if that child is no longer in her presence and care. The bond between them endures. It is written into her heart and flesh. A mother carries the hopes of her child as her own; she feels the anguish of her child; she suffers whatever pain befalls the fruit of her womb.

This lesson helps me to understand why, on this Feast Day of Mary, Mother of God, we do so well to turn to her. Mary is our mother. She bears us as her children not by conceiving us in her body but by adopting us within her heart. She is our mother in all things, above all our Mother of Sorrows and our Mother of Mercy.

Because we are her children, she carries our hopes and our pain always within her. Today she stands with us on this first day of a new calendar year, at this moment when we reflect on our hopes and joys, our sorrows and fears. Here she is, sharing our New Year with its promises and prayers.

Often, as a youngster, I would go into the kitchen to tell my Mum all that had happened, what I had done and, sheepishly, what had upset me. In today's Gospel we heard that the shepherds did the same thing and that Mary 'treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart' (Luke 2:19). We can be sure that in the same way Mary will treasure and ponder all that we whisper to her.

Have you noticed that in most statues of Our Blessed Lady she is holding her son? In fact, she is holding him out to us, showing us the blessed fruit of her womb, Jesus. It is to him that she wants us to come. She brings him to us and us to him. In him we find and receive all that we need, for he is our foundation, our hope and our joy. In the words of St Paul, he is the one sent by God, born of a woman, to redeem us. He makes it plain that, in all truth, we are truly sons and daughters of God for 'God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts: the Spirit that cries out "Abba! Father!"' (Gal 4:4-6).

This, then, is how we best set out into the New Year: with the Spirit of Jesus in our hearts; with the prayer, 'Abba! Father!' on our lips; with Mary holding her mantle of protection and love over us all. Then we shall walk steadily, never losing the poise of grace, and always confident of who we are in the eyes of our loving Father: precious sons and daughters. Mary conceived the Eternal Word of God in her womb, giving him the gift of her flesh and blood. We, in our lesser way, are to do likewise. We are called to give him our flesh and blood in the actions of everyday which we hope will express his love and compassion, his forgiveness and joy, to all whom we meet. This truth is beautifully expressed in these ancient words:

'Christ abode for nine months in the tent of Mary's womb; he abides until the consummation of the ages in the tent of the Church's faith; he will abide for ever and ever in the knowledge and love of the faithful soul.' (Cf Blessed Isaac of Stella, 12th century sermon 51 for the Assumption of Blessed Mary).

At this New Year I wish you all every blessing. In this I can do no better than to use the words of the First Reading as my own:

'May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine upon you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you his peace' (Numbers 6:25).

And may the prayers of our Blessed Lady sustain us both now and at the hour of our death.
Amen.

Yours devotedly,

+ Cardinal Vincent Nichols
Archbishop of Westminster

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